An Ethnographic Communication Analysis of Indian Political Public Relations Practitioners

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Abstract

This thesis is about how political organisations use professional culture to exert control over practitioners in the practice of political public relations (PPR) in India. PPR plays a crucial role in shaping public opinion and influencing political decision-making. It is a complex and dynamic field, shaped by the country's diverse population, complex political system, and rapidly changing media landscape. Moreover, with the rise of digital communication and social media platforms, political public relations in India has evolved to include digital communication strategies such as social media campaigns, online videos, and influencer marketing to reach a wider audience and target specific demographics. This has made the practice of PPR more dynamic and ever-changing, as political parties and leaders rely on PPR practitioners to adapt to new technologies and communication channels to influence public opinion.

While research on the adaptation of new technologies and communication channels has increased in the last decade, little is known about how professional culture influences the practice and the practitioners of PPR. This interpretivist study analyses the micro level of PPR practice by employing vide ethnographic methods. It focuses on investigating how aspects of power such as formal authority, informal authority and discursive power shape the behaviours of professional practitioners and the practice of PPR in India. This thesis approaches PPR as a specialised field of public relations and sheds light on the professional lived experiences of political public relations practitioners (PPRPs) by using a critical approach to examine professional culture within a socio-political and cultural context.

The study gathered 56 hours of video ethnographic data, combined with interviews with ten PPRPs, four journalists and six corporate PPRPs. Through the application of critical discourse studies, conversation analysis, and the analysis of non-verbal cues, the routines of PPR practitioners were analysed to reveal that PPR practice in India is persuasive and closely associated with the practice of propaganda.

This thesis shows how power embedded in the organisation culture of a political party's public relations department is used to control the individual level of PPR practitioners and shape the products of their practice. More specifically, the thesis demonstrates how entitled power is exerted by managers and senior members of a department to regulate lower-level practitioners and the content they produce. Thereby it shows how authority is used by the political organisation's structure to control PPR practice and enforce the organisation's narrative on specific issues.

Another aspect of professional PPR culture examined in this thesis is collegiality, where power is equal. This thesis shows how collegiality creates situations through which everyday professional practices that are central to the production of messages by a PPR department are regularised. These regularised practices provide clear guidelines to practitioners who produce political content. Regularised practices involve in-house style sheets which help the organisation control the messages of the PPR department.

Lastly, this thesis shows how the knowledge and skills required to produce PPR messages, helps political parties ensure that PPRPs represent the interests of the organisation at the cost of their communities. Although the primary responsibility of PPRPs is to represent the organisation and its interests to the public, rather than representing the community, public relations scholars have often called on practitioners to be advocates for the communities they represent. However, attempts by PPR practitioners to represent communities can create tension between the interests of the community and the interests of the organisation. These findings contribute to an international body of knowledge in the areas of PPR, public relations, public policy and critical studies concerning the use PPR in democratic processes.

Table of Contents

List of Figures

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly identified in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Mark Rasquinha

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Acronyms

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
CA	Conversation Analysis
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
CDS	Critical Discourse Studies
CIT	Critical Incident Technique
CM	Chief Minister
ECA	Ethnographic Communication Analysis
IAF	Indian Air Force
INC	Indian National Congress
I-PAC	Indian Political Action Committee
MC	Master of Ceremonies
MNREGA	Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act
OPC	Organised Persuasive Communication
PAC	Political Action Committee
PPR	Political Public Relations
PM	Prime Minister
PPRPs	Political Public Relations Practitioners
PRPs	Public Relations Practitioners
SMPR	Social Media in Public Relations
TNM	The News Minute

Chapter One

Introduction

1.0 Political Public Relations: An Overview

In Communication Studies, political communication and public relations are considered to be closely intertwined primarily because public relations services are employed by political public relations practitioners (PPRPs) in political campaigns. Additionally, the use of public relations tactics has been noted in political communication scholarship (Fynes-Clinton, 2017; Lisi, 2013; Ryfe, 2001). A few scholars such as, Berg and Feldner (2019), Mairita (2019), Martinelli (2019), Pratheepwatanawong (2017), Rice and Somerville (2013), Strömbäck and Kiousis (2011; 2019) and Tarrega (2017) also observed these tactics, but referred to the practice and the field of study as political public relations (PPR). Similarly, scholars of political management (Wilson, 2017) and political marketing (Plasser & G. Plasser, 2002; Yadav, 2019) have observed the use of public relations by politicians while attributing the practice to different fields of study. This thesis also noted the use of public relations in political campaigns but chose to locate the practice within the field of PPR. Therefore, it recognises PPR as a specialised field of public relations.

Previously, researchers of political communication largely ignored or only briefly mentioned public relations services used in political campaigns (Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2011). Similarly, in the social sciences, academic disciplines such as political science, public diplomacy or political advertising highlighted the role of public relations in political campaigns but refrained from identifying the practice as a specialised area of public relations (McNair, 2017; Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2019). Given this backdrop, the following chapter introduces the study and its contribution to knowledge of the practice of PPR practitioners in India from a public relations perspective.

This chapter is divided into eight subsections. The first section provides the thesis with an overview of PPR as a field of study and the second section introduces the practice of PPR services globally. The third and fourth parts highlight the approach and the philosophies that guided and influenced this research. The fifth section introduces readers to the rationale and significance of this research. The following sixth

section briefly touches upon the central theme of the study, “power”. The penultimate section discusses the contributions of the study, and the final section explains the structure of the thesis.

1.1 Political Public Relations: A Professional Practice

PPR refers to the strategic communication efforts made by individuals, organisations, and political parties to shape public opinion and influence political decision-making on issues that are of concern to society (also referred to as organised persuasive communication (OPC) (Fisher et al., 2023). For example, abortion is an ongoing poll issue that shapes political opinion and divides the electorate (Dee, 2019). Similarly, several issues, such as race and ethnicity (Valentino et al., 2018) and immigration (Grande et al., 2019) are discussed and commonly debated in the public sphere during election campaigns (Hunt, 2019; Murphy et al., 2019). However, little is known about the professional apparatus that is used to socially engineer issues with the express aim of dominating the political agenda (Manor & Crilley, 2018). This thesis contributes knowledge about those professionals engaging in PPR activities to shape the public’s political opinions. Additionally, it contributes to our understanding of the role professional culture plays in the shaping of political discourse, thereby throwing light on how discourse is created by a political party. Therefore, this research begins with one critical assumption, which is that political issues are socially engineered by a professional industry that shapes political opinions.

In academia, politicians are often viewed as the people responsible for making statements with the express aim of shaping the political discourse of public interest issues. Therefore, several scholars make politicians the centre of their investigations (Bimber, 2014; Campbell, 2008; Eranti & Lindman, 2016; Wells et al., 2016). However, the roles played by practitioners such as Sarah Huckabee Sanders, a former member of US President Donald Trump’s administration (P. Williams, 2018), and Dominic Cummings, the former advisor to Boris Johnson’s administration in the UK, are rarely the subject of academic scrutiny. In an interview with *The New Yorker,* Sanders said that she never intended to be the “face of anything”. Sanders was different from the other 31 press secretaries with backgrounds in journalism and communications that preceded her because she did not have a formal education in communication or journalism (P. Williams, 2018). Sanders ran political campaigns for similar-minded politicians such as Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty, Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas, and another senator from Arkansas, Senator John Boozman. The latter said Sanders was adept at turning complex policy material into “words that people can understand without falling asleep” (P. Williams, 2018). Therefore, she was never the face of the political message, but rather the force behind the message.

While 'spin' tactics are commonly associated with news media and involve the strategic presentation of information to create a favourable impression. Sumpter and Tankard (1994) recognised “the spin doctor” as an alternative model of public relations and traced the usage of the term to the slang meaning of the verb “to spin“. They believed the term originated in the 1950s when “spin” sometimes meant to deceive as in “to spin a yam” (Sumpter & Tankard, 1994 p. 20). More recent studies in political communication have shown that political journalism is increasingly laying bare the news media's and communication professionals’ own role in political, strategic, and democratic processes such as election campaigns (de Vreese & Elenbaas, 2009).

1.2 The Practice in India

Political campaigns in India today witness a combination of tactics, which require the help of PPRPs (Jaffrelot & Verniers, 2020). PPRPs organise and conduct political advertising campaigns, media relations campaigns, films and popular culture-based campaigns to shape public opinion in India (Karan, 2009). Sajjanhar (2021) mentions that Prashanth Kishore[1] - much like Sarah Huckabee Sanders in the United States of America - is a prominent Indian campaign strategist who is trained in public policy and has been running political campaigns for over a decade in India. His success encouraged him to co-found the I-PAC[2] (Indian Political Action Committee) which provides professional campaign-related public relations services, such as lobbying and designing campaign strategies by micro-targeting voters for political organisations and politicians (Sajjanhar, 2021), who may or may not belong to political organisations (Shivam, 2020). Strömbäck and Kiousis (2011) referred to organisations such as the I-PAC as “collateral organisations”. These collateral organisations are seen as allies or partners of political organisations that help in the public communication and engagement efforts of political parties. Furthermore, they implied that these organisations employ PPR practitioners (Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2011). For the study, the presence of these organisations is evidence of professional PPR services being used routinely in political campaigns in India.

1.2.1 Political Consultation or Political Public Relations

[1] Prashant Kishor is an Indian political strategist and tactician. A public health expert by training, he worked with the United Nations for eight years before venturing into Indian politics to work as a political strategist.

[2] The Indian Political Action Committee (I-PAC) is the platform of choice for students and young professionals to participate in and make meaningful contributions to political affairs and governance in India, without necessarily joining a political party. Started as Citizens for Accountable Governance (CAG) in 2013, I-PAC has brought some of the best minds from diverse academic and professional backgrounds together and provided them with a unique opportunity to become part of the election process and influence policy making in India.

In India, Prashant Kishore is recognised as having orchestrated the victory of several politicians and political parties (Sruthijith & Katiyar, 2020). In February 2020, he successfully organised the national Aam Aadmi Party's[3] (AAP) campaign in the northern state of Delhi. Furthermore, in the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, he helped the regional Yuvajana Shramika Rythu (YSR) Congress[4] win the state elections of 2019 (Shivam, 2020). In 2017, he helped the Indian National Congress (INC)[5] win the north-western state of Punjab, and in 2015, he helped a coalition of parties win the eastern state of Bihar (Shivam, 2020). Therefore, Prashanth Kishore organised campaigns that helped political candidates across different regions and from different parties win state and national elections in India (Patel, 2017). Currently, Kishore is contracted to participate in state elections scheduled to take place in 2023 (Shivam, 2020). The services provided by the I-PAC included research and communication services that helped shape political opinion, build alliances between political parties and help politicians lobby for portfolios within governments (Sajjanhar, 2021). These practices provide this research with a glimpse of what PPR entails while indicating that the professional practice of PPR is routinely used by politicians and political parties in India.

While some political organisations employ collateral organisations, such as I-PAC, to design political campaigns, national and regional political parties also invest in creating in-house communication teams (Sharma, 2020). However, there is little knowledge about the in-house communication departments of political parties and/or organisations, such as the I-PAC, as is discussed in the following chapter. In addition, Sharma (2024) in his report of political communication practices stated that election campaigns in India have undergone a dramatic facelift, with the use of technological gambits employed by political public relations practitioners on behalf of political clients. According to Sharma (2024),

> The rapid developments in the landscape of India's political communication also represent the ascendant power of a new professional salariat class of technocrats who have emerged as the secret movers and shakers of political affairs. Understanding India's election campaigns, thus, demands studying shadowy actors like political consultants, spin doctors, pollsters, social media mercenaries, and 'troll farm' operators who increasingly provide services to political parties and

[3] The AAP is a national political party that is significant in the state of Delhi. Although the party has participated in different states and general elections, its influence is restricted to the state of Delhi, where it is the governing party.
[4] The Yuvajana Shramika Rythu (YSR) Congress Party is an Indian regional political party based in the state of Andhra Pradesh.
[5] The Indian National Congress is one of the oldest political parties in India. It has participated in all general elections since India gained independence. Today, it is considered a national party with significant influence in both general and state elections across India.

> politicians. Seen in this light, the task for contemporary scholars is not merely to ascertain how visible forms of political communication can be studied, but also how one might be able to analyze the hidden, behind-the-scenes organizational structure of modern election campaigns (Sharma, 2024 p.1).

Therefore, the investment in public relations tactics, the lack of knowledge about the public relations departments and the widespread use of PPR services (Plasser & G. Plasser, 2002) are factors that highlight the need for this research.

As for this researcher's interest in PPR, before his enrolment as a doctoral student, he was involved in two political campaigns. In both campaigns, his task was to help independent candidates belonging to minority caste groups win local elections. Furthermore, his belief that public relations techniques and strategies would be tools to ensure a fair representation of a community suffered a setback when the campaigns failed. Thus, this study was born out of two questions:

1) Do public relations work in the Indian sub-continent? and

2) how do political public relations practitioners represent their communities in practice?

The following section highlights the approaches taken in the research to understanding the experiences of PPR practitioners in the professional practice of PPR.

1.3 Approaching the Study

This thesis specifically examines the communication department within a political party, rather than the political party as a whole. The focus is on understanding the professional practices, power dynamics, and communication strategies employed by the communication department. While political parties have unique structures and characteristics, this research is concerned with how the communication department operates within the broader organisational framework of the party. The communication department, although part of the political party, functions with its own set of practices, hierarchies, and professional culture. For example, in Chapter Five, the analysis of interactions between managers and practitioners within the communication department highlights the unique power dynamics and control mechanisms that are specific to this department.

While there are similarities between political organisations and regular organisations, such as hierarchical structures, organisational culture, and the need for effective communication, the research recognises that there are also significant differences. Political organisations are primarily focused on gaining and

maintaining political power, influencing public policy, and representing constituents, whereas regular organisations are typically driven by profit generation and market share. The communication department within a political party must navigate a unique regulatory environment and engage with a broader range of stakeholders. For instance, practitioners in political communication departments are often recruited through informal networks, and the rules of employment are not as formalised as in corporate public relations departments. Additionally, the organisational structure, though hierarchical, often involves a multi-level reporting structure that differs from typical corporate settings. Furthermore, political parties on social media are held accountable to a lesser extent compared to regular organisations. Voter engagement also varies significantly, as a policy championed in one region may not receive favourable backing in another region from the party workers. These differences influence the practices and strategies employed by the communication department, making it distinct from communication departments in regular organisations.

Scholars from different academic backgrounds approach PPR research through various disciplinary lenses. Political science focuses on the study of political systems, institutions, and behaviors, viewing PPR services as a crucial tool for managing information and shaping public opinion (Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2019). Sociology, on the other hand, examines PPR as a means of shaping societal norms and values, while psychology explores PPR as a tool for influencing individual attitudes and beliefs (Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2011). Additionally, marketing perspectives consider PPR as a means of promoting political products and services to target audiences (Tarrega, 2017). This multidisciplinary approach enriches our understanding of PPR and its multifaceted impact on public opinion and political communication. Furthermore, an important aspect of this study is the background of the participants involved, as many of them lacked formal training in public relations and came from diverse academic backgrounds. This lack of formal education in PR significantly influenced their approach to PPR and the strategies they employed, highlighting the need to understand this context when interpreting the findings and comprehending the dynamics within PPR departments.

Given this context, it is important to identify and describe the approach used in this study. Describing an approach is important because it influences the conceptualisation of the roles that communication practitioners play. Public relations scholars Edwards and Hodges (2011) and L'Etang (2012) largely look at public relations services used in politics in isolation because they consider it propaganda. More importantly, these scholars were interested in the role of public relations in society. Some public relations scholars have described the practice of public relations in the political context (A. Gregory, 2020;

Johnston, 2020), while focusing on concepts such as engagement (Jelen-Sanchez, 2017; Srisaracam, 2018), dialogue (Kent & Taylor, 2002; Sommerfeldt & Yang, 2018; Theunissen & Wan Noordin, 2012) and relationships (Theunissen & Sissons, 2018).

Other fields of study such as political marketing (Serazio, 2017) and political management studies (Schwarz & Fritsch, 2014; Wilson, 2017) have examined tactics that are used similarly to those in public relations. However, they did not focus on the professional culture of practitioners of in-house departments of political organisations because they considered communication activities to be conducted by politicians themselves rather than by professional practitioners. Furthermore, J. Grunig et al. (1992) state that these studies are focused on the use of marketing rather than the creation of the message. Political communication scholars are interested in the broader relationship between politicians and journalists or the media (Tarrega, 2017). Therefore, there is a gap in knowledge to help understand the influence of professional culture on the individual micro-level activities of professional PPR practitioners.

Only a few studies have looked to examine public relations services under the banner of PPR (Cheng, 2020; Gbaden et al., 2021; Moloney & Colmer, 2001; Pratheepwatanawong, 2017). However, these researchers did not focus on the lower-level professionals who deliver public relations services to political clients. The objective of these researchers has largely been to describe the field of PPR, which is to be expected because PPR is a new area of study. Moreover, traditionally researchers examining PPR have found it challenging to access PPR practitioners (Franklin, 2004). Hence, research on the professional culture of PPR practice, which is the objective of this thesis, is rare.

In the course of the thesis, several theoretical approaches such as the rhetorical (Tyllstrom & Suddaby, 2016), critical, postmodern (Heath et al., 2009) and systems approach (Roper, 2005) were considered before employing critical theory to understand PPR in India. A series of approaches from research in other disciplines such as political communication (Waisbord, 2012; Lilleker & Jackson, 2010; Shami et al., 2019) and public diplomacy (Zaharna, 2018) was considered primarily because the central theme of the thesis involves power. A second reason was that the thesis seeks to add to our knowledge about *how* power influences the practice of PPR and the products of the practice. Critical theory (Edwards, 2018; Woodward, 2003) was eventually selected because it highlights the existence of power in professional culture and illuminates how power is sourced and exercised in interactions between PPR practitioners. Therefore, critical theory was best suited to examining how power influences the practice of PPR. The following section highlights the epistemology and ontological underpinnings of the study.

1.4 Epistemological Underpinnings of the Study

The epistemological and ontological underpinnings dictated the research paradigm used in the study. An epistemological view is concerned with how knowledge about the subject is defined and built through the study of public relations (Smudde, 2004). Because this research is interested in how professionals use public relations strategies in political contexts, the thesis relied on public relations epistemology to understand the professional practice of PPR. Therefore, epistemologically, the thesis situates itself within the overarching field of public relations, by arguing that PPR, like media relations, is a specialised field of public relations.

Smudde (2004) reviewed the public relations literature to highlight various epistemological and ontological approaches scholars took to understanding the diverse aspects of public relations. Epistemology is the branch of philosophy concerned with the nature of knowledge and belief. In the context of public relations, the epistemology in this research is concerned with how PPRPs gain, construct and communicate knowledge about their stakeholders and the public. This includes understanding the sources of information and knowledge, the methods by which practitioners of PPR gather and evaluate information, and the ethical and moral implications of their actions (Smudde, 2004). It also includes understanding the values, beliefs, and assumptions that shape the perceptions and actions of public relations practitioners, and how these perceptions and actions influence the behaviour of organisations and society (Smudde, 2004). While epistemologically Smudde (2004) found that public relations services were observed by scholars from different fields of knowledge (i.e the use of media relations is acknowledged by political marketing and/or political consulting scholarship), ontologically he observed scholars of public relations employed different approaches within public relations such as the systems approach (J. Grunig & L. Grunig, 2008; Moss, Verčič, et al., 2000; Zerfaß et al., 2008), the rhetorical school of thought (Botan & Hazleton, 2010; Heath et al., 2019), the postmodern school of thought (Holtzhausen & Zerfass, 2014; McKie & Munshi, 2007) and the critical school of thought (Edwards, 2015; Fitch, 2015; Moloney, 2006) to examine complex public relations concepts that impact the practice. These concepts include areas of knowledge such as relationship building, dialogue, engagement and reputation (Myers, 2020).

In the critical school, the presence of power in professional public relations practice was observed by various scholars such as Edwards (2006), Ihlen and Fredriksson (2018), Fitch (2015) and Weaver et al. (2006). While these scholars used different power theories to understand the nature of power in public

relations, this thesis makes use of the power theories of Foucault (2019), Bourdieu (1990; 1991; 1997) and Fairclough (2001) to understand how power embedded in organisation culture influences interactions between practitioners who in turn exert control over one and another to shape the professional practice of PPR. Given the epistemological underpinnings of the study, the thesis uses the critical public relations research paradigm (Fawkes, 2018; L'Etang & Pieczka, 2006; Motion & Weaver, 2000) to guide the study.

1.5 Rationale and Significance of the Study

Critical scholars Edwards and Hodges (2011) highlighted the need to investigate the interplay between public relations and culture because culture plays a role in the practices responsible for the production of political messages, which is an area of interest to this study. Studies on racism and diversity in public relations practice (Edwards, 2015), the role of gender (Place & Vardeman-Winter, 2018), or values and relationships (Sissons, 2014) show that cultural factors influence professional communication practices. Hence, this study observes aspects of power in professional PPR practice.

Furthermore, the study extends the understanding of public relations practices in political contexts by examining public relations departments of political parties, PPR practitioners and their professional culture within a political party system, which is an area that remains understudied. According to Franklin (2004) the lack of knowledge about the creation of political messages is a legacy resulting from a lack of exposure to communication professionals. This is because PPR practitioners live their professional lives in the shadow of politicians.

The role of professional communication services in the context of politics and democracy is of concern to many scholars across disciplines (McNair, 2017). Similarly, in public relations scholars such as Jahng et al. (2020) addressed this responsibility of public relations practitioners by examining the way in which professionals understood fake news and the strategies they implemented to authenticate information. The motivation for Jahng et al.'s (2020) study was the negative impact of public relations messages on democratic practice. In view of such practices, critical scholars of public relations (Edwards, 2018; Edwards & Hodges, 2011; Holtzhausen, 2000; L'Etang, 2005, 2013; L'Etang & Pieczka, 2006; Roper, 2005) have highlighted the need for academics to study public relations with a focus on human interactions.

Methodologically, L'Etang (2011) highlighted a lack of ethnographic studies in public relations. The use of ethnography in India to study public relations practice is not new as Sriramesh's study (1992) observed the workings of Indian public relations offices. Nevertheless, since Sriramesh's (1992) ethnographic

observations, the social, economic, technological and political changes have been immense as a result of globalisation. Some of these changes include the growth of public relations agencies along with the number of employees, the professionalisation of the practice and the competition for media space (primarily attributed to the improvements in communication technology). Moreover, *video* ethnography has never been used in researching the professional culture of communication departments within a political party in the Indian context. The aim of the study, therefore, is to address the above gaps in scholarship by exploring the daily professional experiences of PPRPs.

1.6 Power in Practice

As mentioned earlier, one of the motivations behind the selection of PPR as a field of study and the decision to focus on the micro and meso level of the practice and the practitioners stems from the researcher's experience in PPR campaigns. Public relations campaigns, although organised by professional practitioners, are reportedly overseen by politicians themselves or members of the politician's family, most commonly a son or daughter of the politician. This aspect of the practice is common across different states and political parties, and it highlights the importance politicians placed on PPR services. While politicians rely on practitioners (expert power) to implement public relations tactics they do not give them complete autonomy in managing their public relations activities (formal power). This practice was of great importance to the researcher because it meant that the autonomy of PPRPs in India could be curtailed. More importantly, it seemed to make the practice of public relations a mechanism through which the ideas (discourse) of clients/ politicians were made dominant.

Discourse is a socio-cultural practice that is concerned with how people communicate and exchange information and ideas through language and other forms of communication (Fairclough, 2007). The relationship between discourse and public relations is that public relations professionals use discourse as a tool to shape and manage the public image and reputation of their clients. This can involve crafting and distributing messages through various media channels, participating in public discussions, and engaging with stakeholders through dialogue. The discourse used in public relations must align with the values and goals of the organisation and must also consider the perspectives and interests of its stakeholders. Foucault (2019) drew attention to discourse as a socio-cultural practice, which is intimately connected to the circulation of power as well as being an object of power itself. Therefore, the term "discourse" relates to the struggles or systems of domination. Additionally, it refers to the manner in which struggle or systems of domination are conducted (Edwards, 2018), for example, through status, formal authority or expert power.

In this thesis, four aspects of power, which can be understood as systems of domination, were chosen for analysis because they were routinely observed in the data. These were:

1) power exerted by organisational structures,
2) the exercise of power amongst peers involved in the professional practice,
3) hidden ideological power in the products of practice, and
4) the power of dominant languages in multilingual environments.

The findings of the thesis highlight how each of the above-mentioned aspects of power shapes PPR practice in India and thereby adds knowledge to the understanding of power in the field of PPR.

1.7 Critical Theory and Public Relations

This study uses a combination of critical theories to guide the research. Critical theory is concerned with how power shapes public relations and how public relations messages shape society. In public relations research critical theory has been used by a variety of scholars (i.e, Edwards & Hodges, 2011; Gezgin, 2019; Heath & Xifra, 2016; L'Etang, 2005; Weaver et al., 2006), much like postmodern theories (Heath et al., 2019) and structuralist theories (Motion & Leitch, 2016) which were also considered at the start of this research. While structuralist theories tend to focus on the relationship between public relations and the broader macro structures (i.e. social, economic, etc.) and postmodern theories focus on the role of language and discourse in constructing reality, critical theory provides a more focused lens from which power relations between PPR practitioners could be examined.

This research examines the complex interplay between a public relations department, its professional culture and the practitioners working in the department. To do so, the study acknowledges that the public relations department consists of individuals who are placed in a hierarchical position to ensure the department functions smoothly. Additionally, the practitioners have shared beliefs, values and practices that are a part of the department's professional culture. Hence, the use of critical theory and the understanding of power as an interactional accomplishment was best suited to show how aspects of professional culture exert control over practitioners to shape the practice of PPR in India.

1.7.1 Critical Theory, Power and Control

This research is focused on understanding how power embedded in professional culture is used to exert control over communication practices such as public relations. In public relations, several power theories have been used to add knowledge to issues concerning power in public relations (Edwards, 2015; Heath et al., 2019; L'Etang & Pieczka, 2006; Taylor & Kent, 2022; Weaver, 2021). L'Etang et al. (2015) state that

post-structural theories have helped to identify how public relations is involved in the production of knowledge in democracies and to expose the systems of power and control that support the production and extension of particular areas of knowledge and versions of truth in society. In this research, post-structural theories are used to examine professional culture within a PPR department and to expose how cultural mechanisms are used to exert control over the practice of PPR.

Public relations is, as Edwards (2006, p. 231) states, "a form of symbolic production generating symbolic power". The works of poststructural theorists such as Bourdieu, Foucault and Fairclough are influential in informing research that focuses on concepts such as symbolic power structures that are a part of public relations. Bourdieu (1991) theorised power in relational terms where unconscious cultural norms, values and rules determine who has symbolic power and who does not in a power relation. Bourdieu (1991), as Edwards (2006, p. 230) has outlined, characterised professionals such as journalists, politicians, public relations and PPR practitioners – for whom language is at the heart of their work, as symbolic producers, transforming or disguising interests as disinterested meanings and legitimising arbitrary power relations.

Here, practitioners of public relations unconsciously reinforce the dominant power structures of society. From Bourdieu's (1991) perspective, they exercise symbolic violence on audiences by failing to reveal the real interests of the organisations they represent. Additionally, these organisations are predominantly invested in legitimising their activities and maximising profits for their owners. Critical discourse theory, which is used in this research, provides a useful complement to Bourdieu's theory of power as it provides an understanding of how the public relations texts can be products of power and control.

The term "discourse" refers to a set of statements, in their simplest form, which are often produced by public relations practice. Drawing on Foucault and Fairclough's theories of discourse and power, Motion and Leitch (2016) identified public relations as a discursive practice that strategically shapes and determines public support for organisational activities. Moreover, public relations practitioners seek to strategically deploy texts in discursive struggles over sociocultural practices "to maintain or to transform the sociocultural practices, the values and attitudes which support them and which they embody" (Motion & Leitch, 1996, p. 298). Therefore, Motion and Leitch (1996) described public relations practitioners as "discourse technologists", who strategically advantage those who employ them.

Yet as Foucault (1996, p. 35) outlined, a discourse comprises "the existence of a rule of formation for all its objects, for all its operations, for all its concepts, and all its theoretical options". Therefore, this implies that individual practitioners may not be in complete control when producing public relations texts.

Discourses symbolically structure how individuals (in this case, public relations practitioners) make sense of and understand the professional practice of public relations. That is, they support particular regimes of truth, and different discursive positions will compete to establish their regime of truth as the only version of the truth. In organisation culture, the task of establishing a regime of truth is accomplished by regulated and regularised practices of individuals within that organisation.

In this context of power and public relations, scholars have turned to examining how political activists and humanitarian organisations have utilised public relations methods to promote their interests and causes (Valentini & Edwards, 2019). A leading proponent of research into activism in the public relations discipline, Demetrious (2013), called for greater scrutiny of how public relations communication is used by grassroots organisations such as political parties. Hence, theoretically, there is a need to examine the communication activities of political organisations, who are known to use party members to amplify messages particularly in the context of elections (Fisher et al., 2023).

1.8 Contributions and Structure of the Thesis

The practice of PPR is under-observed as an independent and specialised field of public relations. Hence, the primary contribution of this thesis is the insights it offers into the professional practice of PPR. In doing so, it helps provide an understanding of how PPR practice and its products eventually create a socio-political narrative that best suits the interests of the organisation. Moreover, the presence and influence of different aspects of power in professional practice have received only limited examination by PPR scholars around the world. Therefore, the research offers insights into the professional practice of PPR by adding knowledge about the presence and operation of power through professional interactions amongst PPRPs.

To present these insights, this thesis contains within it nine chapters. Chapter Two surveys the literature on power in public relations research. Chapter Three outlines the data-gathering methods used in this research, along with sections on the analytical frameworks used to analyse the data. The chapter is followed by four chapters of analysis. Each chapter identifies the presence of power in different forms by presenting and analysing interactions along with other forms of data such as interview data and social media posts. The penultimate chapter discusses the findings and their impact on the field of PPR theory and practice. The final chapter then proceeds to answer the research questions.

Chapter Two

Review of Literature

2.0 Introduction and Chapter Overview

As mentioned, the central theme of this thesis is power. Here, power refers to the ability to influence others and shape professional political public relations (PPR) practice. This chapter has four main parts. This section is an overview of the literature on power as a means to exert control over individuals in professional organisation settings. The following section examines how power has been described within public relations, political communication and organisation studies scholarship to understand how power affects the experiences of PPR practitioners.

Power has been examined in different forms, including economic power and social power as well as the power of the media and public opinion. This thesis is concerned with the organisation's power, which as Ackroyd and Fleetwood (2005), in the context of "critical realism in action" (Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2005 p.45) mention is a form of power that is socially constructed by structures, practices, mechanisms and tendencies. These forms of power in this research are assumed to impact the experiences of PPR practitioners working in public relations departments of political parties. Research on communication departments within political parties is rare (Fisher et al., 2023), which shows that the practices of communication departments and the experiences of practitioners have received little attention from academics. Furthermore, there is little research aimed at examining the power relations between communication practitioners and their political employers.

How power is understood in discussions about the influence of public relations on society and culture, and how people think and behave, depends on the specific theoretical lens applied to that discussion. There are several different and contested perspectives on how public relations assert power and control over how publics think (Weaver, 2021). These perspectives are informed by different theories of power, which aim to explain questions concerning who has power in society, and how they access that power. Given the power exercised by public relations on society, it should be acknowledged that its practices – for example, media relations, lobbying, community and public engagement, and promotion – are used to support the cause of many organisations, politics, profits and non-profits and activists, many of which are in conflict with each other (Brockhaus & Zerfass, 2022). Nevertheless, the literature surveyed in this chapter is more interested in how power embedded in professional cultural

practices is used by individuals to control practitioners with the express aim of controlling the communication activities of an organisation or, in this case, a political party.

2. 1 Organisational Culture and Power

The notion of culture has often been associated with exotic, distant peoples and places, with myths, rites, foreign languages and practices (Gregory, 1983). However, recent research has shown that within a society, organisation members engage in rituals, pass along corporate myths and stories, and use arcane jargon to constitute informal practices that may foster or hinder the organisation (Zachry & Thralls, 2017). Therefore, the study of organisational culture can help examine what is considered by many as the informal or merely social or symbolic side of professional organisation or corporate life (Gregory, 1983). In anthropology, where the concept of organisation culture is further developed, the understanding of culture includes all aspects of a group's social behaviour, including their formal laws and technical know-how (Kucharska & Denise, 2023). The traditional goal of anthropology has been to make the practices of people understandable by exploring them in a particular context. This context can include professional practices such as public relations and/or PPR. Here, the research seeks to learn how professional participants make sense of their behaviour in professional settings to help throw light on professional practices.

Applying this anthropological approach to research in organisation studies, or in this case professional PPR, can help examine participants' views about all aspects of professional experiences (Gregory, 1983). These would include the work itself, the technology, the formal organisation structure, and everyday language, not only myths, and stories, but also special jargon that is used in professional practices (Schneider, 2007). Gregory (1983) states that it is in fact the taken-for-granted quality of culture that presents important research and practical problems in organisations. One of the taken-for-granted qualities of culture is its ability to contain power. In organisation settings where individual practitioners belong to multicultural subgroups, different occupational, divisional, ethnic, or other cultural aspects of professional practice are observed in conflict with each other through interactions which have their own meanings, contexts and senses of priorities.

Early research on corporate culture studies was not substantially different from earlier Human Relations research, where the goal was to illustrate the impact of irrational human factors on rational corporate objectives (Gregory, 1983). Rational corporate objectives were understood as the management's goals for the organisation. The objective of such studies was to ultimately provide managers with tools to assess and control the organisational culture of practitioners (Kucharska & Denise, 2023). A review of the research practices of scholars of organisation culture showed that the

motivation for corporate culture research was to evaluate the effectiveness of the organisation's culture in relation to management goals. Therefore, the use of organisation culture to promote integration can be viewed as a mechanism enforced by managers, who then train employees to reproduce organisation culture, which in turn acts as a mechanism of control. Fisher et al. (2023) mention that the organisation culture of political parties in Africa were usually authoritarian, with the communication of party members restricted on WhatsApp groups. Similarly, Chaturvedi (2016) also documented through her interviews the authoritarian culture of a political party in India. Therefore, it is not known how practitioners negotiate challenges related to authoritarian settings in professional practice. More importantly, for this research, there is little knowledge about the organisation culture of a PPR department within a political party, and no knowledge on how the organisation culture of a party shapes the practices of PPR practitioners.

2.2 Power and Control in PPR

In public relations research, investigations on the use of organisation culture as a mechanism to exert power and control are rare. The concept of Power in public relations and/or PPR is usually not considered in terms of actual power, but rather in terms of symbolic power (Edwards, 2009). Symbolic power has been conceptualised by Bourdieu (1991), who positioned language as a medium of power through which social structures are represented and accepted as normal (Fairclough, 2010). Therefore, language is seen as a cultural practice and a mechanism through which power is enacted and resisted.

Language, which includes all forms of spoken, written and visual representation, presents particular narratives of reality and encourages audiences to perceive phenomena in particular ways. Furthermore, public relations is involved in the strategic representation and promotion of ideas, arguments, positions, symbols, labels and meanings, all of which inform and help make meaning for individuals, their organisations or groups which are present in public relations content (L'Etang, 2008). Yet scholars of communication Zachry and Thralls (2017) claim that much of the language used in the production of communication content is lost in real time. Here, they are referring to the challenges related to the capturing of professional interactions that are usually lost because recording professional interactions can be a challenge to researchers who seek to examine complex questions concerning who influences and how influence is exerted on the production of communication content. Sissons (2014) showed, an examination of the language used in the production of public relations content offers insights into how power was used to influence public relations messages. Therefore, one of the most common ways in which power is enacted in an organisation setting is through language.

Power is commonly understood as the ability to either positively or negatively affect an individual or content (Weaver, 2021). While power can enable individuals to self-determine their actions, it can also give individuals the ability to make others do something that they may not have otherwise done (Wrong, 2017). Wrong's (2017) understanding of power included aspects of domination and enforcement. More importantly, the effect that it produces results in the fear of not complying with people in positions of power. In organisation culture literature this has been referred to as "the power of fear" (Seperich & McCalley, 2006). Kish-Gephart et al. (2009) examine the use of fear as an emotional experience and state that individuals have the potential to speak and be heard on topics of importance, but a growing body of research suggests that they often remain silent instead, out of fear of negative personal and professional consequences. While silence is one reaction to the presence of fear, Nagody-Mrozowicz and Mrozowicz (2022) highlighted other negative outcomes such as avoidance behaviour, a narrowed perceptual and cognitive focus on perceived threats, pessimistic judgments about risks and future outcomes, along with anxiety and stress. Hence, individuals who are dominated by another individual who is in power suffer negatively if they fail to do what is demanded of them in situations. Thus this use of power connects to fear and subsequently to control (Wrong, 2017). At the individual level, the phenomenon of public relations practitioners exerting power and control over their peers within their departments/organisation and over other members of the media may seem to have little value, when compared to issues of power and control in democracy. But, as Sharma (2020) in the context of political consultants showed, practitioners performing communication functions for political parties often shape who controls democracies.

Although power can usually be contested and challenged in professional situations within a department (Sissons, 2014), Valentini (2021) in her review of power in public relations mentions absolute power as an exception. In this research, the notion of absolute power is considered a myth, but it is acknowledged and recognised in the context of state control. Absolute power is understood as totalitarian power or a type of power which is unopposed and gives an individual or a group of individuals absolute authority. In situations concerning absolute power, people occupying positions of power may exert control over society/democracy. For example, a person can occupy the position of an absolute monarch or dictator and can assume absolute authority to do as they choose to without being accountable to others (McMillan, 2016). In such an example, power can be connected to corruption, abuse and win-lose relationships (McMillan, 2016). The use of power in such contexts has often received more attention when compared to power observed in the shaping of public relations practices that are instrumental in helping people occupy positions of power in systems such as democracy.

In organisation settings, the closest surrogate for absolute power is entitled power, which for this research may apply only to the power used by managers over individuals or a group of practitioners. Entitled power, as Zachry and Thralls (2017) stated is used by managers of organisation settings to regulate the functions of a department. Questions concerning how or what practices are regulated by managers within PPR departments of a political party and how they are regulated have received little attention in the past (Sajjanhar, 2021). Additionally, how regulated practices become a part of a PPR department's culture and how these practices shape the professional experiences of practitioners remains unexplored.

Regulating practices often puts individual managers with similar levels of authority in contact with each other. In such situations, Zachry and Thralls (2017) take the example of managers in an organisation setting competing for resources and claim that it is difficult for managers to use entitled power with other managers when they compete with each other. In corporate organisations, managers of teams performing specific functions (marketing, for example) are expected to meet other managers within the organisation. Similarly, in the PPR setting, managers of PPR departments can meet other managers (who at times have been referred to as strategists in PPR literature) (Tarrega, 2017) or managers from other professional groups to build alliances on behalf of the organisation (Sharma, 2020). The building of alliances to help the organisation has been referred to as "the power of group membership"(Zachry & Thralls, 2017 P.39). There is a lack of knowledge on questions concerning how managers represent their departments in these meetings and/or how building group memberships or membership to a specific group can add or diminish a manager's status within a political organisation.

Power can impact PPR practitioners, societal groups and/or organisations. For example, Strömbäck and Kiousis (2019) mention the coming together of collateral organisations and political parties to enhance each other's power. Collateral organisations are defined as organisations that are linked to parties while simultaneously having their own agendas and interests. Typical examples of collateral organisations include thinktanks, political action committees (PACs) and other such interest groups (Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2019). Similarly, Moloney and McGrath (2020) argue that, in public relations, stakeholders are generally perceived as allies and insufficient attention is applied to considering stakeholders as neutrals or opponents.

Similarly, collateral organisations can be considered as stakeholders whose relations with political parties have largely been underexamined. There is little known about the how collateral organisations exert power on the PPR department of political parties and how that power exerts control and shapes the experiences of PPR practitioners employed by a political party. Additionally, from an organisation

culture and power perspective, there is a lack of knowledge on questions concerning how groups with different department cultures interact with each other in the political context and how those interactions impact the organisation either positively or negatively.

While research concerning power associated with control over stakeholders has received some attention in public relations (Moloney & McGrath, 2020; Topić, 2021; Zhou, 2021), research on the sharing of control and agency has received limited attention. Aspects of control and agency are important because they are factors that negatively impact how practitioners represent themselves and their communities in interactions. Weaver (2021) states that in such situations the notion of power plays the role of empowering individuals, groups, communities and organisations. However, little knowledge exists about how power, related to control and agency, is employed in professional situations and environments in PPR.

In research on power and public relations, how public relations power is described has been of importance to scholars (Weaver, 2021). However, questions concerning how power is employed within public relations departments have tended to go under the radar. In reference to power as a communication practice (Schneider, 2007), public relations is generally used to persuade people to the extent that they comply with messages communicated through organisational channels, the media and social media (Weaver, 2021). However, the use of public relations channels to spread messages meant for persuasion is outside the scope of this research. This research is interested in questions concerning how power embedded in professional culture can exert control over practitioners employed in a PPR department of a political organisation.

2.2.1 One-Way and Two-Way Communication Theories and Power

In the field of communication studies, the distinction between one-way and two-way communication is fundamental. One-way communication refers to a linear process where information flows from the sender to the receiver without any feedback. This model is often used in mass communication and propaganda, where the primary goal is to disseminate a message to a large audience. Lasswell's (1948) model of communication, which asks 'Who says what to whom in what channel with what effect?' exemplifies this approach.

Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1955) two-step flow theory further elaborated on the process of communication by introducing the role of opinion leaders. According to this theory, media messages first reach opinion leaders, who then interpret and pass on the information to the wider public. This model highlights the importance of interpersonal communication in the dissemination of media messages. In contrast, two-way communication involves interaction and feedback between the

sender and receiver. Grunig and Hunt (1984) introduced the concept of two-way symmetrical communication in public relations, which emphasises dialogue and mutual understanding between an organisation and its publics. This approach is considered more ethical and effective for building long-term relationships.

However, in the context of political public relations (PPR) in India, the predominant use of one-way communication reflects a focus on message dissemination rather than engagement. Sriramesh (1992) highlighted that public relations practices in India often prioritise top-down communication strategies, which align with the one-way communication model. This study examines how PPR practitioners in India employ one-way communication strategies to control the narrative and influence public opinion.

The choice between one-way and two-way communication is impacted by power dynamics. One-way communication is often employed by those in positions of power to maintain control over the narrative and limit the opportunity for feedback or dissent. This approach allows politicians to project their messages unchallenged, reinforcing their authority and shaping public perception. Lasswell's (1948) model underscored this by focusing on the effects of communication on the audience, highlighting the power of the sender to influence the receiver.

Katz and Lazarsfeld's (1955) two-step flow theory introduced a layer of complexity by acknowledging the role of opinion leaders, who act as intermediaries in the communication process. These opinion leaders hold power within their social networks, mediating and potentially altering the message before it reaches the wider public. This dynamic illustrates how power is distributed and exercised within communication networks. Similarly, Grunig and Hunt's (1984) concept of two-way symmetrical communication challenged the traditional power dynamics by advocating for dialogue and mutual understanding. This model promotes a more balanced power relationship between the organisation and its publics, fostering trust and cooperation. However, in the context of Indian PPR, the preference for one-way communication reflects a desire to maintain hierarchical control and minimise the risk of losing authority through open dialogue. In India, given that public relations practices are often characterised by top-down communication (Sriramesh, 1992), power is concentrated at the top and information flows unidirectionally. This approach aligns with the broader cultural context, where hierarchical structures are prevalent, and authority is respected. By employing one-way communication strategies, PPR practitioners in India can effectively control the narrative, ensuring that the party's message is disseminated without challenge.

2.2.2 Persuasion, Manipulation, and Propaganda

In the field of political public relations (PPR), the concepts of persuasion, manipulation, and propaganda are central to understanding how political messages are crafted and disseminated. Persuasion involves the use of communication strategies to influence attitudes, beliefs, and behaviours. It is often seen as a legitimate and ethical practice when it respects the autonomy of the audience and provides truthful information (Perloff, 2010). Manipulation, on the other hand, involves the use of deceptive or coercive tactics to influence the audience. It often undermines the autonomy of the audience and can lead to misinformation or disinformation. Propaganda is a form of communication that is designed to influence the audience by presenting biased or misleading information. It is often used by political actors to control the narrative and shape public opinion (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2018). Scholars such as Moloney (2006) and Sanders (2012) have examined the use of propaganda in political communication, highlighting its potential to manipulate public perception and undermine democratic processes. The use of propaganda in PPR is particularly relevant in the context of India, where political parties often employ sophisticated communication strategies to influence voters.

With the rise of social and digital media, new methods of influencing public opinion have emerged, including the use of algorithms and automation to micro-target potential supporters with tailored messages. This phenomenon, known as digital propaganda, involves the deliberate manipulation of public opinion during crises or elections through the use of machines alongside human users (Neyazi, Kumar, & Semetko, 2016). Despite limited internet access in developing countries, political actors have still integrated the internet into their propaganda strategies (Neyazi, 2018). Bots, software apps that perform automated tasks and interact with users online, have played a significant role in shaping public opinion. They can be used benignly to distribute automated news feeds or maliciously to spread spam and fake news (Howard, Woolley, & Calo, 2018; Keller & Klinger, 2019; Woolley & Howard, 2017). In fact, it is estimated that 9% to 15% of Twitter accounts are bots (Varol et al., 2017). Since then, the social media platform has taken measures to combat this issue, suspending millions of accounts in an effort to curb the spread of propaganda (Shao et al., 2017).

In India, where internet connectivity has increased significantly, reaching approximately 604 million people, the deployment of digital propaganda and the spread of disinformation have become pressing concerns (Neyazi et al., 2016). Misleading information has been disseminated through online platforms, both within India and globally, highlighting the need to understand the dynamics of digital propaganda in India's evolving hybrid media system, which encompasses traditional media and a

growing number of internet users (Neyazi, 2018) making propaganda, persuasion and manipulation important concepts in PPR research.

2. 3 Power in the Indian Context and the Public Relations Department

Three decades since L. Grunig (1990) stated that professionalism remains an elusive goal for public relations practitioners, the improvements to the professionalisation of the practice are slow and inadequate particularly in India (Sahoo & Nayak, 2022). In the literature on public relations professionalism, interdisciplinary guidelines for a "profession" are most often used and referred to in discussing the industry: (1) a well-defined body of scholarly knowledge; (2) practitioners completing some standardised and prescribed course of study; (3) examination and certification by a governing body; and (4) oversight by a governing body with disciplinary powers (Niemann-Struweg et al., 2008).

While research on the professionalisation of public relations is increasing (Sahoo & Nayak, 2022) the conceptualisation of what constitutes professionalism in public relations is contested (Nutsugah & Anani-Bossman, 2023). Niemann-Struweg et al. (2008) suggested that there are a number of faces of professionalism in public relations and little is known about how well the industry is progressing in settling on standards by which professionalism may be judged and upheld. In the last decade, there have been attempts to include in this process the wider educational and social responsibility issues in a set of measurable standards (Nutsugah & Bossman, 2023). So, although the importance of professionalisation is underlined in public relations scholarship, few studies give actual information regarding the nature of professionalisation and how the organisational culture can shape the professionalisation of a public relations department in regions like India.

Professionalisation in the context of this research is important because professionalism is related to professional identity. Fawkes (2015) has stated that public relations work involves shaping, reflecting and communicating identity for organisations and individuals, and is in turn shaped by the professional identity both of the field and individual public relations practitioners. In examining professionalism Fawkes (2015) called on researchers to conduct further research on the professional identities of public relations practitioners because she noticed that practitioners often struggled to reconcile the "official versions" of their role presented in texts and professional associations with their day to day experience. Here, it is important to understand how PPR practitioners understand whether representing communities and relationship building are part of the PPR function.

L'Etang and Pieczka (2006) present a culturally specific take on the development of public relations professionalisation which recognises the importance of unique sets of historical circumstances in particular cases. In doing so, they abandon the American progressivist development of public

relations as a profession. In the Indian context, a cultural take on professionalisation can bring to light different cultural aspects that can control practitioners in India. Nevertheless, there is little public relations research on how culture has shaped the development of public relations as a profession in India.

An early account of professionalism in the Indian factory setting was provided by Sheth (1968), who discussed the problems of industrialisation in India and stated that professionalisation can be a result of personal way of life and the situations of a practitioner's social life, which are embodied in language. Therefore, how practitioners describe and identify with their practice can shape how individuals conceptualise professionalism. An example of how professional work is embodied in language can be found in the usage of the Kannada word "Kelasa", which can mean work, duty or responsibility. "Kelasa" is used in everyday conversations in the southern state of Karnataka to express a professional job. The usage of the word contains ideological connotations that dictate how practitioners are expected to perform their roles ethically and to the best of their abilities.

Additionally, the factory workers in Sheth's (1968) research were understood to have an integrated self, which is a combination of the personal self (existence) and that person's situational social life. In applying Sheth's (1968) understanding of the factory worker's self to a PPR practitioner, we can assume that a practitioner's self can dictate that practitioner's individual drives, emotions, thoughts and moral judgements. Similarly, these practitioners, like the factory workers, may come from rural backgrounds, class and caste groups that invariably shape their perception of professionalisation. However, there is little to no knowledge of how these factors contribute to a practitioner's perception of how a practice is professionalised and how these perceptions shape a practice.

Sheth's (1968) examination of the Indian factory also showed that certain departments within the factory were dominated by members of specific regional, ethnic, caste, sub-caste and class groups. There have been two important consequences of these differences. First, any difficulties, rivalries or jealousies between different ethnic groups have reflected in the productivity of these practitioners. Second, worker mobility has been restricted, which is a feature that is not confined to work in India. Given that there is no knowledge of how ethnic, caste/sub-caste, or religious and regional constructs shape both public relations and PPR practices, it can only be assumed that these factors can indeed shape PPR departments.

Some research in the field of journalism by Udupa (2010) showed that journalism in the state of Karnataka is dominated by Brahmin (caste) journalists and by the ability of this group to shape public discourse. More recent research by Harad (2020) showed that Dalits (a lower caste group in Hindu

societies) are isolated in newsrooms. Similar accounts of caste and regional-based discrimination have been observed by Shakthi (2023), whose examination of a modern organisation in the field of Information technology shows that caste and religious-based discrimination causes isolation and alienation of members who come from specific marginalised communities. Such discrimination negatively impacts the experiences of practitioners in professional work spaces. There is no information on the social constitution of PPR departments or how the national and/or dominant social group culture intersects and/or interacts with professional culture.

Globally, little has been written about the scope of experiences of public relations practitioners as professionals (Tworzydło et al., 2019), which is a trend that is followed by Indian public relations scholars (Sahoo & Nayak, 2022). In India, most public relations professionals work at a technical level. In other words, they engage in technical activities that involve creating media releases, speeches or newsletters (Patwardhan, 2015). There is no knowledge of the upward movement of these practitioners and their ability to influence PPR or public relations practice.

The classification or characteristics of power in public relations has been and continues to be underexamined (Edwards, 2015) and inadequate (Aldoory & Toth, 2021). Hence, knowledge of where this power may come from, or why some practitioners enjoy greater influence than others in similar positions requires research. Additionally, public relations scholars tend to focus on public relations managers (Falkheimer et al., 2017; Osswald, 2019; Parsons, 2016; Valentini & Sriramesh, 2014), which has resulted in research concerning lower-level practitioners of public relations being underexamined (Johnston & Rowney, 2018; Napoli et al., 1999).

2. 3. 1 Local Cultures and Power

Culture, in the context of this research, includes all aspects of a professional group's social behaviour, including their formal laws and technical know-how. Culture as an environment of public relations affects and is affected by public relations practices which “can no longer be ignored" (Sriramesh et al., 1999). Therefore, research on public relations within different cultural contexts is growing (Zainuddin & Djusan, 2012). The two distinctive approaches to examining public relations and culture include the critical approach and the cultural approach. The cultural approach has been around for over three decades through Hofstede’s work on values (Hofstede, 2001). However, Hofstede’s framework is more suited to examining different cultures at a national level while this research is concerned with the professional culture of PPR in the context of India.

Zainuddin and Djusan (2012) used the critical approach and showed that, in the context of Indonesia, local wisdom - which includes art, beliefs, customs, knowledge, language, law, morals and other

capabilities and habits - shapes public relations practice. The development and push for the local wisdom approach come in particular from studies of public relations in Asia (Y. Kim, 2020; Lee & Kim, 2021). The idea that public relations can be of value to societies, such as Indian society or democracy, gives the ability to examine issues concerning political processes such as elections, which form the backdrop to this thesis.

Much like Zainuddin and Djusan (2012) on public relations in Indonesia, Al-Kandari and Gaither (2011) examined Arab culture and discovered that religious devotion, group dedication, resistance to change and history, and recognition of hierarchical order were key cultural influences on public relations practices in the Arab world. Moreover, Zainuddin and Djusan's (2012) research examined intricate cultural details explaining why language which is a part of Arabic culture shapes the practice of public relations in that region. Nevertheless, Zainuddin and Djusan's (2012) research does not provide empirical evidence to show how signs and symbols that are integral to Islamic culture control public relations practice.

Furthermore, Al Tamimi (2014) states that culture and public relations in Bahrain's society curtailed the expressions of women in public relations practice. AlSaqer (2008) interviewed women practitioners in Bharain to understand their experiences of the cultural challenges in the public relations corporate environment and how those challenges shaped their relationship with colleagues, personal life, social domination, and marginalisation in public relations practice. Culture was a key theme in AlSaqer's (2008) research. For example, one of the practitioners talked about the culture of "Being a woman working in a job that is associated with men" (AlSaqer, 2008, p 78). Besides, several interviewees emphasised the cultural sensitivity which is present in the relationship between women and their male colleagues in Bahraini culture.

Moreover, the interviewed women agreed that working in public relations required "working for long hours", "working hard" and the "fear of being a mother" (AlSaqer, 2008, p 78), because their job dominated their personal life and the high level of stress from which they suffered. These themes underline Sheth's (1968) earlier examination of the practitioners' integrated self and how practitioners' social self and situational self influence practice. These cultural influences that have challenged Bahrainian women practitioners have similarly been noticed in India, and it can therefore be assumed that these factors can shape public relations practices in India. However, there has been a lack of research examining how hierarchy and authority have shaped the practice of public relations and PPR in India.

2.4 Challenges to Public Relations Practice: The Practitioner in Context

The discussions in the sections above highlight certain themes that are important variables of organisational culture, known to shape the experiences of practitioners in a professional setting. A review of literature about organisational culture is important because this study understands organisational control as a set of mechanisms through which an organisation, in this case a political party, can exert control over the practice of PPR and its practitioners. The following sections review literature in public relations and organisational culture on power in professional practices within a department.

According to Pettigrew (1979), organisational culture is defined as a set of beliefs, values, and assumptions that are shared by members of a department within an organisation. Such shared values and beliefs influence the decisions and behaviours of practitioners (Meng & Berger, 2019). By seeing organisations as socio- and rational-structural systems, practitioners develop a set of mutually acceptable ideas and beliefs about what is real, what is important, and how to respond. Schein (2010) further expands the definition of organisational culture by describing its characteristic as a shared learning pattern of behaviour, which can be transmitted from one generation of organisational members to the next.

2.4.1 Members of the Political Public Relations Department

Public relations roles are descriptions of the behavioural patterns of professionals in organisations practising public relations (Sampa, 2022). These roles guide the actions of practitioners in an organisational setting. Katz and Kahn (1978) gave the concept of a job role a central place in public relations theory. They pointed out that conceptualising roles was important because, at a micro level of analysis, an individual occupies a space in the network of relationships that make up the system called an organisation. Therefore, an observation of the practitioner's roles is key to understanding how political organisations use PPR and the practitioners working in PPR departments to further political interests. However, there is little to no knowledge of who performs what roles and how those roles are practised.

In public relations literature, performing prescribed roles within departments well allows practitioners to compete with each other for rewards, which are presented in the form of higher wages and positions and enable practitioners to gain status (Tindall, 2007). Therefore, roles and professional status are tightly intertwined according to Serini (1993), who states that professions expect their members to behave in certain ways with professional role expectations. These expectations may differ from role to role and organisation to organisation. These role expectations can shape control

patterns, personal autonomy, structured hierarchy, routinised tasks and supervisory autonomy (Dozier, 2008).

In the context of India, Patwardhan (2015) discusses how public relations managers navigate the challenges concerning leadership in public relations practice in India. Furthermore, to address the limitations of scarce literature about leadership roles in public relations, he interviewed public relations managers to show that managers in India preferred a democratic culture and prioritised the retention of practitioners. Furthermore, Patwardhan (2015) states that managers of Indian PR departments spent time training practitioners through the practices of mentoring. On the subject of training public relations practitioners both Patwardhan (2015) and Mukhtar and Shahzad (2018) touch upon some of the routine practices of practitioners. While Patwardhan (2015) states that new employees (public relations practitioners) get bored with just engaging in routine press release writing and following up with media, Mukhtar and Shahzad (2018) also found that practitioners were involved in tasks such as preparing, editing, and sending communication material. Nevertheless, the roles of public relations practitioners, particularly PPR roles within a political party, have not been sufficiently explored. For example, questions concerning how monotony can shape the experiences of public relations practitioners and whether it can function as a mechanism to control practitioners have not been studied. Particularly in the context of India, most public relations scholarship has focussed on managerial roles because of their link to the 'dominant coalition'.

Sinha (2000) suggests that business environments in India demonstrate a preference for hierarchy and that they value personal rather than contractual relationships. N. Singh and Krishnan (2005) emphasise culture-specific Indian qualities along with universal qualities, and conclude that leaders in India are mentor-like authority figures who value and build personal relationships, display expertise, possess and demand loyalty (to the organisation/department/team), and affirm self-sacrifice and giving (both collectivistic values that put the organisation above self).

Leadership models in India also draw on Indian social roles. According to Sinha (2000), the ideal leader in India was both task-oriented and nurturant, and their approval was contingent on the performance of tasks by their subordinates. A similar approach was evident in the “Karta” model of leadership (P. Singh & Bhandarker, 1990) where the leader was seen as the head (or “Karta” in Hindi) of an extended work family. Chakrabarti (1999) proposed the concept of “Wisdom Leadership”, and states that this form of leadership springs from ancient Indian culture, where the guru or ‘rishi’ (using innate wisdom and knowledge) inspires and promotes desirable actions in followers. The use of persuasion and authority by Indian leaders to manage subordinates is consistently found in the studies of Sinha (2000), P. Singh and Bhandarker (1990) and Chakrabarti (1999).

2.4.2 The Organisation Structure and the Practitioner

Both Fisher et al. (2023) and Gerbaudo (2019) acknowledge that an organisation structure is a part of a political party's culture and it impacts how a party communicates, yet there is little research on the structure of communication departments within political organisations. Organisation structures have received considerable attention in the field of organisation studies (Brukwe, 2022; Lestari & Juwana, 2021; Lubua, 2021; Raziq et al., 2020) and the findings of these studies are similar to observations made in public relations research (Berger, 2021). In the political communication literature that acknowledges the modern styles of political campaigning, there is limited existing scholarship on the organisation and functioning of political parties both in general and during elections. Of the literature that does exist, historically there have been two major trends. Fisher et al. (2023) examined African parties, stating that they have traditionally been presented as lacking structures and substance. Additionally, the role of gatekeepers – or "big men" – as filters of influence and power has frequently been emphasised. These people were usually identified as older, wealthy, politically connected and (often) male, and it is argued that these actors dominate through their networks. Furthermore, Fisher's et al. (2023) research showed that political parties have often been analysed as organisationally and structurally weak and sitting on top of a larger, personalised patronage system.

In organisation studies the understanding of an organisation's structure deals with how tasks are executed within a department or an organisation (Seperich & McCalley, 2006). In public relations, L. Grunig (1992) referred to organisation structures, as "who reports to whom", the formal coordinating mechanisms and interaction patterns that were to be followed within a public relations department. Attending to these organisations' structure is critical because, as J. Grunig (1976) pointed out, the behaviour of public relations practitioners is largely controlled by organisation structures and the practitioners' role in that structure. Moreover, as Sharma (2020) observed, the communication practices of political organisations may be outsourced to organisations specialising in communication services (such as public relations). Sharma's (2020) thesis and Sajjanhar's (2021) research suggest that organisations to which political parties outsource communication activity are more likely to have corporate cultures. Thus, addressing the issue of organisational structures from a public relations and organisational studies stand point is not only useful but critical to this study.

Organisational structures in public relations address questions of what is the best form in which organisations function and why. In its most basic form, an organisation's structure can be divided into horizontal and vertical structures. J. Grunig et al. (2002) state that horizontal structures refer to how professional tasks are allocated within a public relations department. The vertical structure points towards the reporting relationships, coordinating mechanisms, and patterns of interaction

throughout the organisation. Moreover, J. Grunig et al. (2002) determined that vertical structure was a critical aspect of excellence to be examined in public relations research because the roles and behaviours of the PRPs are influenced by organisational structure. The horizontal and vertical dimensions are basic structures of an organisation that fail to consider other complexities in the management of a public relations department. For example, Seperich and McCalley (2006) state that there are differences in how power and authority sourced from the organisation structure operate:

> The difference between enforcing power and using authority. Enforcing the application of power is a choice made by the manager to inject action into the management process. When one is authorised by established procedures to take specific actions in the management of a function, there is management by authority (Seperich & McCalley, 2006, p 30)

Nevertheless, Seperich and McCalley (2006) recognised that whoever has power also has authority, and the one with authority can bring power to bear when it is needed.

For this research, if the option to exert power is by choice of the manager, it is of interest to understand under what circumstances managers of the PPR department choose to employ power and/or authority. Furthermore, how do procedures control the actions and choices of the manager, and how does the implementation of procedures shape the experiences of both managers and practitioners working in a public relations set-up within a political party?

The organisation structure recognised in public relations by L. Grunig (1992) was *centralisation*, which refers to the practice in which decision-making is concentrated in the upper reaches of the organisational hierarchy, or the hierarchy of authority. *Decentralisation* is when the decision-making process is spread out to include more voices and instil motivation among members of a public relations department. Another type of structure is *stratification,* which refers to how rewards are distributed within an organisation. *Formalisation* in a structure represents the importance of rules and the degree to which they are enforced within an organisation. Lastly, *complexity* refers to the number of occupational specialities found in an organisation and the level of training required for each speciality, that is, professionalism.

Organisation structures can be dependent on factors such as the size of the organisation/team, the financial capability of the organisation to employ large or small teams etc. In the field of organisation studies, Brukwe (2022) observed similar structures as identified by L. Grunig (1992). Brukwe (2022) offered more insights into understanding what skills, expertise and/or experiences individuals require to occupy positions within the organisation structure. The three structures discussed below include the *functional structure,* which is the one which classifies employees according to their functions and specialisations, the *divisional structure*, which are structures that organise their activities based on

products or services and the *matrix structure,* which is more complex because it requires multiple reporting by an employee. For example, the dual reporting system refers to reporting to multiple managers (chains of command), which may lead to experiences of conflict In the context of political parties, where practitioners are not directly employed but are members of the political party (Fisher et al., 2023). In such situations, party members may be expected to perform a range of tasks that are outside their skill sets. Moreover, as Fisher et al. (2023) point out, the party organisation in political parties is weak. In situations where party organisations are weak, there is no knowledge of how organisation culture through structure exerts control and shapes the practice of PPR.

At the micro-level, interactions between practitioners belonging to two different departments take place to ensure the organisation's objectives are met (Raziq et al., 2020). These interactions are also referred to as negotiations by Holmes and Stubbe (2015). The division of structures within corporate and public relations organisations is useful because it can help understand how different departments (e.g. the research and analysis or the finance team) can exert control over that organisation.

In the matrix structure multiple reporting practices are observed (Brukwe, 2022). Professional practitioners can be observed exercising and resisting power as they interact to help organisations meet their goals. Therefore, the practice of negotiations is an important aspect when considering questions concerning how practitioners represent communities in PPR practices. This includes the practice of spreading mis-information and dis-information, as was reported by Sharma (2020) in his observations of PPR in India.

While in public relations practice it is common for managers to represent authority (Ghosh, 2011), In PPR, authority rests with the politicians. Chaturvedi (2016) and Hager (2006, 2014) imply that political messages are an outcome of negotiations and conflicts between campaign members and politicians, because politicians have an image of themselves and want to project that image to the targeted public. On the one hand, these images may not be acceptable to campaign managers and scriptwriters who create strategic themes based on data from online campaigns and focus groups (DiResta et al., 2018; Pybus, 2019). On the other hand, politicians may insist on strategic themes and overrule PPR managers on what the themes and messages should be, thereby creating conflict. These negotiations can significantly impact the effectiveness of public relations and therefore there is a need to examine how authority sourced through organisation structures is used to exert control of PPR practice. The following sections shift the focus from what Schneider (2007) called the "real abstract structures" of organisations to the communicative activities through which those structures are constructed and maintained (Schneider, 2007 p.187)

2.4.3 The Organised Culture of Communication

In contemporary society, multimedia technology seems to be the best tool to influence people with certain products or services provided by public relations professionals. Over the last decade, the use of internet-based technologies to reach and influence the masses has received adequate attention from researchers (Sharma, 2020). However, a key ingredient in the effectiveness of these internet-based tools is the use of content that is produced by a specialised practice related to PPR. This thesis's understanding of the use of PPR practice as a form of professional communication is similar to Bakir et al's., (2019) understanding of organised persuasive communication (OPC)employed to produce and spread political content. OPC in the words of Bakir et al. (2019) is a label that refers to:

> all organised persuasion activities (including advertising and marketing, propaganda, public relations, organisational communication, information/influence campaigns, psychological operations, strategic communication and a whole host of other overlapping terms), is central to the exercise of power across all social spheres (Bakir et al., 2019 p.311).

OPC has been studied by scholars of public relations, promotional culture and propaganda (Bakir et al., 2019).

While OPC was used to study deception, incentivisation and coercion by Bakir et al., (2019) public relations scholars have largely looked to distance themselves from the practice of propaganda. In this thesis, the term 'propaganda' is used to refer to the strategic dissemination of information, ideas, or rumours deliberately spread to influence public opinion or promote a particular political cause or point of view. Propaganda is characterised by its intent to persuade and manipulate the audience, often by presenting biased or misleading information. This definition aligns with the understanding of propaganda as outlined by scholars such as Jowett and O'Donnell (2019), who describe it as 'the deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist.' In the context of political public relations (PPR), propaganda involves the use of various communication techniques to create and maintain a favourable image of a political party or candidate, whilst discrediting opponents. This thesis examines how PPR practitioners employ propaganda techniques to influence public opinion and achieve their political objectives.

Little knowledge exists of how industrial practices or technological infrastructure - particularly in the case of misinformation and/or disinformation - can exert control over the practice of PPR. Given that there is a dearth of knowledge on this aspect of PPR practice, it is important to understand how such practices shape the experiences of PPR practitioners who, as Sheth (1968) states, are members of

social groups that are integrated to form the professional self that in turn shapes the experiences of PPR.

2.4.4 Professional Discourse as Social Practice

The discipline termed “professional discourse” developed along with related fields of organisational discourse, workplace discourse, institutional discourse, and more recently, corporate discourse, all related to specific forms of communication (Irimiea, 2017). Public relations scholars have focused on the discourse of public relations (Edwards, 2014; Motion & Leitch, 2016; Sissons, 2015; Soares & Recuero, 2021). By examining discourse, we can better understand the role of the producers of language (political public relations practitioners/PPRPs) who are employed to add, reduce, eliminate or change particular behaviours in the interests of organisations (Sabrina et al., 2021). Discourse focuses on how languages are used in different social and cultural contexts, either talk or writing (B. Johnstone, 2018). Scholars studying the use of discourse in politics have researched discourse in public relations messages (Edwards, 2015; Soares & Recuero, 2021; Xifra & Girona, 2012), discourse in professional workplaces (Zachry & Thralls, 2017) and discourse on social media platforms (Kreis, 2017; Soares & Recuero, 2021) to show how different forms of power are exercised to shape opinion.

Despite recent calls for renewed engagement with 'politics-in-organisation' (O'Doherty & De Cock, 2019) and organisational conflict more broadly (Contu, 2019), organisation scholars have always been concerned with questions of power and politics. In fact, the discipline that today calls itself Organisation and Management Studies (OMS) often traces its origins back to thinkers likewise counted among the founders of political sociology (e.g. Adler, 2009). This shared pedigree suggests that OMS was born as a discipline dedicated at least partially to the study of political dynamics in organised settings (Clegg, Courpasson, & Phillips, 2006), which is an ambition that is reflected in the vast literature on organisational politics (Drory & Romm, 1990). This literature often emphasises the inherently contested nature of organisational identities, practices, and procedures. Here, the organisation is thus viewed as a 'political coalition' (March, 1962), and organisational politics is understood as a struggle to influence sanctioned and non-sanctioned means and ends (Mayes & Allen, 1977). As Fleming and Spicer (2007, p. 3) note: 'It is this struggle that gives organisations a sense of vitality and a life-giving political pulse.'

Recently, organisation scholars have supplemented this longstanding interest in the politics of organisation with increased concern for what might be called the organisation of politics; that is, the internal orchestration of collectives that openly engage with political issues. This has resulted in empirical work on different political organisations such as worker collectives, activist networks, and

social movements (e.g. Kokkinidis, 2015; Reedy, King, & Coupland, 2016; Reinecke, 2018). However, one type of organisation has been almost entirely neglected: the political party. Considering the fundamental role that parties play in representative democracies (Rosenblum, 2008), it is surprising how little attention has been awarded to these political behemoths within OMS. A quick search through the most well-read journals in the field shows that, save for a few exceptions (e.g. Moufahim, Reedy, & Humphreys, 2015; Husted & Plesner, 2017; Ringel, 2019; Sinha, Smolović Jones, & Carroll, 2021), hardly any studies investigate parties from a truly organisational point of view. This omission is striking considering that foundational texts on parties emphasise precisely the question of organisation as crucial to understanding representative democracy.

For instance, Michels (1915) famously characterised his 'iron law of oligarchy' as a problem of organisation rather than a problem of ideology or membership demographics. Similarly, Duverger (1954, p. xv) argued that modern parties are distinguished not by their actual policies but by the 'nature of their organisation'. This perspective is supported by recent works such as Husted (2022), who highlights the critical role of political parties as a case of organising, and Scarrow and Webb (2017), who investigate party structures. Additionally, Kosowska's research on the organisational structures of political parties and Danyi's (2017) work on the centralisation of control in campaigning provide valuable insights into the unique characteristics of political organisations.

In critical public relations scholarship, it is worth considering how public relations is a discursive practice (Berger, 2021) whose products contain hidden ideological power. The discourse produced by public relations, specifically PPR, and its subsequent impact on democratic societies and systems has been widely examined by scholars, who have offered alternative perspectives on how public relations discourses can shape democracies and their practices. Ihlen and Heath (2019), for example, showed that such research can be classified into research that backs claims of public relations discourse having the potential to promote self-governance, enhance the ability of humans to solve problems, make enlightened decisions and align interests for the common good. Alternatively, public relations discourses can also mount an assault on democratic decision-making by helping those who seek to control, in their own self-interest, discourse processes and outcomes.

Outside public relations according to Kong (2014), professional discourse studies have two areas of focus: on the one hand, applied discourse studies emerged early in the form of case studies and conversation or interaction analyses. These studies into applied discourse were carried out mainly in educational settings and focused on classroom interaction (Kong, 2014). On the other hand, studies focused entirely on what was called “professional discourse”, which emerged later (in the late 1990s), stimulated by the development of microanalyses of individual interactions (Kong, 2014). These studies

focused on the more reality-bound areas of society, where discourse is used in real-life communication to carry out activities and solve problems (Irimiea, 2017). Overall the research is focused on language use in work-related settings as is evidenced in the research on writing in professional communities, spoken discourse in a variety of professional settings, and intercultural negotiations as reviewed by Irimiea (2017). Professional discourse studies provide a framework for what activities, behaviours, routines, emotions, etc. shape professional environments or, more specifically, campaign environments. Therefore, this research assumes that all PPR content is produced within a social context.

In public relations, Motion and Weaver (2000) used Fairclough's (1992) three-dimensional approach to show how public relations text influences practice and society and vice versa. Fairclough's (1992) dimensions include the text; the discourse practices associated with the production, distribution and interpretation of texts; and the broader social practices within which these discourse practices are embedded (Fairclough, 2001). Furthermore, discourse practices and social practices combine to provide a better understanding of the micro and meso-level contexts of power. Fairclough (1992, p. 88) states that all ideological work is undertaken within broader organisational, social, economic and political contexts.

These contexts are infused with systems of thought, which he refers to as “ideologies”. Furthermore, he argues that hidden ideology is both a property of institutional structures and a property of events. This research is interested in examining the different factors in professional settings that can control and shape the experience of PPR practitioners. Furthermore, while discourse studies have been used in the context of PPR to show how the products of the practice shape professional discourse (Li Xia & Hamuddin, 2019; Pratheepwatanawong, 2017; Soares & Recuero, 2021), research examining the influence of societal structures and organisation structures on the practitioners of PPR is rare.

2.4.5 Dominant Languages and Power

Dominant languages are linked to regional ideologies (Bhattacharya, 1988) because languages are seen as carriers of ideologies. Fairclough (1992) states that the idea of a dominant language is that the whole social order of discourse is put together and held together as a hidden effect of power. Hence, an individual’s ideologies and identities are embodied in language which he/she may then use to express them. For researchers of ethnomethodology who are called to examine routine or common aspects of practice, the language or languages used by practitioners in social settings is important because, by the use of language, individuals choose to reveal aspects of their social worlds.

More importantly, it is through the use of language that their social worlds are realised. Therefore, PPR content produced by practitioners is the realisation of an individual's or group's social world.

In group settings the collision of individual realities can create conflict. Communication platforms can be an arena where the social worlds of groups collide to give rise to conflicting ideologies that are grounded in racism (Valentino et al., 2018), regional and/or religious ideologies (Soares et al., 2018). In a multilingual society where ideologies are embedded in multiple languages, social settings not only become an arena for language conflict, but they become weapons through which symbolic violence can be exercised on a group or/and individuals (Tankosić & Dovchin, 2023). Alternatively, language - more specifically, a dominant language - can also play a role in modernisation, nation-building and unification, albeit at the expense of marginalised, minority and indigenous languages (Windmiller, 1954).

The power-related focus of this research is interested in how language can become a tool for political interests that can dominate social strata (Sabrina et al., 2021) and, more importantly for this research, a mechanism that can be used to exert control over practitioners of PPR. Mehta (2019) and Palshikar (2013) reviewed the literature on political communication to show that political organisations and politicians belonging to particular regions within India use regional languages to communicate with their voters. This means that politicians used language to further regional ideologies and gain the support of their regional audiences through these interactions. Additionally, the end goal of gaining support from audiences is to access and control political offices from which further control can be exercised over local communities, who communicate using regional languages. Bhattacharya (1988) states that dominant languages exercise control over regional languages by giving access to institutions such as legal and educational establishments. Similarly, Mackey (1988) in his study of language use in Canada and India, states that languages are in conflict with each other in multilingual communities. In such communities, language conflict results in the slow but steady process by which the language of the dominant class of society is recognised as the official language of governance of that society. This gives the dominant communities language power over other languages commonly used by the minority. The result of this process is that the mainstream agenda, helped by public relations practices, hegemonically preserves the structure of society in favour of the dominant classes.

The literature above makes three important points concerning the need to investigate language in the practice of PPR. First, the fact that this research is contextually situated in a multilingual society means that practitioners use multiple languages in interactions. Therefore, in social interactions, practitioners could use dominant languages to exert control over one and another. The second is the

use of language by politicians to further ideologies, which implies that PPR practitioners either intentionally or unintentionally use symbolic violence on local communities, which could be the communities they represent. Lastly, language is a social practice (Fairclough, 1992) and so it is another cultural aspect that shapes the experiences of PPR practitioners. Research in the field of organisation studies, public relations, PPR and political communications on the above topics is thin. Nevertheless, research in the discipline of linguistics provides knowledge on how language can impact professional work settings.

The use of the rules of standard language (that is, the dominant language) - as prescribed by the dominant native-speaking society - is one of the most common ways in which language can be used in the process of othering, with the ultimate aim of dominating individuals and/or groups/communities., Barker (1981) observed this practice of othering and called on scholars to adopt the concept of new racism. In the context of linguistic racism, a dominant language is perceived by a group or community as a cultural emblem of society, which complexifies the use of language because it is linked to ideas concerned with race, religion and/or region.

In the practice of linguistic racism, a set of linguistic practices that is valued by a dominant nation state becomes a matter of sociocultural power and inequality. The use of language can also link individuals to identity (May, 2023). Linguistic racism, then, becomes stronger once the multilingual speaker directly or subtly exhibits their linguistic non-nativism, which deviates from a default standard form of the dominant centre language (Tankosić & Dovchin, 2023). These deviations in the language used can result in language shaming. There is little knowledge of how language is used in professional PPR practices and how these linguistic experiences shape professional experiences. Nevertheless, the use of linguistic racism in a formal setting may be restricted because of the sanctions that an authority can impose on such behaviour.

2.5 Summary of the Literature Review and Research Questions

The literature surveyed shows that the examination of professional cultural practices is required to investigate how power is used in professional settings. The chapter began with a survey of the literature on organisation culture and its relation to power and control. The organisation culture or more specifically, professional culture, consists of a set of values, beliefs and practices that are shared by members of that profession (for example, organisation structure and/or discourse). The power embedded in organisation culture can be observed in the values, beliefs and practices of members of the organisation. Therefore, members of the organisation play an important role in the production and reproduction of organisation culture. Furthermore, the professional practices, along with the

shared values and beliefs of the organisation, are used to exert control over the practitioners. As the literature also shows, the effects of the organisation's culture can either positively or negatively impact the experiences of the practitioners, and these experiences can shape the understanding of the practice.

Organisation culture and its use to exert power and control has received increased attention in public relations literature. Nevertheless, the focus of these studies has largely been on intersectional areas such as racism, feminism, gender and diversity. Moreover, most of the studies have looked at the effects of public relations on the wider population. However, there have been a few exceptions, with the practitioners and their experiences being the subject of research. Nevertheless, there has been no research on the public relations department and its function within political parties. This trend is consistent in research conducted in the allied fields of political communication and organisation studies. Therefore, there is little research on issues concerning how power is exercised through local cultures on public relations practices within political parties. The literature examined in this chapter highlights statuses, positions, occupational structures and dominant languages in multilingual societies as variables that can shape the experiences of practitioners and the practice of PPR.

Public relations literature shows that roles and professional positions to which status is ascribed are intertwined. Here the roles and actions of managers and practitioners within a PPR department are given attention because they shed light on how authority is used in professional settings and what experiences (either positive or negative) impact practitioners. Public relations research on roles has focused on relationships between practitioners and the use of power to influence practitioners both within and outside public relations departments. Nevertheless, researchers studying public relations practitioners in India have not looked to examine what aspects of organisational culture, unique to the geographic location of India, shape the professional lived experiences of practitioners.

In public relations, researchers have primarily examined and described organisation structures in studies concerning the dominant coalition. The term dominant coalition is a pivotal concept in mainstream public relations theory, it refers to the powerful decision-making group that advances the profession's status and allows practitioners to help organisations become more socially responsible as they overcome social challenges (Berger, 2005). Nevertheless, there is little knowledge on the experiences of practitioners who negotiate these challenges, particularly in the context of India. In this research, the literature on organisation studies has helped widen the scope of knowledge on the experiences of managerial practices among practitioners of PPR. In political communication literature, political parties have been considered as the bridge between governments and the masses. This aspect of the political party involves the representation of community interests and organisation

interests by both practitioners and managers. Yet, little is known about how the structures of a PPR department shape the experiences of practitioners. Moreover, in the context of PPR - which is a form of organised persuasive communication – it is unknown how organisation structures exert power and how that power shapes a practitioner's decision to represent issues that impact communities.

The literature review in public relations, PPR and political communications shows that the political messages have been adequately studied to show that these messages contain within them hidden ideologies. Yet, there is little knowledge of the creative process involved in the production of political content. The literature on ethnomethodology shows that in professional practices such as writing and/or technical writing, practitioners are influenced by the experiences of the environment. Research on how industrial practices and/or knowledge can exert control over the practice is limited. Additionally, knowledge about how the social experiences of practitioners impact the practitioners and the practice of PPR is also not available, particularly in the context of political practices in India.

Given this backdrop, the thesis aims to examine empirically and in detail, the current professional practice of PPR in India. To do so, the research relies on the investigation of live interactions. By employing the method described in the next chapter, this study probably becomes the only one of its type to be conducted on the Indian subcontinent. The research questions of this study are:

RQ1 How do the professional lived experiences of PPR practitioners influence the political messages they produce?

RQ2 How in practice do interactions of practitioners lead to decision-making?

RQ3 How do PPR practitioners represent their publics in interactions amongst themselves and the politicians they serve?

Chapter Three

Research Methodology

3.0 An Overview

This research is interested in the lived experiences of political public relations (PPR) practitioners. More specifically, it focuses on how power embedded in professional organisation culture shapes experiences of domination and/or resistance in Indian PPR practice. The chapter outlines the methodological approach used to answer the research questions outlined in the previous chapter concerning lived experiences and power. The section below describes the research design and is followed by the third section, which illustrates how the researcher prepared for fieldwork by describing the steps taken in approaching participants. Following this, the analytical framework is described with sections on how critical discourse studies and conversation analysis are used to analyse data. The fourth section discusses the data-gathering methods, with sub-sections on video ethnography, participant observations, and unstructured interviews. The fifth section previews how data is presented in this thesis. This is followed by the penultimate part of the chapter which debates aspects concerning the validity and reliability of the findings, and then the conclusion.

3.1 A Qualitative Approach

The qualitative approach in this research emerged from the complex and subjective nature of the study's objective, which includes describing professional experiences, shared practices and meanings of a professional group within a professional workspace such as PPR. The factors influencing experiences, practices and meanings are subjective. They depend on other factors such as environment or context that differ from practitioner to practitioner, which makes this investigation complex. As Sissons (2014) showed, a qualitative research design is adequate to academically investigate such complexities within PPR practice.

Another reason for selecting a qualitative research design is the call by critical scholars Edwards (2009), L'Etang (2011), L'Etang and Pieczka (2006) and Roper (2005) among others (Daymon & Hodges, 2009; Fawkes, 2018; Hodges, 2006; D. Jackson & Moloney, 2016) for more ethnographic research in public relations. More recently Madden and Levenshus (2021) also called on researchers to conduct more ethnographic research concerned with individuals occupying public offices. They used a "rare" ethnographic lens to examine a political training program's efforts to develop women's leadership communication as a public relations process. The opportunity to add knowledge from a

methodological perspective such as ethnography is highlighted by L'Etang et al. (2012). Since the time of Sriramesh's (1992) research on public relations in India and Sriramesh's (2013) study on public relations in South India, the number of those choosing to research PPR or public relations through ethnographic methods has been limited (Sahoo & Nayak, 2022).

Lastly, this thesis is situated within the critical paradigm of public relations because it is concerned with power in PPR practice. As the previous chapter showed, power is a part of professional PPR culture that can be analysed qualitatively. Additionally, the choice to employ qualitative methods contributes to generating new perspectives in areas of knowledge such as political communication which are dominated by quantitative approaches (Robinson, 2019). Therefore, the use of a qualitative research design is informed by scholarship and deemed suitable to fulfil the aims of this research.

3.1.1 Research Generalisations and Comparisons

In this research, organisation culture and interpersonal communication are emphasised because PPR practice is made possible by context-dependent relationships and practices between practitioners and other groups. Researchers L'Etang et al. (2012) and Sissons (2014) state that qualitative designs assume human beings and the social world cannot be studied as if they are constant and unchanging. Heracleous (2004) shows that interpretivist approaches can help understand an organisation's circuit of culture, which explains how discourses are produced and reproduced by communication practitioners employed by the organisation.

Heracleous (2004) also states that participants in all interactions have a purpose and a reason for taking part in a conversation through which they either dominate or resist power (Kravčenko, 2023). Hence, focussing on conversations was essential to gain insights into intentions, situations and practices, as well as the context of their actions and interactions, which makes generalisation challenging. Theunissen and Sissons (2018) argue that while broad generalisations cannot be made, some generalisations can be made in research sharing similar contexts. Although this research does not aim to generalise research findings, the findings can make generalisations to areas where parallels exist.

On the topic of research generalisation Ramlo (2023) states that generalisability represents the ability to expand a study's findings beyond the specific set of subjects and the setting used within that study. Thus, research findings can be classified as specific to a set of participants/setting and can then be expanded to apply to untested persons or settings (generalisation). Earlier, Williams (2000) identified three types of generalisations that researchers can make. These are, first, total generalisations, defined as deterministic laws or axioms. Secondly, statistical generalisations refer to the probability of

a situation or feature occurring that can be calculated from its instances within a sample representative of the population. Thirdly, moderatum generalisations refer to aspects of a case that are seen as illustrative of a more widely occurring situation or characteristic. Moreover, Williams (2000) mentions that moderatum generalisations can be made from a small number of cases to a larger unknown number of cases, as long as there is categorical equivalence and the cases operate in a similar socio-cultural context. While interpretive research does not aim to make total or statistical generalisations (Williams, 2020), it can make moderatum generalisations because it observes routine aspects of practice that are similarly observed in other parts of the world, with similar categorical equivalence and similar socio-cultural contexts (Sissons, 2014).

Generalisations made about human experiences can often be a challenge to researchers because of differing contexts, backgrounds and/or circumstances, and hence making generalisations to categorise human experiences can be unwarranted. Therefore, moderatum generalisations are made only after considering every researcher's background and disciplinary roots (Sissons, 2014). In this case, the researcher's prior experience of partaking in two PPR campaigns and his three years of teaching public relations in India gave the researcher the necessary disciplinary roots and deontological background to conduct this study. Additionally, L'Etang's (2013) observation that public relations is not an ideologically neutral management technocracy, means that PPR and its products - as Wiggins (2019) showed - is certainly not ideologically neutral. Here, the researcher's cultural backgrounds and roots provide specific ideological perspectives, which help explain the cultural and ideological aspects observed in this research.

This study is situated in India, where the professionalisation of communication practices surrounding elections is increasing (Sharma, 2020). The presence of similar PPR departments in political organisations having the same political arrangements and engaging in identical activities engenders the possibility of making generalisations. Additionally, cultural aspects of organisational culture, such as organisation structures, regulated practices by managers, regularised practices of producing PPR content by the departments, and language use, are common aspects of professional practices. More importantly, they are routine everyday practices that go unnoticed in professional life.

3.1.2 Designing the Research

Historically, research on professionals in organisations is limited because researchers tend to rely on empirical materials that are removed from the flow of real-time or live conduct within organisations (Llewellyn & Hindmarsh, 2010). Given that this research is concerned with professionals, their practices, reasoning, interpretations and descriptions of events, the choice to analyse spoken

interactions and texts produced by PPR practice was logical. Thus, interactions are the form of data collected and analysed in this research. Within anthropology and sociology, Goffman (1964) and Gumperz (1982) have investigated spoken interactions, along with Clifford Geertz (1973). The goal of these investigations was to understand the participants' lived experiences by using what they called "thick descriptions", a term coined by Geertz to describe a way of providing cultural context and meaning that people place on actions, words, things, etc. Thick descriptions provide enough context so that a person outside the culture can make meaning of the behaviour. Furthermore, thick descriptions also help in the building and understanding of culture. In this thesis, to provide a thick description, every interaction is introduced by two sections that are titled "the background of the interaction" and "setting the scene", which are subsections that provide the presented interactions with overall context.

Within the interpretative research tradition, Gumperz (2001) observed that participants involved in interactions relied on contextual knowledge to understand the communicative intent of those involved. This scenario could include constructing situations or intertextually remembering uses of expressions to make sense of the interaction and to find solutions to interpreting interactions. Hence, this research engaged with the situated practises of PPR professionals by employing ethnographic procedures.

3.1.3 Critical Discourse Studies: A Qualitative Research Approach to Examining Power

Critical Discourse Studies (CDS) is a popular method used to examine the use of power in communication research (Smith & Sheyholislami, 2022). It helps researchers analyse oral interactions and to evaluate the discursive construction of power. Here, CDS was used to analyse spoken interactions along with other aspects of the practice such as postures, office space, gender labels and power labels such as "Sir" and "Madam". CDS scholars (Fairclough, 1995; Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018; Machin & Mayr, 2012) are concerned with how practitioners in interactions hide agency and normalise the actions of people in power.

CDS developed historically out of critical linguistics (Smith & Sheyholislami, 2022). It emphasises the role of ideology and power relations in the use of language (Fowler, 1986), which is a mechanism through which public relations practitioners influence society (L'Etang & Pieczka, 2006). Additionally, Flowerdew and Richardson (2018) state that CDS relates theories of language to theories of society, for example, theories of social capital (Bourdieu, 1986). In the CDS framework, individuals may exercise power through interactions (as observed in this study). This is done within the constraints of social conventions, ideologies and power relations. At the same time, interactions which use language

are considered an essential component in the creation of knowledge and meaning (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018). Hence, CDS is an approach that examines different aspects of power.

In this research, the questions are "How"' questions. First, how do the professional lived experiences of PPRPs in India influence the political messages they produce? Second, how in practice do interactions lead to decision-making? And lastly, how do PPR practitioners represent targeted publics in interactions between themselves and their clients? How interactions between practitioners influence professional practice and lead to decision-making are questions that can be answered by utilizing a CDS approach. According to Machin and Mayr (2012), CDS helps explain questions related to who does what to whom and how while analysing an institution or an organisation. By doing so, it exposes power structures that influence different levels of society. Wodak and Meyer (2016) focus on how power relations at these different levels are exercised and negotiated in discourse. Several researchers have since used critical discourse studies to examine power in several fields, as H. Wang's (2023) systematic review of research using critical discourse studies has shown.

3.2 Data Gathering

In the recent past, there has been an increasing trend in the use of video cameras in qualitative research (Thunberg & Arnell, 2022). Norris (2011) and Sissons (2014) recognised that a recording device such as a camera helps collect rich data. Nevertheless, a single type of data, on its own, using a camera cannot draw an entire picture. Hence, interviews as an additional data-gathering method were employed, along with observations. The nonverbal and verbal cues gathered by video ethnography used in this research had weaknesses, and so a collection of various forms of data allowed triangulation (Norris, 2011). Triangulation in qualitative research is a methodological approach that involves the use of multiple methods or data sources to validate or corroborate the findings and identify patterns in the data (Matu & Perez-Johnston, 2023). This involves collecting and analyzing data from different sources or methods, such as interviews, ethnographic observations, and documents, to ensure the accuracy and reliability of the research (Sissons, 2021). The audio-video camera used in this research, along with interviews, ensured the triangulation of data, which enabled this study to gather rich data.

3.2.1 Preparing for Fieldwork

Most ethnographic researchers (Matu & Perez-Johnston, 2023; Chauchard, 2017; Middleton, 2020; Sissons, 2021) use interviews, documentation and field notes alongside newer tools, as they combine data-gathering methods to enable a fuller analysis. Theunissen and Sissons (2018) studied the relationship between public relations and journalism practitioners by gathering data on videotape

during ethnographic-style fieldwork to allow a fuller analysis of the power structures and to show cooperation between different groups of communication practitioners. Earlier, ethnographic fieldwork was designed to shed light on an "ecology" (Gumperz, 2001, p.221) which significantly affects the course of an interaction. The term "communicative ecology" refers to the context in which communication processes occur. Therefore, research using interactions must be made ecologically valid by including context as a part of the system(s) under investigation, instead of treating context as a stable background variable outside the system. Here the research replicates Sissons's (2021) Ethnographic Communication Analysis method which involves keeping field notes along with videotaped ethnographic-style fieldwork and interviews to provide the analysis with background and context.

The research involved observations over a period of time in the communication departments of a political organisation before the 2019 Indian general elections (Pre-Election Cycle). The choice to gather data before the Indian general election was premeditated because of the increase in PPR activities before an election, and the subsequent employment of practitioners to organise and execute PPR campaigns on behalf of political clients. Data was gathered from two PPR departments of a political party with a pan-India presence. One department was located in the northeastern state of Tripura and the other in the southern state of Karnataka. Data collection began in February 2019 and continued up to February 2020, a total of 56 hours, 6 hours in Tripura and 50 hours in Karnataka were spent in gathering the multimodal data analysed in this research. The fieldwork was conducted during the period leading up to and following the 2019 Indian general elections, which were held in seven phases from 11 April to 19 May 2019, with results declared on 23 May 2019. Specifically, the researcher was present in the political offices in Karnataka from 4th to 17th February 2019 and in Tripura from 4th to 8th March 2019, covering the pre-election phase

However, not all interactions could be captured on camera either because the researcher could not be present at different locations at the same time and/or the researcher was not allowed to film sensitive interactions. This limitation meant that investigating some aspects of the practice required input from other targeted publics such as journalists and corporate public relations practitioners. Hence, interviews were conducted with four political journalists, six public relations practitioners working in public relations agencies with corporate clients, and three public relations strategists who provided directions to the managers of the political public relations departments, in order to explain and understand the deep background of specific situations and/or actions of the participants that were related to the analysis. This brought the total number of interviews conducted outside the video ethnography to thirteen.

3.2.2 Gaining Ethical Approval and Approaching Participants

Ethical guidelines were followed during data collection. An ethics application was tabled in July 2018 and ethical approval (application number 18/298) was received in August 2018. Following this, politicians, members of political parties, public relations agencies and a few journalists were approached in accord with the criteria explained in section 3.2.3 (sampling), and the research was explained to them. The choice of data gathering methods to be employed, in particular the use of video recording devices to gather video ethnographic data, brought with it a few challenges. For example, the presence of a camera and the recording of participants sparked concerns among decision-makers regarding their organisation's privacy and security. These challenges are thoroughly described in section 3.2.4.1 "video ethnography".

Access to political spheres is usually restricted because political parties and governments are fearful of making known their inner workings, tactics and strategies to the broader public (Charles et al., 2020). Therefore, initially, the members of the political party were hesitant to participate in the research. However, in the meetings, the concerns of the department heads were addressed, and access to the participants was gained.

3.2.2.1 Approaching Participants for Video Ethnographic Observations

Once the organisation agreed to participate in the study and to recruit participants, meetings were set up with the managers of two communication teams. In these, the research was explained to them and access to the practitioners was sought. In addition, the contact details of the practitioners were collected and a schedule for the video ethnographic observations was created. The participants were then sent a soft copy of the participant information sheet, consent form and video release form. On the day of the scheduled video ethnographic observations, the participants were given a hard copy of the above-mentioned information and consent forms thereby following the protocol set up in the ethics application.

The process of negotiations carried out in this study to gain access to PPRPs is worth noting. While interviews are a popular data-gathering method (Thunberg & Arnell, 2022), ethnographers have faced difficulties when studying organisations (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Domingo, 2011; Middleton, 2020; Saville-Troike, 2003; Sissons, 2014, 2016; Theunissen & Sissons, 2018; Willig, 2013). A few studies have documented the challenges of gaining access to communication departments and have made note of the reluctance on the part of these departments to grant access to practitioners.

Stokes (2021) noted that professional practitioners were wary of academics, as they tended to believe professional practices were normal, routine work and, hence, not subjects for academic scrutiny. The video ethnographic data gathering process was a further challenge because it aimed to record professional practices on video. Earlier, Sissons (2014) studied newsrooms and public relations departments using the video-ethnographic method, and she acknowledged that the idea could draw adverse reactions. As was expected, initially in this research, the idea received unfavourable reactions from members associated with public relations and PPR practice.

A top-down approach (upper-level to lower-level) to recruit participants was used and a meeting with a prominent member of the party was scheduled by the researcher, in which access to the participants was sought. The negotiations to recruit participants were an ongoing process and took weeks because politicians were occupied with the Indian elections in early 2019. Nevertheless, it must be stressed that once access was agreed, all departments of the political organisation were open and welcoming.

3.2.2.2 Approaching Participants for Interviews

In comparison to gaining access to participants for video ethnographic observations, access to journalists and public relations practitioners for interviewing was considerably easier. The four journalists who participated were approached first indirectly through mutual contacts before being contacted directly. After the first contact, a copy of the information sheet and the consent form were emailed to them, and an interview was scheduled a week or two later. A similar approach was followed in order to schedule interviews with the six practitioners practising in public relations agencies.

3.2.3 Sampling Methods

The sampling method is of relevance to any research because it provides information concerning how participants of the study were selected. This study employed the use of purposive and convenience sampling methods (Campbell et al., 2020), as discussed below. The criterion for sample selection was to represent those communication practitioners who held - or in the past had held - professional positions in political communication departments. Hence, communication practitioners employed by the participating political organisation were approached to participate in the study.

Suri (2011) claimed that purposeful sampling is the identification and selection of highly informative participants relevant to the purpose of the study. More importantly, these individuals carry with them the necessary knowledge, experience and expertise about the phenomenon of interest (Suri, 2011). In

this instance, the heads of communication departments were primarily approached because they managed communication practitioners who provided public relations services for a national-level political organisation.

The departments in the research were approached because they belonged to the political party that had agreed to be a part of the study. The participation of the party was made possible through a reference from a senior leader of the political party, who was introduced to the researcher by a third party. Thereby, the research also used convenience sampling, which is when a researcher selects participants who are easily accessible (Flick, 2018). In this case, the researcher recruited practitioners from the organisation who agreed to participate and its employees who similarly consented to participate in the study. Therefore, a combination of purposive and convenience sampling methods was used to recruit participants in this study.

In research concerning organisations, while convenience sampling was most frequently used, the purposive sampling approach was used rarely (Zickar & Keith, 2023). Additionally, Zickar and Keith (2023) in their study of the different types of sampling methods used in organisation research mention that the challenge with convenience sampling is that it is unclear to what population the sample can be compared. Similarly, on purposive sampling, they state that the disadvantage is the difficulty in determining the populations to which these samples can generalise (Zickar & Keith, 2023). Another challenge for researchers who use purposive sampling is the accurate identification of individuals that fit the purpose of the study. In this research, one of the challenges related to purposive sampling was that some practitioners identified themselves as communication specialists, designers and/or activists. However, they were selected because they worked in teams such as the media relations and social media teams of the political party. Furthermore, they engaged in the public relations activities of the political organisation. The challenges concerning generalisations, validations and credibility in purposive sampling are discussed in section 3.6.

3.2.4 Ethnography as a Method of Data Gathering

The use of ethnographic methods was deemed most appropriate for the exploration of the research questions because as stated, it enables first-hand observations of professional practice and culture. Pugh and Mosseri (2023) state that there is a flurry of scholarship that has arisen around contemporary practices of ethnography, seeking to reform and to address a perceived credibility crisis. They argued that most of these proposals reflect a core misunderstanding of what is valuable about ethnography (Pugh & Mosseri, 2023). For this research, the use of ethnography was to answer questions concerning the professional culture of PPR practice and the professional lived experiences

of practitioners in PPR. In this regard Pugh and Mosseri (2023) argue that ethnography is about understanding participants' beliefs holistically, to help understand the work people do to cope with or resolve everyday tensions produced by a group's structure and culture. Employing ethnography enabled the researcher to focus on how PPR practitioners interacted with their peers and other relevant people, and how they conducted themselves in specific situations. Therefore, ethnography helped add knowledge to how hierarchies, relationships, ideologies, language and attitudes of participants shaped PPR practice.

Ethnography takes the researcher out of their environment and into the environment of the practitioners, who are the focus of this study (Sissons, 2014). Therefore, ethnography requires intensive periods of fieldwork to allow the researcher time to familiarise themselves with the people and the environment (Atkinson & Hammersley, 1994; Charles et al., 2020). During fieldwork, the researcher spent an initial twelve hours (two days) in the public relations office, during which no video ethnographic data was collected. This was done to help him familiarise himself with the practitioners and the contextual environment. Additionally, the time spent in familiarisation helped practitioners get comfortable with the researcher and the ethnographic tools which include field notes, a camera and an audio recorder. However, because ethnography is time-consuming, the number of cases in the analysis is small. However, both Middleton (2020)and Sissons (2014) selected a small number of cases to describe and explain similar interpretative accounts of the professional lives of public relations practitioners and journalists.

3.2.4.1 Video Ethnography

The objective of combining data gathering techniques was to obtain rich data that provides an in-depth understanding of PPR. This research relied on technological devices to facilitate the gathering of rich data. Dufon's (2002) use of video recording devices gave researchers an advantage by increasing the richness of the data. These video-recording devices are now increasingly being used in research, particularly by researchers examining the learning practices of students (Ataş & Sağın-Şimşek, 2021; B. Gold & Windscheid, 2020). The advantage of video-recorded ethnographic data is that it provides the data analysis with accurate verbal and non-verbal records which, as Sissons (2014) points out, could be replayed as often as needed during the data analysis period.

The advantage of using a camera to collect non-verbal data was that video recording enabled the documentation of intricate details of the setting and of the activities of participants engaged in routine practice (Koç et al., 2021). It also enabled the accurate identification of who was speaking to whom and provided non-verbal information such as gaze, posture, proxemics, and gestures.

Additionally, the non-verbal data provided information on the quality of the professional interactions by enabling the analysis of non-verbal cues such as intensity of attention, which indicated a participant's level of comfort and involvement in professional and group interactions, thereby providing this research with excellent multimodal data for analysis. The term multimodal refers to the use of multiple modes or forms of communication or expression to convey information. This can include spoken language, nonverbal signs, gestures and actions as forms of expressions (Norris, 2011).

Dufon (2002) accepted that video can only capture what is observable through the lens, and at times its field of view is limited. During the collection of video data, the participants' use of computers to communicate meant that the camera could not capture that participant's interaction with the screen. Moreover, the layout of the professional space at times made it difficult for the camera to record the nonverbal expressions of other members involved in the interaction. In such situations, when possible the use of a second camera was employed to capture aspects of screen-related professional work and screen-related interactions. Unfortunately, not all interactions could be captured thus.

Another drawback was that video data does not explain whether the video recorded is a typical everyday interaction, nor can it disclose the thoughts or opinions of the participants (Sissons, 2014). Hence, clarifications and explanations were sought from participants whenever possible. However, that again was not always possible because participants were either busy performing professional tasks or had entered another interaction soon after. However, the fact that video data could be played back to the participant in question to remind them of particular events before asking about their feelings and thoughts at the time, proved useful in filling gaps and understanding situations and behavioural choices. In addition, the video allowed (with permission of the participant) the publication of visual transcripts of interactions alongside the published interpretations. These interpretations of the interactions are open to academic scrutiny. As for the opinions and thoughts of participants, such knowledge can only be gathered over time in the field. In terms of professional filming conventions, the researcher's Masters in Communication had contained four practical courses on videography, which gave the researcher some experience in operating handheld cameras.

The critical incidents filmed in this research were the result of filming entire events or sequences. Dufon (2002) advocated filming such sequences or entire events to determine the structure or organisation of an event. Furthermore, she filmed whole events because it provided context for interpretations, which is important in studies that focus on discourse. The interactions filmed were recorded as a whole to provide the researcher with opportunities to make interpretations as a result of the analysis of the interactions. So, for example, in the event of an interaction between three people, filming started minutes before the members arrived and did not stop until the interaction

ended. Moreover, in accord with Sissons' (2014) recommendation concerning the setting captured by the video camera, neither the setting nor participants should be manipulated for the camera. Therefore, during the collection, analysis, and presentation of the data, neither the settings nor the participants were manipulated to capture the natural context.

Ethnographic researchers make use of field notes (Middleton, 2020), which refer to qualitative notes recorded by scientists or researchers in the course of field research to help make sense of observations (Adair & Kurban, 2019). In this study, field notes were recorded at certain times of the day and those field notes provided context for filmed behaviour and helped fill in the blanks about interactions and professional practices that happened elsewhere. Over and above that, during fieldwork, sometimes participants requested that the camera be turned off. This request was usually made when there were discussions on sensitive topics or incidental participants. An incidental participant is a person who engaged by accident with the participant during the ethnographic fieldwork. If incidental participants did not permit videography, field notes were taken to help record events that the informants were unwilling to share or discuss.

3.2.4.2 Observer as a Participant

The observer as a participant in this research meant that those taking part were aware that the researcher was observing their professional lives. Gold (1958) categorised participation by researchers using observations into four types. These four types included the complete participant, the participant as an observer, the complete observer, and the observer as participant. In the complete participant scenario, the participants are unaware that there is a researcher in their midst, and in the participant as an observer, the researcher lives and takes part in the community, and the participants are aware of the researcher's intentions and roles. In the complete observer scenario, the researcher is a detached observer. Here, the researcher is neither seen nor noticed by the group or participants studied. whereas in the observer as participant, the community is aware of the researcher’s presence, but the researcher is observing rather than participating.

As a researcher with previous experience in the field of Political Public Relations (PPR), my position in this study was both an insider and an outsider. My prior work in election campaigns and as a public relations lecturer provided me with a deep understanding of the professional practices and challenges faced by PPR practitioners. However, this also necessitated a rigorous approach to reflexivity so that potential biases and expectations were managed. Throughout the research process, I engaged in continuous self-reflection by repeatedly watching the video recordings of the participants and presenting my observations for supervisory feedback. This allowed me to critically examine my

observations and interpretations. Additionally, I conducted feedback sessions with participants to discuss the analysis and findings, ensuring that my interpretations were validated by the participants and that potential biases were mitigated

While scholars Dodds (2020) and Waldenström (2019) used the participant-as-observer method because it enabled them to learn about the community's practices, other researchers such as Middleton (2020) and Kawulich (2005) identified that in the observer-as-participant situation, the primary role of the researcher was to gather data while participants are aware of the researcher's intention of observing professional activities. After careful consideration of the different types of observation stances, this study employed the observer as participant stance because it enabled the researcher to focus on his observations. Additionally, his cultural and professional background helped him generate an understanding of professional activities. The chosen approach also helped create a rapport with participants, allowing relationships to be built. These relationships created a sense of trust, which allowed the participants to share details of the practice through, among other things, interviews.

3.2.5 Interviews

Interviewing as a method has been commonly employed in addition to video ethnography (Pugh & Mosseri, 2023). This section discusses the rationale behind this methodological choice of employing two types of interviewing methods. Additionally, it describes how the researcher used interviews as a data-gathering method.

3.2.5.1 Semi-structured Interviews

The interviews were conducted as open-ended sociolinguistic interviews that should be viewed and carried out as conversational encounters (Wood & Kroger, 2000). The semi-structured interviews (M. Shamir et al., 2019) were conducted in this study in familiar settings and used broad themes as a guide instead of a set of questions. Saville-Troike (2003) recommends that interviews should be loosely structured, with questions inserted that have no predetermined answers and at natural points in the conversation. This method of interviewing is considered appropriate for collecting data concerning communication within a community or professional group (Saville-Troike, 2008). Hence, the content of the interview focussed on themes suggested by the research questions and related to the observations that had been made.

Additionally, the semi-structured interviews were conducted in the offices of the practitioners. Adeoye-Olatunde and Olenik (2021) claim that in-person interviews give researchers the ability to see and take note of participants' non-verbal reactions. They also mention that it may not be feasible to

do in-person studies for reasons such as study sites being too spread-out, lack of access to an appropriate (e.g. private) location in which to conduct interviews, or difficulty in the participant population travelling to the interview location.

This study employed the use of purposive and convenience sampling methods (Campbell et al., 2020), as discussed below. In total, thirteen semi-structured interviews were conducted outside the video ethnography: four with political journalists, six with corporate public relations practitioners, and three with public relations strategists. The interviews were used to explain specific parts of the practice. For example, the educational background of political consultants and their relationship with public relations practitioners (chapter 8). The feedback sessions and further interviews ensured that the analysis was validated by the participants and that potential biases were mitigated. This decision was made to maintain a focused scope for this research while allowing for a broader exploration of related topics in subsequent studies.

3.2.5.2 Unstructured Interviews

Another type of interview method employed in this research in addition to the semi-structured interview was the unstructured interview (Low, 2019). The reason behind the use of unstructured interviews as a method was that it helped enrich the data by having the participants (those who consented to participate in video ethnography) offer their perspectives on certain aspects of the practices that had been video-ed. Additionally, certain practices that could not be observed through video ethnography because they were happening elsewhere were investigated through interviews with the participants. This provided the observations with information about why certain tasks were performed and at whose behest.

The key to ethnographic interviews is that they flow like a conversation/discussion and so there should be no pre-set questions (Clair, 2003). This style of interviewing was influenced by Minichiello et al. (2008), who showed that the style offered greater flexibility in comparison to survey-style interviews (Pugh & Mosseri, 2023). Nevertheless, Minichiello et al. (2008) warned researchers that this interview style reduces statistical comparability. Because statistical comparability is not the primary objective of this research, interviews were employed to provide valid explanations of the participants' perceptions and construction of professional practice.

For these reasons, interviews are considered a feasible and suitable data collection method when combined with video-ethnographic and participant observation. The following section describes how the data gathered by these methods were analysed. The data included not only verbal communication but also non-verbal communication. Therefore, the ethnographic communication

analysis (ECA) framework developed by Sissons (2021) was used to allow for the interpretation of rich data.

3.3 Data Analysis

The systematic arrangement and presentation of information from the data followed the participant centered approach prescribed by Minichiello et al. (2008) to facilitate the finding of meaning in the data collected. The participant-centered approach emphasised the importance of being responsive to the participants' perspectives and experiences, allowing their insights to guide the direction of the research. Gumperz (2001) stressed the importance of selecting incidents that could be considered representative for analysis. The aim of choosing representative samples helps the discovery of naturally organised interactions containing empirical evidence to confirm or disconfirm a particular phenomenon, against which assumptions appearing elsewhere could be tested. Preliminary interrogations, as prescribed by Gitlin (2003), Middleton (2020) and Sissons (2014; 2015; 2021) were carried out to select relevant strips of data. These selected strips are taken from the interactions recorded on video camera that are analysed in the following chapters.

3.3.1 Using Self-reflection to Generate Knowledge

The use of self-reflection is based on the premise that self-reflection helps produce knowledge about the phenomenon explored (Naples & Sachs, 2009). The reflexive process refers to the practice by which researchers examine their observations and their interactions in a reflective mode. The use of video ethnography and interviewing facilitated the process of reflexive engagement with the participants in this research. The aim was to engage with PPRPs and to create and enhance a thick description of their practice. The thick descriptions were fed back to practitioners for comment in order to maintain an accurate analysis.

In addition to reflecting on the participants' experiences, I also critically examined my own role and potential biases as a researcher. Given my previous experience in PPR, I set aside my prior knowledge and assumptions to focus on the participants' perspectives. The feedback sessions with participants served as a form of bracketing, as they allowed me to discuss the analysis and findings with the participants, ensuring that my experiences did not unduly influence the research outcomes. By incorporating these reflexive practices, I aimed to produce a more nuanced and credible analysis of the PPR practitioners' professional lives

The use of feedback along with the interviews facilitated the process of story-telling (Boje & Rosile, 2020) which, as DeMaris (2004) pointed out, is the process of meaning-making. Giddens (1984) recognised that social actors’ knowledge is not incidental but integral to the systems and structures in

which they are embedded. In other words, the research analyses were informed by the responses of participating practitioners because they shared their views and opinions about their professional environment. At the same time, the interviews enabled participants to make sense of their own experiences by selecting constitutive details of experience, reflecting on these experiences, giving them order and thereby making sense of them.

3.3.2 Selecting the Data

The technique used for the selection of strips as mentioned earlier is known as the "critical incident technique" (CIT). CIT is a set of procedures used for collecting direct observations of human behaviour that have critical significance and meet methodically defined criteria (Flanagan, 1954). In this research, the technique was used as a procedure to select data meant for analysis. Flanagan (1954) recognises that CIT does not consist of a rigid set of rules governing data collection. Instead, it is a flexible set of principles, modified and adapted to meet the requirements of analysing professional practice. Therefore, CIT provides a technique through which data concerning professional behaviour can be selected for analysis.

To identify an incident as an observable human activity, it has to be sufficiently complete. It must have the capacity to help the drawing of inferences and making of predictions about the person performing the act (Flanagan, 1954). Additionally, Flanagan (1954) qualifies interactions as critical only when an observer sees the event as having a clear purpose and a definite consequence that makes its effect obvious. However, Viergever (2019) has examined the use of CIT in healthcare research and states that CIT is limited in the degree to which it engages with participants' broader lives and psychological and sociological backgrounds, and that sometimes such information is needed to enrich the findings of a study. Additionally, Keatinge's (2002) earlier use of CIT in researching nurses' behaviours shows that different contexts and different research questions raise challenges in locating what is considered ordinary and critical. In the current instance, while the description of the social and contextual background is provided before every analysis, the larger challenge was to understand what made an incident critical and ordinary.

In the context of this research and within the ECA approach (Sissons, 2021), for an incident to be classified as critical it must conform to three criteria:

1 An entire event must be captured (Flanagan, 1954).

2 It must represent a significant aspect of professional PPR practice.

3 The aspect of practice that it showcases must be observed routinely in the data (Sissons, 2021).

Following these three criteria, the critical incidents selected from the data were chosen.

3.3.3 Ethnographic Communication Analysis

The ECA framework that was employed to analyse data is a little under a decade old, and a few studies interested in professional communication practices have used the framework (Middleton, 2020; Sissons, 2015; Theunissen & Sissons, 2018). The biggest challenges in employing the ECA framework are the extended periods of fieldwork, the video recording of the professional lives of participants, and the use of multiple strategies to analyse the data gathered. These empirical processes are necessary to operationalise the ECA framework. This section describes how both verbal and non-verbal data were analysed. The communication modes analysed include verbal communication, namely speech (Jucker, 1986; Schegloff et al., 1977), and non-verbal communication such as posture, proximity (Goffman, 1964; Norris, 2004; Sissons, 2014), gaze (Goffman, 1964; Kendon, 1967) and gestures (McNeill, 2006).The method of analysis integrates the verbal and non-verbal actions of social actors, their interactions with professional tools (such as mobile phones and computers) and with their environments. The latter was necessary because there were occasions when several modes of communication had to come together before the full meaning of the interaction could be understood.

3.3.3.1 Conversation Analysis

Conversation analysis (CA) (Jucker, 1986; Schegloff et al., 1977) was employed to understand how participants organise their conversations with each other. The process of analysing data through CA began with transcribing the audio and video data and, from there, creating transcripts to help analyse aspects of conversations such as pauses, laughter, turns, etc. and to help readers understand the various aspects of speech (see Figure 1). The transcripts contain within them conversational codes which help identify pauses, overlapping talk, laughter, words that were stressed or lengthened, loud or soft, specific discourse items such as fillers, markers (So, Oh,) and repairs (Brennan & Schober, 2001; Schegloff, 2010). Therefore, the codes (markings) helped preserve several unique characteristics of conversations between participants.

Following the analysis of conversations, non-verbal cues such as posture and proximity (Goffman, 1964; Norris, 2004; Sissons, 2014), gaze (Goffman, 1964; Kendon, 1967) and gestures (McNeill, 2006) were analysed within the ECA framework. To systematically work with video data and ensure a thick analysis of the data, ECA recommends several steps. The first step was to conduct a mapping exercise which involved going through the data to map out specific parts from interactions through which professional practice and behaviour could be explained. Mapping the data led to the identification of

four themes that form the basis of analysis. The Four themes that emerged were power and control between colleagues, power and control through structures (managers), power and control through discourse, and power and control through regional languages. These themes were identified as their occurrence was routinely observed. This was done manually after reviewing the video ethnographic footage and field notes.

The primary objective of ECA was to explain the generic mechanisms that recurrently organise professional interactions.

3.3.3.2 Analysing Multimodal Data

Tomkins (1963) represents research on early writers who created awareness of the social significance of gaze direction. However, before Tomkins's (1963) study, Simmel (1920) demonstrated that gaze is part of an interaction where two or more persons enter a relationship with one another when they direct their gaze towards each other. Studies on gaze by scholars Adams and Kleck (2003), Gibson and Pick (1963), Kendon (1967) and McNeill (2006) show that, historically, research on gaze was concerned with the relation between habits of looking and other characteristics of the looker, or with manipulating participant reactions. However since then, research on gaze has shown it can serve as a signal to demonstrate aspects of non-verbal communication, such as paying attention (Schechtman & Lavie, 2013). ECA took into account Goffman's (1964) point of view on gaze and attempted to analyse gaze within ongoing social interactions (Sissons, 2021).

Gestures are referred to as movements of the body or parts of the body to express thoughts or feelings (McNeill, 2019). In the context of gestures, a degree of voluntarism is implied to decide what constitutes a gesture. On the one hand, an explosion of laughter, as Ruch et al. (2019) noticed, may have different meanings, such as joy, a display of power, or sarcasm. On the other hand, someone making a 'thumbs-up' (which is an iconic gesture) is gesticulating while speaking and using sign language in a sense that is commonly understood by specific cultures (Archer, 1997). Therefore, different meanings are attached to gestures depending on their context. Experimental work was conducted by Goffman (1964) and Kendon (1997) on non-standardised gestures, which are spontaneous gestures produced when speakers talk to each other and which convey little or no information to recipients (McNeill, 2019). Speakers also use topic gestures, which are gestures that depict some aspect of the topical content of the conversation, for example, the size of an object. Other studies conducted by McNeill (2019) and Norris (2011) indicate that participants in interactions gain information from gestures of this type.

3.4 Presenting the Interaction

The interactions in the following chapters are formatted as tables, with each table labelled as a figure. The figures present a series of face-to-face interactions that took place during data collection and they document critical incidents. The language used in the interactions is Kannada, often mixed with Hindi and English. This mixing of languages has been constantly observed by scholars such as Auer (2013) and Farah and Rao (2021) in multilingual societies and is referred to as code-switching. Figure 1 shows an example of the format in which interactions are presented in the following chapters.

Figure 1

Presenting data: An example transcript

Pearl	**Kannada Script**	ಮಧ್ ಕೋಥಿಯ ನೀನು ನಾನು ಅದು	 Image 0.1
	English Script	twe:ets mad:h ko:thiya: na:nu, a:du, ↑whats:pp m:ss:age ma:dh°tini°	
	Translation	can you do the tweets i will do the whatsapp messages	

The data presented through figures in the chapters of analysis is divided into rows and columns. The first column consists of the name of the participant, and the next column displays the language of the interaction; the third column contains the spoken words, represented in two scripts and a translation. The first row in the third column is the Kannada script, which is available to the local community and readers of the language. The second row presents the words of practitioners, which had been spoken in Kannada, transliterated into a Roman script, and the final row carries the English translation. Though the Roman script may seem confusing, it benefits native Indian readers from different parts of South India who may speak the language but are not literate in Kannada. Therefore, the table offers readers the choice of reading the conversation in Kannada using a Roman script. In addition, the Roman script enables the analysis to highlight the markings used in CA to display pitch, intonations and other such speech-related characteristics as shown in the figure.

On the use of translations, it is worth mentioning that the verbal data gathered in this project consisted of two primary languages (Bengali and Kannada), which were mixed with Hindi and English. However, the data gathered in Tripura was not continuous as the researcher could rarely capture a full interaction. Furthermore, the researcher lacked familiarity with Bengali and thus chose to use the data gathered in the state of Karnataka (Bangalore) in the analysis chapters. The translated language of data presented in the following four chapters of analysis is Kannada. More specifically, it involves a

version of Kannada that is spoken in the city of Bangalore, which at times may seem odd to native speakers within the region of Karnataka (but outside the region of Bangalore). To English speakers (or people not native to Bangalore), how sentences are framed or language used by the participants may seem strange and may often seem to make little sense. The choice to translate the participants' statements word for word (from Kannada to English) was deliberate because it helped examine a participant's choice of words. For example, in Chapter Six a participant chooses the word "haradua hadagu" (flying ship) to refer to an aeroplane. Another word that could have been used is "vimahna", the translation of which is "aeroplane". Yet, the participant used the word "flying ship" because he did not view the aeroplane as an ordinary aeroplane, but as an extraordinary, large aeroplane. The examination of the choice of words used by the participants in such instances enhances the analysis of the participants' motivations, interests, and objectives. Hence, the decision to translate the participants' conversations word for word was reviewed and made.

The last column in Figure 1 presents the speaker's image with markings, which draws attention to the non-verbal cues used by the practitioners in their interactions. In the Figure 1 picture, non-verbal cues, such as gaze direction and hand movements, are indicated by arrows. Another non-verbal cue, facial gesture, is obscured in all transcriptions to protect the security and privacy of the participant.

3.4.1 Anonymity and Use of Pseudonyms

Anonymity and confidentiality were critical considerations in this research to protect the identities of the participants and the sensitive nature of the data collected. To ensure anonymity, pseudonyms were assigned to all participants, and identifying details were redacted using the notation 'XXX' in transcripts and analysis. This approach was applied consistently across all data, including video ethnographic footage, field notes, and interview transcripts. For example, in Chapter Five, Section 5.3, the use of 'XXX' as a redaction method is evident to protect the names of politicians and political parties. This method ensured that sensitive information was not disclosed while maintaining the integrity of the data. Additionally, footnotes and asterisks were used to indicate where pseudonyms and redactions had been applied.

3.5 Validation and Credibility in qualitative research

In qualitative research, validation is a judgement of the trustworthiness of the research (Angen, 2000). A debate is ongoing about how to ensure that a piece of qualitative research is a fair and accurate representation of the culture being explored (Middleton, 2020). Therefore, to ensure trust in this research, the thesis used Creswell's (2013) list of validation strategies. According to Cresswell and Miller (2000), there are eight validation strategies frequently used by qualitative researchers. These

eight validation strategies are (not in order of importance): prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field, triangulation, peer review or debriefing, negative case analysis, clarifying, member checking, rich thick description, and external audits. Creswell (2013) recommends that researchers use a minimum of two validation strategies. In this study, six of Creswell's (2013) eight strategies were used.

The first strategy, 'prolonged engagement with participant practitioners' and persistent observation of the PPR practices was followed during data-gathering. Bernard (2013) noted that the presence of a researcher helped build trust which subsequently lowered reactivity, which occurs when participants change their behaviour because they know they are being studied. Therefore, twelve hours (over two days) were spent in the participants' professional environments.

Triangulation, the second strategy, is the use of multiple data-gathering methods, analytical methods and theories to cross-check and corroborate information (Creswell, 2013). The interviews with journalists, corporate public relations practitioners and PPR strategists were used to triangulate information supplied by the participants in the video ethnography. Additionally, as in Middleton's (2020) and Sissons's (2014) studies, multiple analytical tools were used to analyse verbal and non-verbal cues, which helped confirm aspects of culture and behaviour in professional practice.

The third strategy involved peer reviews, which as Creswell (2013) states, is an external check and a challenge to the research process and findings. Dr Helen Sissons, the primary supervisor of this research, also used video ethnography and pioneered the use of the EMC analysis framework, which is adopted by this research. Therefore, her constant feedback on the research process provided the research with validation concerning the research process.

The feedback mechanisms included meeting with the participants to review the analysis of critical incidents and to verify the observations, and to obtain the views of the participants on the inferences drawn in the chapters of analysis. Therefore, the feedback mechanism helped validate the observations and analysis of those observations made by the researcher. Additionally, the feedback helped eliminate research bias, which is another of Creswell's (2013) strategies for improving data validation and credibility in qualitative research. The fifth validation strategy employed was that of providing a 'thick description' of the events observed. A thick description details accounts of a culture (Geertz, 1973), which was accomplished in abundance because of the video data, see section 3.4.

In addition, "Reliability", which refers to analytical procedures that deliver consistency and aim for neutrality (Noble & Smith, 2015), was also targeted in this research. The audio and video data

collected are important routes to achieving greater reliability (Creswell, 2013). Middleton (2020) also noted that videos:

> allow for scientific rigour when conducted by trained researchers. Videos retain sequences of observed behaviour for later scrutiny and can as a result increase quality and reliability of statements made regarding the activity. (p. 98)

3.6 Conclusion

This chapter discussed the foundations of the research design for the study of the communication practices of PPRPs in India. The research uses an interpretative qualitative design that combines data gathering and analysis methods. The combination of methods produced a rich analysis and a thick description of the data presented. While the methods provide in-depth knowledge of PPR practice, they do not aim to generalise the findings although some moderatum generalisations are possible.

Video ethnography was the primary data-gathering method, along with semi-structured and unstructured interviews. Data, however rich, are only useful if analysed in the best possible way. So, a combination of analytical tools used in linguistics and social science research was employed to analyse the data. However, combining methods is challenging as is discussed in this chapter. The research now turns to the analysis. As stated previously, power is the central theme of this thesis, and so each of the following chapters is related to power. The following chapter focuses on structural power in Indian PPR. In particular, the chapter demonstrates how managers and senior members of a communications department exert formal power.

Chapter Four

The Collegial Experience

4.0 Collegiality, Power and Control: An Overview

The daily life of almost any organisation is filled with instances of people or groups attempting to influence the attitudes and/or behaviours of other people, because such attempts to influence take place when individuals work together. This ability of practitioners to work together engenders collegiality which, as Betzler and Löschke (2021) state, is one of the most prevalent types of interpersonal relationship seen in professional settings. Collegiality is a common type of interpersonal relationship, which allows practitioners to pursue shared objectives within specific professional settings. The practice of collegiality can also help practitioners perform complementary functions, through which knowledge and experiences are shared between practitioners (Ackroyd & Fleetwood, 2005). Hence, through the practice of collegiality, necessary conditions are created in which the content-creation processes of practitioners are regularised.

In this chapter, collegiality is considered as an important aspect of professional culture, through which regularised practices of content creation are shared and power is enacted to exert control over practitioners and the products of their practice. To demonstrate how this occurs, the chapter presents and analyses the data of two PPR practitioners working in a professional setting. Here, power between the two practitioners is balanced, and yet control is exerted over the practitioners by the organisation.

Daudi (1983) reminds us that every individual and group has some form of power, which is exercised as an influence. Similarly, every group and individual is also subject to the power and influence of others, in this case the political organisation. This phenomenon creates complex networks or relations of power in organisations that are both repressive and productive. Hence in such situations, how political organisations exert control over practitioners of PPR is important. The data in this chapter is presented through one interaction.

4.1 Collegiality and Regularised Practices

Cooperative practices in a workplace are made possible by professional relationships, which can be classed as collegiality. In this chapter peer relationships of co-workers are described as relationships between practitioners who have no formal authority over each other and operate at the same

hierarchal level within an organisation. Here, the focus is on how collegiality enables the use of power to control the activities of practitioners. Additionally, cooperative practices and collegiality ensure practitioners have a shared understanding of processes and rules that are to be considered when performing professional tasks.

Doing collegiality commonly involves combining and coordinating different functions and aspects of professional practice, along with processes and systems, to meet set objectives. The use of processes, rules and/or protocols to carry out tasks is referred to as "regularised practices" (Zachry & Thralls, 2017). In the context of collegiality, power between the practitioners is balanced or shared. But enacting collegiality provides opportunities for organisation culture to be reproduced through the use of regularised practices, which ultimately is a control mechanism, as the chapter demonstrates.

Regularised practices, as Zachry and Thralls (2017) state, are a part of organisational practices that:

> emerge from agents in particular situations; these practices are more flexible and diverse than the notion of regulation supposes; and agents themselves participate in their own ordering so that regularisation does not proceed from external authority (Zachry & Thralls, 2017 p.25).

In the context of this chapter, the agents are PPRPs and the "particular setting" is that of a professional PPR setting in which the practitioners perform the task of creating a particular social media post, titled the "Women's Day Post". Some common examples of the regularised practices used in professional corporate settings include standard letters, uniform formats and sizes of paper (Zachry & Thralls, 2017) which, when extended to social media posts, can include the use of specific fonts, images and background colours.

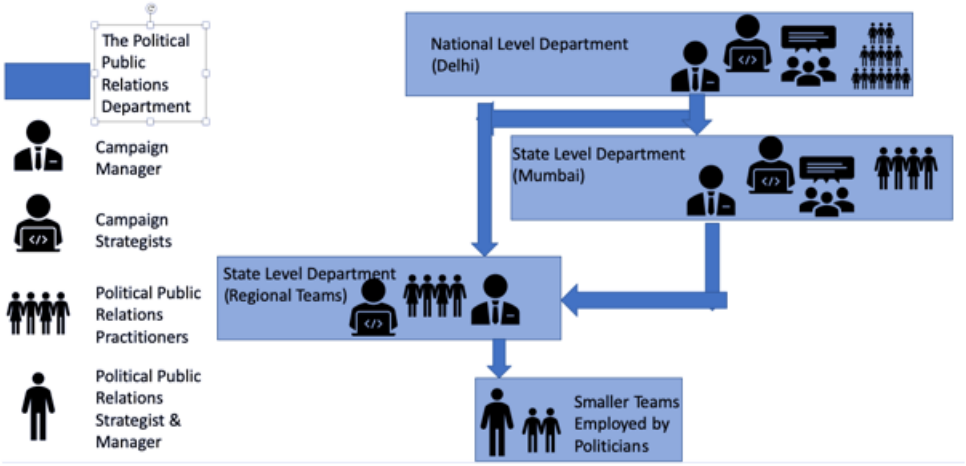
4.2 Introducing the Participants

The critical incident in this chapter involved two professional PPR practitioners, Philo and Mitch (names changed), who worked for the participating political party. The two practitioners belonged to different teams and worked in different offices. While Philo worked at the headquarters of the state department, Mitch was employed by a particular politician and worked out of his office. Mitch performed multiple PPR roles including organising events, representing the party as a spokesperson on television shows, preparing press releases and invitations, contributing opinion pieces in regional newspapers, and creating content for social media campaigns. These roles meant that Mitch spent most of her time away from the office. In contrast, Philo performed the technical role of designing digital banners and posters. Hence, her role required her to work out of the party's headquarters.

The following is a general structure of the party's communication team, which employs Mitch, Philo and all the other PPR practitioners who participated in this study.

Figure 2

The Structure of the Political Public Relations Department.



In figure 2 each rectangular box represents a team of PPR practitioners equipped with different sets of skills and expertise. Furthermore, each team of practitioners performed different tasks and hence some practitioners would carry out similar roles and were given similar responsibilities. Practitioners were often observed identifying with roles such as video content creator or designer,

In the following interaction, although the creation of the Women's Day post can be viewed as a cooperative activity between Philo and Mitch, in this specific situation it was Philo's responsibility. However, Mitch wanted the post to be shared with her so that she could use it on her employer's Facebook page. Here, the exercise of collegiality enabled both Mitch and Philo to bring to the table their different experiences, strengths, expertise, and diverse backgrounds. Therefore, in this setting, Philo and Mitch had the opportunity to represent the larger social group of women to which they belonged. Additionally, concerning the creation of the women's day post, Mitch and Philo shared the same understanding of the activity, which meant they were aware of the shared rules and patterns that governed the actions that would result in the creation of the post.

4.3 Background to the Interaction

Globally, Women's Day is celebrated annually on 8 March. It provides PPRPs with an opportunity to engage with women-focused groups. Women are a strategic group within the Indian electorate. Recently, K. Kumar (2022) examined the continued targeting of women by political strategists and stated that the women's vote bank in Indian politics is important considering that most political

parties contesting elections mention beneficial schemes for women in their election manifestos. For example, during the 2022 elections, women were seen as a major source of votes, so the Congress party offered free bus travel for women in Punjab (North India) to attract women voters. The Shiromoni Akali Dal (SAD, a regional party) announced a monthly allowance of 1000 rupees, while the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) announced 1000 rupees per month for women to support their empowerment (K. Kumar, 2022).

Furthermore, according to K. Kumar (2022), in the 2022 elections, over 10.3 million women voters exercised their right to vote in the state of Punjab. This large group of women voters is a testament to the increasing political consciousness of women voters. The findings of K. Kumar's (2022) study underscored the need to target women voters as a key segment in Indian elections. On the subject of voting patterns, Hankla et al. (2023) showed that popular women leaders in some regions were able to garner support (in the form of votes) from women, which helped them win elections. Similarly, Arabaghatta (2022) mentions that some leaders were popular in specific regions even though they did not belong to that region. For example, Indira Gandhi, a former prime minister of India, was popular in the state of Karnataka, where our practitioners were located when they created the post. Arabaghatta (2022) stated that in the late 1970s, because of the imposition of the national emergency by Indira Gandhi, the Congress party lost elections across many states; however, in the state of Karnataka, the Congress performed well. Furthermore, Indira Gandhi contested and won the Chikkamagaluru (a region in Karnataka) Lok Sabha constituency in the 1978 election and the Congress party won 149 seats that same year. This success was attributed to the popularity of Indira Gandhi.

The contemporary use of Indira Gandhi as a symbol in conversations concerning the rights of women, along with issues of empowerment and safety, continues to be observed on X (Twitter) campaigns (Saluja & Thilaka, 2021). Furthermore, issues such as women's empowerment and safety continue to be the subject of electoral debates during national and state-level elections (K. Kumar, 2022). Therefore for PPR practitioners, International Women’s Day was an opportunity to create a conversation about issues over women in India. International Women's Day in India is celebrated amid demonstrations, public talks, get-togethers and other events. Hence, Women’s Day celebrations are often intertwined with the politics of the region. PPR practitioners could not afford to ignore women voters, who were an important part of the electorate. So, if there was an opportunity to engage with women, practitioners made the most of it, and one way to engage with women voters was to create digital Women's Day posts.

Before the interaction presented in Figure 2, Mitch was having a stressful day because of some challenges concerning the designing of promotional content for the "Hampi Utsav[6]", which is a cultural festival held annually in the town of Hampi. In 2018, the State government decided to cancel the event because of a drought faced by the state[7]. Mitch's client was an elected member of the region and a member of the ruling party at the time. He was attacked by the opposition (opposing political party) for his alleged role in the decision to cancel the event. The opposition members accused him of being culturally insensitive to the electorate, which created a political storm. The pressure created by interest groups, including the opposition, caused a change in the government's decision and the event was reinstated, to be held in December 2018. Given this change in government policy, Mitch was tasked with creating a narrative positing that the politician had played an influential role in altering the government's decision.

4.3.1 Setting the Scene

Mitch and Philo were no strangers to each other, as they were colleagues despite working in different offices. On the day of the interaction, Mitch was awaiting the arrival of a freelance designer, because she was unable to complete a poster's design. This situation brought her to Philo who, at the time, was designing a Women's Day post meant for publication on the organisation's Facebook page. During the ethnographic interview Philo was asked who instructed her to create the post. She replied:

> The manager tells us to create posts. This post is scheduled for Women's Day, so before the event, we make these posts and send them to the manager. If there are corrections or if they do not like it, they send it back and ask us to change it.

Therefore, Philo was completing a task that required her to create a post. In the context of this chapter, the regularised practice of creating a post consisted of bringing together four components: the design, the text, an image, and the symbol of the party. While the component of design consisted of colour selection for the background and banners and fonts used in the post, the textual component consisted of quotes, in written form. Every post had some amount of text, but the idea was to keep this component minimal. Similarly, almost every post had an image or images, mostly of leaders. The final component was the symbol of the political party, this component was used on the banners of social media posts published on official social media pages. Therefore, the task of creating the Women's Day social media post was a routine branding exercise.

[6]The Hampi Utsav, is a cultural extravaganza held in the town of Hampi, Karnataka.
[7] See 'Why was Tipu Jayanti celebrated?' BJP upset after K'taka govt cancels Hampi Utsav | *The News Minute*. https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/why-was-tipu-jayanti-celebrated-bjp-upset-after-k-taka-govt-cancels-hampi-utsav-92464

The interaction in the extract examined below results in the production of the Women's Day post. It shows how regularised practices that are part of organisational culture shape the communicative activities of practitioners within organisations. An examination of regularised practices, particularly in the context of collegiality, is important because it shows how in situations between colleagues, where power is balanced, control is exerted by the organisation. Zachry and Thralls (2017) state that such an understanding of power can lead to a deeper understanding of the relationship between the social context and individual communication activities and offer insights into the regulation of communicative practice in organisations.

Before the interaction began, Philo had asked Mitch to sit next to her. The practitioners began to chat about a Women's Day event that Mitch was organising. Philo asked Mitch questions concerning the number of people attending the event, where the event was going to be conducted and if any female celebrities were attending the event. Such sharing of information is known to build trust between practitioners (Hinds & Cramton, 2014). For Philo, the information shared by Mitch about the event helped increase Philo's trust in Mitch. This trust made Philo allow Mitch to be a part of the process of producing the post. Before the interaction began, she searched for images of a former party leader on Google Images. While Philo identified an image of a prominent female leader of the party with ease, she struggled to find text (words) that could accompany the image in the post. Hence, she looked for quotes in Kannada (the language used in the post) and in English on the internet. The idea was to translate English text into Kannada at a later stage. In the context of PPR practice, the sourcing of images and text from the internet was not considered to be a violation of any kind (for example, copyright). Instead, all participants in this study understood these practices as routine activities required to create the post.

As Philo was preparing to create the Women's Day Post, Mitch asked her which social media post she was making, and Philo informed her about the Women's Day post. Mitch asked if the post could be sent to her and Philo agreed to do so on completion. Women's Day was a common area of interest because Mitch was a social and a political activist who participated in women-centric movements, such as the event mentioned before beginning of the extract below. This detail about Mitch being a social/ political activist also provides a social context for Mitch's communicative practice.

Figure 3

Regularised Practices: *an interaction between Philo (wearing a red and yellow dress) and Mitch (blue dress) who are collaborating to produce a social media post.*

Philo	**Kannada Script**	ಹ್ಮ್ಮ್ ಥರಕ್ಷಿಣಿ ದೂರೋಧ ಶಕ್ತಿಶಾರು ಮಹಿಳಾ ಬಗೆ	 Image 3.0
	English Script	hmm: (0.3) ↑tharaksini durodha: saktisa:ru:: >mahila< bage:	
	Translation	the challenge for power concerning women	
Mitch	**Kannada Script**	ಸ್ತ್ರೀ ಶಕ್ತಿ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರದ ಶಕ್ತಿ ಅಂತ ಹಕ್ಕು ಸ್ತ್ರೀ ಶಕ್ತಿ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರದ ಶಕ್ತಿ	 Image 3.1
	English Script	↑stri ,sakti ↑rastrada ,sakti °anta: hakku:° (0.2) <strisakti rastrada:: sakti>	
	Translation	women power is the nation's power put that, women power is the nation's power	
Mitch	**Kannada Script**	ಮಹಿಳಾ ಮ್ಮ್ ಸಮಾನಾಧಿಗೆ ಮುನ್ನಡಿಯ ಮುನ್ನಮುನ್ನ ಮುನ್ನಡಿಯೋಣ	 Image 3.2
	English Script	(0.4) mahila (.) hss >samanadhige munadiyo::< (.) mun (.) mun muna::diyo:na:	

	Translation	let us move forward for the betterment of women	
Mitch	**Kannada Script**	ಎಲ್ಲರಿಗೂ ಅಂತಾರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀ ಯ್ ಮಹಿಳಾ ದಿನಾಗೆ ಸುಭಾಶಗಳು	 Image 3.3
	English Script	yell:arigu: >°antarastriy mahila dinage°< subhasa::galu:	
	Translation	happy international Womens Day to everybody	
Mitch	**Kannada Script**	ಸ್ತ್ರೀ ಶಕ್ತಿ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರ ಶಕ್ತಿ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಮಾನಾಧಿಗೆ ಎಲ್ಲರು ಮುನ್ನಡಿಯೋಣ	 Image 3.4
	English Script	(0.2) stri: sakti rastra sakti (.) mahila ↑samanadhige (.),ellaru: munnadi:yona:	
	Translation	Women power is the nation's power for the betterment of women let us all move forward	
Philo		((indistinct(0.6))	
Mitch	**Kannada Script**	ಯಾಕಂದ್ರೆ ಎಲ್ಲರಿಗೆ ಈಕ್ವಾಲಿಟಿ ಬೆಖಗಳ ರಾಜ್ಯಗೆಲ್ಲ ಅರ್ಥಿಕ್ದಲ್ಲಿ ಸಮಾಜಲ್ಲಿ	 Image 3.5
	English Script	(0.1) yaka[ndre] >ellarige< [ikval:iti] be khagala rajya:galla: °arthikdalli° samajalli	
	Translation	because everyone wants equality for the nation for the for the economy for society	

Philo	**Kannada Script**	ಆಹ್ಹ್ ಅವಿದ್ದು ಈಕ್ವಾಲಿಟಿ	
	English Script	[u:mm] °[ahh vdu] ikvaliti°	
	Translation	Umm ahh yes equality	Image 3.6
Mitch	**Kannada Script**	ಮುನ್ನಡಿ ಬಾರೋ ಎಲೆಕ್ಷನ್ ದಲ್ಲಿ ಸ್ತ್ರೀ ಒಂದು ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರ ಶಕ್ತಿ ಅವ್ರು ಸಮಾನಾಧಿ ಕೋಟು ಎಲದಲ್ಲಿ ಎಕ್ವಾಲಿಟಿ ಖೋಶ್ಬೇಕು	
	English Script	mun::nadi (.) [baro] eleksan dalli (.) stri ondu rastra: sakti: avru (.) [sama]nadhi kotu yeladalli: ekvaliti khotbeku::	Image 3.7
	Translation	in the coming elections the nation must make things better for women and bring about equality in everything	
Philo		[um:m] [h:mm]	
Philo	**Kannada Script**	ಉಹ್ ಓಹ್ ಓಕೆ ಇಂದಿರಾ ಗಾಂಧಿ ಫೋಟೋ ಇರ್ಬೆಖ	
	English Script	uhh oh ee ok xxxxxxxxxx photo irrbekha:	Image 3.8
	Translation	uhh oh ok, should (xxx name) photo be there	

Mitch	**Kannada Script**	ಆಹ್ ಇರೇಬೇಖು ಯಾಕಂದ್ರೇ ರಜೆಕ್ರಯದಲ್ಲಿ	 Image 3.9
	English Script	ah: ↑bekhu:: yakan:,dre rajekrayadalli xxxxxxxxxx-	
	Translation	ahaa it is needed because in the country's history (xxxxxx)	
Philo	**Kannada Script**	ಅವರು ಫಸ್ಟ್	 Image 3.10
	English Script	[ah] av:aru:: pha:,st	
	Translation	aha she's first	
Mitch	**Kannada Script**	ಸಮಾಜಧಲ್ಲಿ ಅವ್ರು ಮಾಡಿದು ಮತ್ತೆ ಸಮಾಜ ಧಲ್ಲಿ ಅವ್ರು ಮಾಡಿದು ದೇಶದು ಅರ್ಥಿಣ್ಕ್ ಎಡಿಎ ದೇಶದ ಅರ್ಥಿಣ್ಕ್ ಕಥೆ ಅವರು ಮುನ್ನಾದಿಸೋದು (.)ಅಂದ್ರೆ ಸ್ತ್ರೀ ಶಕ್ತಿ ರಾಷ್ಟ್ರೀಯ ಶಕ್ತಿ ಮಹಿಳಾ ಸಮಾನಾಧಿಗೆ ಮುನ್ನಡಿಯೋಣ	 Image 3.11
	English Script	>mathe< ↑sama:ja: dhalli: avru madidu ↑desadu arthik °edie° desada arthik kathe: avaru mun::adisodu: (.)andre >stri sakti rastiya sakti (.) mahila< samanadhige mun::nadiyona:	 Image 3.12

	Translation	in our society in India's story, the economic story she took things forward that is why empowered women will empower the nation and so for the betterment of women let us move forward	 Image 3.13
Philo	**Kannada Script**	ಆ ಫೋಟೋ ಇಲ್ಲೇ ಇರ್ಲ ಏಳಂದ್ರೆ ಬೇರೆ ಫೋಟೋ ಹಾಕ್ ಬೇಕಾ	 Image 3.14
	English Script	a:: photo °ille irla° ela:ndre: >bere photo hak beka<	
	Translation	that photo or a different photo I should put.	
Philo	**Kannada Script**	ಇದು ಮೇಲೆ ಹಕ್ ಬಿಟ್ಲಾ ಫೋಟೋ	 Image 3.15
	English Script	idu: m:ele > ↑hak bitla< ,photo	
	Translation	should i put this photo on top	
Mitch	**Kannada Script**	ಫೋಟೋ ಹಾಕೀ ಇಲ್ಲೇ ಹಾಕ್ಲೇಯ್	 Image 3.16
	English Script	↑photo ha:ki °ille hakey°	
	Translation	put the photo here only put it	
Mitch		Best ((code-switch))	

4.4 Organisational Frames as a Control Mechanism

Purdy et al. (2019) state that to understand organisations, researchers must focus on the nature of institutional processes at multiple levels. This is because institutionalised patterns can be reduced to a set of practices that can pervade and control the organisational life of practitioners. They equate regularised practices to a set of logics, which "refer to the belief systems and related practices that predominate in an organisational field" (Scott, 2001 p. 139). "Logics" has also been understood as "frames of reference that condition actors' choices for sensemaking, the vocabulary they use to motivate action and their sense of self and identity" (Thornton et al., 2012, P.2). The focus of this section is the usage of frames to encode the textual element of the Women's Day Post. In PPR practice, the use of nationalistic frames has been observed by scholars such as Jaffrelot and Verniers (2020), Pratheepwatanawong (2017) and Shami et al. (2019). The analysis of data shows how the use of frames to produce social media content is an informal norm within a larger set of norms that constitute regularised practices. Thus, the regularised practices act as mechanisms of control in situations where there is a balance of power between two practitioners.

4.4.1 Framing the Text

As Philo searched the internet for popular quotes that could accompany the image on the post, Mitch observed her work. At the same time, Philo performed the gesture of rubbing the palm of her hand against the other hand, often stretching her fingers and interlocking them with one another (Figure 3, image 3.0). The interlocking of fingers is similar to the Tepee gesture, which has been observed universally, primarily in religious contexts. The tepee gesture is conceptualised on the lines of a tipi[8], which is a tent used by Native Americans. A tipi is built with poles that crisscross each other, like Philo's fingers in this instance. This gesture has often been observed when individuals are performing business tasks (Nierenberg & Calero, 1971). Additionally, this gesture symbolised a stressful situation. Here, the stress was attributed to Philo's need to choose from among the many quotes she had found in order to create the post. Philo began this part of the interaction with the verbal cue "hmm:". This prompted Mitch to react by shifting her gaze towards Philo's computer screen (image 3.0). Philo read from the computer screen, "↑tharaksini durodha: saktisa:ru:: >mahila< bage:" (the challenge for power concerning women) (image 3.0). Mitch replied by saying "↑stri ,sakti ↑rastrada ,sakti °anta: hakku:° (0.2) <strisakti rastrada:: sakti>", the translation of which is "women's power is the nation's power, put that". She then repeated, "women's power is the nation's power". Philo reacted by typing out the words on the computer (image 3.1). Mitch repeated herself because, Philo did not hear a part

[8] Tipi: A tipi is a conical tent, historically made of animal hides or pelts or more recently of canvas, stretched on a framework of wooden poles that often cross at the top.

of the line, which made Mitch repeat herself at a slower tempo. At this point, Mitch touched her neck, an action that helped her soothe herself (Winnicott, 2014), and also signalled that Mitch herself was stressed too because of the creation process. More specifically, Mitch was stressed because the creation process required her to encode ideas concerning "Women's Empowerment" within the framework of nationalism. The need to create content on topics of Women's empowerment was an unstated regularised practice that governed the actions of both Mitch and Philo.

Mitch then said "(0.4) mahila (.) hss >samanadhige munadiyo::< (.) mun (.) mun muna::diyo:na: yell:arigu: >°antarastriy mahila dinage°< subhasa::galu:", which translates as "let us move forward for the betterment of the women" (image 3.2). The initial pause before and after the word "(0.4) mahila (.)" along with "hss" signalled Mitch's struggle with the pronunciation of the word "muna::diyo:na:" (going forward) as is evident when "mun" was repeated twice before stressing the syllables to complete the word. The difficulty with the pronunciation of words indicates that Mitch was struggling with her thought process (Corballis, 2003). Hence, she used hand movements (see images 3.1 and 3.2) to help express herself (Ekman & Friesen, 1972). An arched palm with her hand moving from her chin to the level of her eyebrows was repeated to symbolise growth (Smith et al., 2008) or in this case moving forward (Kita et al., 2017).

After a short pause (image 3.3), Mitch said "yell:arigu: >°antarastriy mahila dinage°< subhasa::galu:" which translates as "happy International Women's Day to everybody". Mitch realised Philo was lagging behind in typing the text. So, she repeated herself "(0.2) stri: sakti rastra sakti (.) mahila ↑samanadhige (.),ellaru: munnadi:yona:" (Women's power is the power of the nation, for the betterment of women let us all move forward) (Image 3.4). The multiple pauses used by Mitch allowed Philo the time to type the line.

The conversation continued after Philo finished typing the text and proceeded to create the aesthetic elements of the post. Having said that, before she began work on the aesthetics of the post, Philo read and re-read the text in a low tone, which is marked "indistinct" in the transcript (images 3.4 and 3.5). Mitch noticed Philo going through the text repeatedly, however, the number of times she repeated herself is unknown because she could not be heard clearly. Additionally, the movement of her lips helped identify that she was reading and re-reading the text on the screen. Non-verbally, her facial expression was firm, which signalled seriousness (Schechtman & Shachar, 2013).

Once the post was created, Philo was required to send it to her manager and gain his approval and so, she appeared to evaluate the textual component of the post. Consequently, she took the responsibility of ensuring that the post was aligned with the department's requirements. At the time

of the observation, Philo and Mitch were asked why the subject of women had to be framed in the context of the nation-state, the party or the Election. Philo stated that:

> Now that it is election time all our posts must be about what the party has done for the country, the best thing is to use a quote from a current leader or one of the famous past leaders, for example, Indira Gandhi. But we can also come up with general quotes as long as it is in line with the ideals of the party. In this election, our party is the only one that can ensure every Indian will be treated equally irrespective of caste, gender or religion. In the other parties, women are not given importance

Therefore, the regularised practice concerning the selection of texts used in social media posts included using quotes from political leaders, past or present and/or using generalised quotes that could be applied within a national or organisational (political party) frame. Additionally, at the time of the election, Saluja and Thilaka (2021) showed that the party participated in image management to brand an upcoming leader in the likeliness of Indira Gandhi, who was a former prime minister known for her strength in governing the country. As the interaction continued (image 3.5) Mitch appeared to observe Philo's gestures of uncertainty and therefore moved to assure Philo that the words used were appropriate. Although Philo had the main responsibility, Mitch was also looking to use the social media post in her campaign and therefore she too shared some responsibility. Mitch then began to provide Philo with an explanation as to why she believed the text of the post was appropriate. The explanation began (image 3.5) when Mitch said "(0.1) yakan[dre] >ellarige< [ikval:iti] bekhagala rajya:galla: °arthikdalli° samajalli", which means "because everyone wants equality for the nation, for the economy, for society". To which Philo replied with "[u:mm] °[ahh vdu ik]valiti°" (u:mm ahh yes equality) (image 3.6) in a low voice, and agreed with Mitch. In addition, the non-verbal cue in image 3.6 shows Mitch's hand movement (a curved palm moving circularly) helping her express herself.

The circular palm movement is an action that symbolises "everyone" as it accompanies the verbal cue "yellarige" (everyone). Corballis (2003) examined hand movements and argued that language evolved from manual gestures, gradually incorporating vocal elements. Here, the curved palm movement is a manual gesture that incorporates the expression for "everyone". After completing the actions, Mitch said "mun::nadi (.) [baro eleksan] dalli (.) stri ondu rastra: sakti: avru (.) [sama]nadhi kotu yeladalli: ekvaliti khotbeku::"(image 3.7), which translates as "in the coming elections the nation must make things better for women and bring about equality in everything". While Mitch spoke, Philo stared at the screen with a tight facial expression, implying that she continued to evaluate the content. Soon after, Philo maximised the Internet Explorer on her screen which displayed images of a former leader of the party.

4.4.2 Design as a Mechanism of Control

The process of creating a post requires the coming together of four elements, which are the text, the design, an image and the symbols of the political party. These elements are known to be controlled by regularised practices (Zachry & Thralls, 2017). As the conversation progressed, Philo was observed selecting images that could accompany the post on Google. The focus of the analysis in this section is to identify the unwritten norms that explain the reason behind the selection of specific images, colours and symbols and their placement in a social media post. Additionally, this section demonstrates how regularised practices concerning the usage of an image exert control over the practitioners.

In image 3.8, Philo stated "uhh oh ok xxxxx: xxxxx: photo irrbekha:", which translates as "uhh oh ok, should (xxx name) photo be there". The initial stammer "uhh oh" in Philo's sentence, in this instance is a filler used to process information. Simultaneously, she moved her hands, which helped her express herself verbally (Guellaï, 2014). Furthermore, "should (xxx name) photo be there" can be understood as a question, as the word "irrbekha" when translated is "should it". The reason why Philo asked Mitch if the image was needed was because the post had a significant amount of text and the addition of an image would clutter the design. When quizzed (during observations) about why she wanted to leave the image out, she said, "it is too much". Yet, towards the end of the interaction she included the image in the post, which is an example of how control is exerted. In social media marketing the prescribed practice of the department was to keep the element of text to a minimum when producing social media posts. In the context of regularised practices within the department, all social media posts did carry an image. Nevertheless, when Philo said, "Should (xxx name) photo be there" she was planning on moving the image to the background and foregrounding the text.

Mitch took her turn in the conversation and said "ah: ↑bekhu:: yakan:,dre rajekrayadalli xxxxxx-", which is translated as "it is needed because in the country's history (name)" (image 3.9). Before Mitch completed her justification, Philo cut her off with "[aha] av:aru:: pha:,st", which meant " [aha] she is the first" (image 3.10). In the line, Mitch implied that the picture was needed because historically, the leader was a symbol of the fight for equality and status among women in India (Saluja & Thilaka, 2021). Therefore, Mitch implied that the image of the leader needed to be a part of the post. The overlap, coupled with Philo cutting off Mitch in the conversation signified Philo's high emotion and active participation in the process of creating the post. Furthermore, "she is first" reveals acceptance of including the picture.

Non-verbally, Mitch used a range of hand movements (image 3.10) to display a sense of conviction and confidence, while giving Philo time to process and formulate her words. Philo's palms were pressed against each other and her fingers were interlaced with each other. Furthermore, a slight rubbing of her palms was also noticed, as she said the above line. These non-verbal cues were understood to signal a stressful situation. Nierenberg and Calero (2012) observed that in stressful negotiations people clench their hands. In addition, the interlaced fingers, with the rubbing of palms against one another are a variation of self-soothing in a stressful environment (Nierenberg & Calero, 2012). Philo was asked in the feedback session why she appeared to be stressed, she stated "When you make a post there are so many things that must come together, and so you naturally get tense".

In continuation, Mitch said, ">mathe< ↑sama:ja: dhalli: avru madidu ↑desadu arthik °edie° desada arthik kathe: avaru mun::adisodu: (.)andre >stri sakti rastiya sakti (.) mahila< samanadhige mun::nadiyona:". The translation of which is "In our society, in India's story, the economic story, she took things forward that is why empowered women will empower the nation and so for the betterment of women let us move forward" (image 3.12 and 3.13). In the line, Mitch stressed words such as country and society in a bid to draw attention to the choice of using the leader's image. The line is an attempt to provide Philo with further explanation of the reasons behind the text. Here, the analysis offers clear evidence of Mitch using a nationalistic frame to bring together the text and the image used in the Women's Day post.

Philo directed her gaze towards the monitor as she began to place the image on the post. She said, "a:: photo °ille irla° ela:ndre: >bere photo hak beka<", the translation of which is "that photo or a different photo I should put" (image 3.13). Here, Philo meant to ask Mitch which image (digital picture) she preferred. In the analysis of the above lines, Philo stressed on the word "elandre" (or) and rushed with the other half of the sentence (">bere photo hak beka<"). The stress on "elandre" helped Philo gain Mitch's attention to help provide feedback on the photo. In addition, the second half of Philo's line was said at a faster pace, indicating that Philo was expecting Mitch to disagree with her on the selected image (Yu, 2011). Moreover, the use of (hak beka) "should I put", is a question, which does not elicit a verbal reaction. However, Mitch nodded her head and then moved it side to side twice (image 3.13). This gesture appeared to display Mitch's agreement with the image and its location in the post.

Philo continued the interaction by asking Mitch if she should move the image up, by saying "idu: m:ele >↑hak bitla< , photo" (this on top, I'll put) (image 3.14). The words ">↑hak bitla<" (I'll put) said at an increased pace is a question. The two questions put forward by Philo to Mitch - the first asking which photo should be added and the other asking if the photo should be moved up are likely

indicators of Philo's uncertainty. Holmes (1990) acknowledged that tag questions, which are short questions added to the end of a statement to seek confirmation, or agreement, or to prompt a response from the listener at certain times can be a politeness strategy or signal uncertainty and tentativeness. Similarly, Thomas (1988) pointed out that tag questions are used to force feedback when it is not forthcoming. At the time of feedback, Philo recalled,

> She (Mitch) also wanted to use the post on her socials (employer's social media platforms), so I was checking to see if she was ok with the placement of the head, if it had come down a part of the text would have been on the face and that was not right, so I had moved the head to the top corner.

Therefore, Philo was forcing Mitch to give her feedback. As mentioned earlier, when creating the social media post, Philo had moved the image to the background and the text was foregrounded. By moving the image up, so that the face of the leader (image) did not have text on it. The non-verbal cue of Philo's left index finger pointing upward (image 3.14) was a gesture that helped Mitch visualise the movement of the image to the top corner. Mitch concluded the interaction by saying "↑photo ha:ki °ille hakey°" (put the photo here only) (image 3.15). Both practitioners directed their gaze towards the computer screen as the post was made ready. Mitch looked at the post and said "Best" to which Philo paid no attention.

The use of the former leader's image to create social media posts was a regularised practice within the department. In the feedback session, the practitioners were asked why they had to use an image of that specific leader, considering that she was a former leader who was not actively participating in the election. Additionally, the researcher suggested that an image of Mitch in one of her events could have been used instead of a Google image of the former leader. To this, Mitch said, "It will not get accepted". Here, Mitch was referring to the practice of getting permission from the manager to do something different, "there is no need to ask, some things are unsaid" she said. At this point, Philo said,

> If you look at all the banners on the road today, every banner has photos of national leaders along with local leaders. If we do not include the photos of the leaders, we will not get permission to post any of this type of content on social media or print any publicity banners.

Therefore, the use of images of leaders was a regularised practice.

4.5 Conclusion

Mitch's words "some things are unsaid" are an apt way to conclude this chapter, which is about how power and control are exerted by the organisation on two practitioners who share a collegial relationship in which power is balanced. Such situations provide an opportunity for practitioners to

represent communities. In the interaction presented in this chapter, the practitioners have an opportunity to represent the larger social group of women. To a certain extent, by highlighting the need for equality of women, the practitioners do represent women as a social group. However, instead of drawing on their experiences, the practitioners relied on regularised processes to create content. The objective of this chapter was to show how in collegial relationships where power is balanced, regularised practices act as control mechanisms that ensure the practitioners produce a narrative that is better suited to the organisation. In such situations, it becomes a challenge for practitioners to represent communities that may have little benefit within the organisation's narrative of events and issues. By exerting control over the practitioners, the organisation may have lost out on the expertise derived from the experiences of practitioners, who in this case were women (members of the same community). If the practitioners had had more freedom, it is possible that they might have been able to build a connection with other women (women who live in the region), who are a significant section of the voting public.

Therefore, this chapter shows how power and control are exerted through the use of regularised practices within a PPR department. This chapter began by examining how collegiality and cooperative practices, which are a part of organisational culture create a situation. In collegial relationships, practitioners with complementary skills often find themselves in professional situations where there is a balance of power between them. In doing so, the analysis of this chapter shows that practitioners of PPR orient themselves to regularised practices, which include a set of norms concerning specialised practices which reproduce power relations.

Hence, power and regulation are collaborative interactional accomplishments. Here, power is not seen as something that is possessed by individual practitioners, but power is seen as an objective practice which enables the understanding of how power is produced and communication is realised. The analysis of regularised practices as a control mechanism also shows that in PPR practice in India power is produced in a predetermined manner.

Regularised practices are mechanisms of control that shape the values, beliefs and ideas of practitioners in specific professional situations. Often these professional situations intersect with social situations that are of relevance to the practitioners. It is in these situations that regularised practices define the limits of an individual practice. In the field of public relations, regularised practices have not hitherto received adequate attention. This chapter shows that regularised practices are a cultural factor that shapes how public relations and PPR are practised.

Chapter Five

Structural Power and Political Public Relations in India

5.0 Structural Power: An Overview

This chapter investigates how managers of a PPR department exert control over practitioners to shape the practice and the professional experiences of PPR. Here, the PPR department refers to a specialised communication unit within a political party that is responsible for the governance and management of communication activities in and by the political organisation. This understanding of the PPR department has similarly been used to define public relations departments in the context of a business organisation or corporation (Cornelissen, 2020, p. 27). The activities performed by the department are organised and executed by professional practitioners, who may execute listening and messaging activities themselves, or who may support, enable or commission others to do so (e.g. writing speeches for top managers, or hiring agencies to run campaigns).

Therefore, the constitution and management of a PPR department, particularly in large political organisations, is similar to those observed in a public relations team. The difference between the public relations department and a PPR department, as observed in this research, is that PPR departments are usually small teams that add members (practitioners) during the time of elections. Similar observations have been made by Sharma (2020). Furthermore, most members who join communication teams of political organisations at the time of elections do so as ordinary party members. These individuals have also been referred to as “party workers” (Sharma, 2020), and they are known to have different cultural backgrounds and experiences, which makes the task of exerting control over them a challenge for political organisations.

Little knowledge exists about the organisation of communication departments within a political party (Fisher et al., 2023). In studying the digital communication practices of political parties, Fisher et al. (2023) mention the use of authority to regulate the communication practices of political organisations. While tasks such as supporting practitioners to achieve organisational goals can be performed by colleagues, as the previous chapter showed, certain tasks such as commissioning specific practitioners to perform specific tasks require managers. In such professional situations managers have the authority to direct practitioners to perform organisation-related tasks.

5.1 Structures and Authority

The hierarchy of positions ensures that the department functions smoothly and that it manages the organisation's political narrative efficiently. Moss et al. (2017) state that there is no dominant structural model of public relations practice. This is because public relations departments usually tend to adopt a structural design to suit their circumstances (Moss et al., 2017). In organisation studies, hierarchal structures are known to be common (Seperich & McCalley, 2006). All members of an organisation are a part of that organisation's hierarchy. Therefore, hierarchies establish the power relationship between people, which makes organisational hierarchies a part of organisational culture.

Organising the activities of people within an organisation invariably leads to the development of a hierarchy. Furthermore, the need for a hierarchy rests on two key activities - directing and controlling (Seperich & McCalley, 2006). In the context of this chapter, the activities of directing and controlling are performed by managers. Moreover, to perform these activities managers of an organisation are given authority, which is enacted by the use of power (Meng & Berger, 2019).

In this research, the observations showed that managers exerted control over practitioners to regulate their activities. These activities included producing media and social media content, and managing online campaigns. In turn, the managers were given tasks by a senior manager or, in this case, a strategist. For example, the selective targeting of issues was commonly made known to the manager by strategists via text messages and emails, who in turn directed practitioners, either through face-to-face interactions or text messages, to produce content on the themes selected by the strategists. The practitioners played their part by creating content that formed narratives on issues that ultimately benefited the organisation. Thus although managers performed a management function that resembled "middlemen", they (along with strategists) had formal authority or power which was used to exert control over practitioners and over messages produced by the practice.

This chapter demonstrates how formal authority is used to exert control over practitioners by examining the interactions between managers and practitioners. In this chapter, two interactions are presented for analysis. The first focuses on entitled power, which is understood as power derived from one's position in the organisation. The second interaction focuses on usurped power, which is power used by a member who is identified as having sufficient authority in his position to exercise power when it is needed.

5.2 Interaction I: Background

Soutik Biswas, a *BBC News* correspondent, reported on 14 February 2019 that Adil Ahmad Dar drove a vehicle carrying explosives into an army convoy in Pulwama (Indian-occupied Kashmir). The reasons for his actions remain speculative and reporting is biased depending on the Indian, Pakistani or Kashmiri narrative of the attack. The attack killed over 40 Indian soldiers and increased tensions between India and Pakistan ahead of the Indian general elections (Biswas, 2019). Karnad (2019) of *The New Yorker* reported that "Pulwama" had become synonymous with terrorism to Indian voters. Moreover, the attack spurred the Indian Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, to authorise retaliatory airstrikes on what the Indian government referred to as an alleged Pakistani "militant camp" in Balakot (in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir). While the airstrike resulted in the loss of an Indian jet, Modi's rating rose in the polls (Karnad, 2019).

Following the attack, Modi brandished the name "Pulwama" and paired it with "Balakot" to boost his standing as a nationalist (Karnad, 2019). Initially, most opposition parties refrained from criticising the leader for exploiting dead soldiers for political gains (Bisht, 2019). The strategy of restraint enabled Modi to gain political mileage and establish himself as a decisive leader (Jaffrelot & Verniers, 2020). On the eleventh day following the attack, 21 opposition parties issued a joint statement criticising the politicisation of Pulwama (Mahaprashasta, 2019), showing that they were keen to move the agenda away from the terrorist attack. However, the news media and social media channels continued to debate and discuss the possibility of a large-scale conflict between India and Pakistan.

5.2.1 An Interaction Over War

The following interaction is born out of a practitioner's task to create video content meant for publication on the official Facebook page of the party. The interaction involved Paul, a video content editor, and Nag, the Media Relations manager[9]. On the day of the interaction, Paul was observed editing videos meant for publication on X (Twitter) and Facebook. The production of social media content was a routine practice regulated by the managers of the department. In this chapter, regulated practices are understood as practices that are controlled by a manager.

Nag usually allotted two types of video editing tasks to Paul. One type of video content was sourced from the news media, which would be repurposed for social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter. The other type was produced by the team, including videos of leaders delivering speeches at events and/or press conferences organised at the party office. Additionally, the department also

[9] The names of the practitioners and the manager have been changed to protect their identity.

produced video content of political leaders commenting on specific issues. Therefore, Paul edited videos of press conferences and formal addresses delivered by regional and national political leaders meant for publication on social media platforms. Additionally, there were times when videos (usually of press conferences) edited by Paul were sent to the news media if news media outlets requested footage.

Usually Paul began the day by surveying social media platforms to find relevant content that could be repurposed for the organisation's social media pages. While some pages he surveyed belonged to the party, other pages belonged to specific news media websites. Paul selected video content that could be reproduced, although the ultimate decision to publish the content rested with the manager - underlining the routine and regulated nature of the task. Once the content was repurposed by Paul, he uploaded it to a WhatsApp group (an instant messaging application), from where managers uploaded the content to the organisation's social media pages.

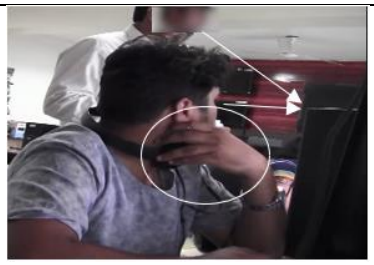
Earlier on the day of the interaction, Paul's Facebook and X (Twitter) timelines were flooded with discussions of a war with Pakistan. These interactions helped him understand the mood of his online target audiences, which subsequently aided his selection of strategic content that could be used by the organisation. Before the interaction, Paul selected a video published on a news media platform *The Quint,* an online platform considered to be relatively sympathetic to the organisation. Paul believed the video's message was effective and in line with the organisation's strategy, as popular opinion was against a war with Pakistan. Most individuals in the video opposed the ruling party's war narrative and instead wanted to discuss topics such as employment and corruption. Ahead of the 2019 general elections, the Election Commission of India recorded the total number of registered voters at 900 million. Of this, 15 million were said to be first-time voters in the 18-19 age group[10]. Hence, youth was an audience that was specifically targeted by campaign strategists.

The interaction began with Paul's manager Nag walking into Paul's workspace and asking if the "applications are ready to be sent". "The applications" refer to a workshop which is not a part of this interaction. The line is a conversation starter and is mentioned because it marks the beginning of the interaction. What follows this is a demonstration of how Paul's manager Nag reinforces his authority and exerts control over Paul and the content creation process.

[10] See Report by the Business Insider, (2019, May 11) General Elections 2019: India expects over 15 million first-time voters in the 18-19 year age group, Business Insider India https://www.businessinsider.in/general-elections-2019-india-expects-over-15-million-first-time-voters-in-the-18-19-year-age-group/articleshow/68353207.cms

Figure 4

Entitled Power: The participant, Paul, asks the manager, Nag, for permission to repurpose content meant for publication on the organisation's Facebook page. Nag (standing) is wearing a white shirt and Paul (seated) a blue T-shirt.

			 Image 4.0
Nag	**Kannada Script**	ಇಡು ಯೆಲ್ಲಾಅಪ್ಲಿಕೇಶನ್ ಆಗಿದ್ಯಾ ಹೊಗಲ್ಕೈಕ್	
	English Script	((indistinct)) idu ye:lla aplik,esan agid:, ya °hogalike°	
	Translation	are all the applications done	
Paul	**Kannada Script**	ಇಲ್ಲ ಸರ್	 Image 4.1
	English Script	↑illa s:ar,	
	Translation	no sir	
			 Image 4.2
Nag		((indistinct murmur))	
Paul	**Kannada Script**	ಸರ್ ಕ್ವಿಂಟ್ ನಲ್ಲಿಯೂತ್ ಪಾಕಿಸ್ತಾನ ನಾ ಇಂಡಿಯಾ ಮುಂಚೆನ್	 Image 4.3
	English Script	((indistinct)) ↑sar (0.6) kvi:nt nalli::,(.) °pa:kistana:: indiya: munncen°[na]	
		sir in the quint news the standoff between pakistan and india	

	Translation		
			
Nag		[a]hhh	
			Image 4.4
Paul	Kannada Script	ಜನಾರು/ ಯುವ ಜನ ಕೇಳಿದಾರೆ, ವಾರ್ ಬಿಕಾ ಅಂತ ಪಾಕಿಸ್ತಾನ್ ಜೊತೆ ನ್ಯೂಸ್ ಹಾಕೋಣ	
	English Script	Janaru (.) >youthina kelidare< (.) var bage: °pakistan jote° (.) nyus hakona:.=	
	Translation	youth (young people) are being asked if they want a war with Pakistan	Image 4.5
Nag	Kannada Script	ಬೇಡ	
	English Script	=↑beda ,beda	
	Translation:	no need no need	Image 4.6
Nag	Kannada Script	ಅದು ಬೇಡ ವಾರ್ ಮುಗೀತು ಇನ್ನು ವಾರ್	
	English Script	adu:. (.) mugitaitu kathe(.) var, bage,-	
	Translation	no need of that war is over no need of anything on the war	Image 4.7

5.2.2 Recognising Formal Authority

Figure 4, image 4.0, showed the manager (Nag) walking into the room with his gaze directed towards Paul's colleague Philo. He began the interaction by saying "idu ye:lla aplik,esan agid:,ya °hogalike°", the translation of which is "are all the applications done". Kendon (1967) states that when a person directs her/his gaze towards another person and simultaneously asks a question or says something, there is an expectation of a response from the person whom the gaze is directed towards. In this instance, the manager directed his gaze towards Philo, but she did not respond to his question and instead directed her gaze towards Paul. However, Paul turned his head, directed his gaze towards the manager and replied *"*↑illa s:ar," (No, Sir). The reason behind Philo's lack of response is unknown because she could not recall the incident during the feedback. However, despite Paul's response, the manager's gaze continued to be directed towards Philo. Paul, in his feedback session, recalled an event, where the practitioners (Paul and Mitch) had to create application forms for volunteers who would join the team for a month before the elections. He said:

> That might have been the volunteer drive, usually before elections we get party workers who volunteer to spread social media messages. These volunteers were required to fill in the application form so that they could join the training organised by the department.

For the analysis, this section provides the first glimpse of a routine practice that was regulated by the manager.

In images 4.0 and 4.1 Philo remained outside the camera's frame, but she was observed alternating her gaze between Paul and the manager. Paul exhibited non-verbal cues by continually touching the back of his head and neck with his left hand. These actions displayed by Paul are referred to in non-verbal communication literature as "self-adaptors", and they appear to signal both Paul's uncertainty and his eagerness to get involved in the conversation with Nag (Meadors & Murray, 2014). Matsumoto and Hwang (2012) observed neck rubbing in their study, and state that it indicates uncertainty. Here, in image 4.1 Paul's hand was on his neck, showing Paul was eager to talk to the manager, and he was also uncertain about the outcome of the conversation with Nag. As the manager began to move out of Paul's space, while conversing with another practitioner, Paul moved back and forth in his chair (image 4.2), movements which indicate anxiousness (Hall & Knapp, 2013). This was likely to be a result of Paul's anxiousness about interacting with Nag (authority), and it signalled that the pair did not share a comfortable relationship.

Paul's nonverbal cues of anxiousness, eagerness and uncertainty can be considered as indicators of a "culture of fear" (Zachry & Thralls, 2017 P.7) within the communication department. Zachry and Thralls (2017) regard fear as a management tool. Furthermore, the legitimate use of authority and

entitled power may be fearsome to some practitioners. Both Paul and Philo in the feedback session agreed that fear was a factor when it came to how tasks were completed in the department. While the practitioners stated that they were not fearful of the manager, Paul said, "If certain responsibilities are given to us and we don't complete it or do it properly, then the manager would ask them about it and that conversation can be scary". Zachry and Thralls (2017) also state that the presence of managers who seldom monitor work creates fear among employees. Therefore, the presence of the manager can be seen as creating a fearful situation.

In the interaction, a few seconds (0.6) later, Paul called out '↑s:ar' ("sir"), this time to gain the manager's attention (image 4.4). In contemporary Indian society, 'Sir' refers to people outside one's societal strata, which includes people of other classes or caste groups. An online etymological search of "Sir" showed that in India the term is used commonly to address people. Moreover, the term is also used to address strangers with respect (Yule & Burnell, 1903). Although Yule and Burnell's (1903) study of words such as "Sir" is old, the usage of "Sir" to gain the attention of strangers and members of authority is a common cultural practice in modern India. The difference is in the intonation, where a lower intonation is general and unmarked, and a higher intonation is marked and subservient when used at the beginning of the word. The commonly used higher intonation, in this instance, confirmed Nag's hierarchal position.

On hearing Paul, Mr Nag turned around and walked towards him. Paul moved forward and backwards in his chair (anxiousness). The intonation in "↑s:ar" is high, along with the usage of "Sir", which communicates power and seniority (West & Zimmerman, 1987). In this instance, the word 's:ar' was used to cue interaction with an individual (Lucal, 1999) who was a member of authority because it was said with a higher pitch and to gain Nag's attention.

5.2.3 Authority in Practice

Figure 4, image 4.5 shows Nag walking into Paul's professional space for the second time. This time, he stood closer to Paul, leaned over a seated Paul and stared at the computer screen. Paul responded by reclining in his seat (image 4.5) as this helped him look at Nag's face. The chair in which Paul was seated was made of plastic and had no reclining system, which was inconvenient for Paul (image 4.5). In non-verbal communication, a higher postural position during an interview can demonstrate authority (Degroot & Gooty, 2009). Similarly, Morris (2018) states that higher postural positions, e.g. looming over, are seen as a power play. Kendon (1970) notes that when a person leans forward, there is an openness to what is communicated, while an upright posture is a signal of authority. Hence, the position of a person towering over another who is seated, accompanied by the other's gaze directed

upward, is observed when people of power communicate non-verbally with their subordinates (Kendon & Cook, 1969; Morris, 2018). Nevertheless, in this instance, it was not possible to equate Paul and Nag's positional arrangement with power because the type of chair, the space around Paul, and Paul's posture made it difficult for Nag to look at Paul's computer screen.

Nag directed his gaze towards Paul's computer monitor placed in front of Paul, thereby avoiding Paul's gaze (directed towards Nag). Nag's proximity to Paul could explain why Nag chose to direct his gaze away from Paul. Argyle and Dean (1965) indicate that people of the same gender avoid making eye contact because of implications of intimacy. For example, two males may not feel comfortable being too close and making eye contact. While this could be a possible reason why Nag did not meet Paul's gaze, the movement of Nag's gaze from the monitor screen to the table raises questions concerning his commitment to the conversation (Adams & Kleck, 2003). Zachry and Thralls (2017) state that how managers allocate time, materials and information are symbols of how power is used by managers. Nag's lack of engagement in the conversation with Paul was a show of power because although Nag did give Paul his time, the time given lacked quality. By doing this, Nag was displaying power.

After a moment (0.3s), Nag reached into his pocket, which caused him to lean further towards Paul (image 4.5) for a few seconds. Nag then straightened himself after recovering his phone from his pocket. He then shifted his gaze from the monitor to his phone and simultaneously listened to Paul - an action that confirmed he was distracted and not paying full attention to Paul. Verbally, Paul stressed the name of the media house "Quint", which is a marker (Yu, 2012) used by Paul to persuade Nag. "*The Quint"* was an organisation that was critical of the government and hence often its interests were aligned with the organisation. Before Paul completed his point, Nag uttered "Ahh" which overlapped the word "munncen[na]" (between). Paul then paused (images 4.5) and said "Janaru", meaning "people", before immediately correcting himself by replacing "people" with "youth" (image 4.5). This repair (Schegloff et al., 1977) highlighted that Paul believed a story related to youth would be more likely to gain the manager's approval (the organisation's public relations strategy targeted youth).

Three points of the analysis demonstrate how Nag exercised his superiority over Paul and how Paul accepted his subservience to Nag, thereby reinforcing Nag's higher/more senior role. The first point is the sentence ">youthina kelidare< (.) var bage °pakistan jote° (.) nyus hakona:." (youth people are being asked if they want a war with Pakistan) (image 4.7) a part of which (>youthina kelidare<) was uttered by Paul with a faster tempo, and another part in a lower pitch (°pakistan jote°). The decrease in pitch and increase in tempo (Yu, 2011) was because Paul was attempting to confirm the suitability

of the material chosen. Furthermore, in the interview, Paul stated that "because the video was about youth the chances of getting approval was greater".

Another point of analysis that displayed how authority was used by managers was the overlapping conversation. Nag said "ahh" in response to Paul, which was an invitation for Paul to continue the interaction. In doing so he controlled the interaction, which as Fairclough (2001) mentioned is a show of authority. Additionally, Nag remained invested in the conversation before making a decision, which as Holmes and Stubbe (2015) showed is a practice of power. Lastly, the nonverbal cue of Paul's folded hands (image 4.7) can be interpreted in different ways, such as indicating a reduction in anxiety or as a way to rest his hands (McNeill, 1992). However, this cue of folded hands denotes a move away from the openness demonstrated previously by Paul (image 4.5). Paul, in the feedback session, stated that "by this time, I knew he was not going to go for it (selecting the video)". This statement, along with the folded hands, exhibited a reduction in stress and an acceptance of Nag's decision and his superior position in matters concerning content selection.

5.2.4 Exerting Control

The segment discussed above highlights three important verbal and non-verbal cues that suggest Nag's decision to reject Paul's selection was made before Nag had heard Paul. *How* the selection was rejected is important in the analysis because it shows how practitioners are controlled by managers who use power and authority. Additionally, it also throws light on how decisions concerning content selection are made within a PPR department of a political party in India. The first verbal cue is latching (Zhang, 2009), which is a term used in conversational analysis to refer to the absence of silence between two turns. Latching is generally interpreted as a turn-holding device (Zhang, 2009). Here, the latch (denoted by the = sign in the transcript) indicated that Nag had made his decision before Paul completed his sentence, as indicated by the lack of a pause (=↑ beda,) (image 4.6).

The second verbal cue is the repeated word "beda", ("No need" or "Not required")(image 4.6). Tannen (1987) states that repeated words may often indicate reconfirmation of a verdict. Unlike the two verbal cues the third cue is non-verbal: Nag's gaze was first directed at the monitor, and then at his mobile phone (when Paul mentions youth), indicating that Nag was uninterested in Paul's verbal explanations. It is after this frame (image 4.6) that Nag removed his phone, and Paul folded his hands, implying that the decision was made at this point.

5.2.5 Experiencing Authority

Nag followed "=↑beda, beda" with an attempted explanation to defend his decision by saying "adu:. (.) mugitaitu kathe(.) var, bage, -" which translates to "there is no need for stories about a war". Nag's response did not inform Paul about the process involved in the rejection of his suggestion, and the line can be considered a directive (Holmes, 2005) intended to exert control over Paul's professional practice. As mentioned earlier, Zachry and Thralls (2017) state that withholding information can be seen as a display of power and authority. Additionally, the statement "the war is over" can be observed as a normalisation strategy (Machin & Mayr, 2012) that shows Nag drew on his hierarchical position to restrict Paul's autonomy. The following section describes how Paul reacted to experiencing being controlled by Nag.

Nag's statement (image 4.6), though an indicator of his engagement with Paul was accompanied by distraction (see earlier section) (image 4.6 and image 4.7). His left hand was halfway up, moving towards the top of his left shoulder, his palm open and fingers pointed outward to imply "the story's time was over" or "it is past". Additionally, he walked away (image 4.7), leaving the conversation incomplete. In the feedback session, Paul viewed Nag's action as "Normal" and not an action of power. Furthermore, he stated, "I don't need to know why (the reason behind Nag's decision) he said no, and that's enough". Paul's words indicate that the above situation was a fairly common professional setting that was normalised in the department.

Three different non-verbal communication cues displayed how Paul experienced and reacted to Nag (Image 4.7). Firstly, Paul covered his mouth with his hand to hide his reaction from the manager. Behind Paul's hand a closer look showed his tight-lipped smile, which is known to signal frustration (Ekman, 1992). Additionally, Paul remained silent, which as Schnurr and Chan (2011) showed can be an expression of disappointment. In this instance, Paul's silence and the tight-lipped smile are likely to signal Paul's frustration and disappointment with his manager. Thereby, Paul appeared to subtly expressed his disappointment and frustration.

Nag's use of power and authority to exert control over Paul's professional practice is embedded in the structure of the organisation. Here, power was reinforced by the manager of the department on behalf of the organisation's structure to shape a narrative about an event. Pereira (2023) states that authoritarian managers use their position and their entitled power as primary methods of managing. In the section above, Nag's management style can be considered as authoritative, regulating the products of the practice within the department. The first interaction highlights how structural power embedded in a political organisation's hierarchy is used by a manager of a PPR department.

Nevertheless, most organisations have many employees who are not in positions of power. Yet, in certain professional situations (such as the one seen in the following interaction), individual practitioners would like to have power and influence.

5.3 Usurping and Assuming Power

The following interaction focuses on how a senior member, Adam, used authority to exert control over Paul. Seperich and McCalley (2006) stated that not all individuals in an organisation have positions of power, but some individuals would like to have power and influence. These individuals are often in positions where power is not required for them to perform their responsibilities. Nevertheless, in situations where there is a need to complete a task, these individuals may usurp and assume power. The practice of usurping power and assuming power can be subtle, such as exempting oneself from a task without permission. Usurping power, as mentioned earlier, can be referred to as power used by a member who is identified as having sufficient authority in his position to exercise power when it is needed. Assuming power is when one assumes power by taking responsibility to complete a task. To usurp and assume power, there must be an existing power source (Seperich & McCalley, 2006). In the context of the following interaction, power is made available to Adam by the managers of the departments, Nag and Sonam. Furthermore, Seperich and McCalley (2006) state that while it is common for managers of a department to not allow subordinates to usurp power, in many instances, individuals with entitled power invite trusted subordinates to usurp power when it is needed. The following section provides the interaction with a context and introduces Adam[11], who in the interaction usurps power to exert control over Paul.

Seperich and McCalley (2006) mention that power is usurped or assumed in various ways. They list five prerequisites by which power can be usurped, including: special knowledge, extensive experience, established seniority, obtaining influence with superiors, and reacting to exigent needs. The following interaction is a demonstration of how a practitioner uses his knowledge, experience, seniority and influence to fulfil a task that had to be completed.

5.3.1 Interaction II: The Speech

The politician in the context of the following interaction was a Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) and a minister in the local government. In July 2018, he was appointed as the working president of the participating political organisation. The position required him to engage and mobilise party workers during election campaigns. Here, the politician was delivering a speech to the party

[11] The name Adam is a pseudonym meant to protect the identity of the participant.

workers who had gathered at the regional office. The objective of the speech was to mobilise party workers and inform them about the schemes and policies the party was going to implement if they were to come to power. The speech was recorded, and this interaction was born out of a requirement to create a video of the politician's speech.

Adam was responsible for creating video content that provided the party workers and the general audience with coverage of the speech. The video of the speech was created for both the internal public (party workers) and the external public (general audience). The party workers would receive short videos of the speech on WhatsApp, which they would then use to circulate on their respective networks. Additionally, longer versions of the speech were made available to party workers on social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube. This was to provide party workers with longer versions of the speech, which they could then make into shorter clips to help spread on all social media platforms including X (Twitter), WhatsApp and Instagram, in a bid to persuade the audience to vote for the political party.

Video content had to be made available to party workers across the state because some members could not attend events organised by the party. Failure to attend events left party workers uninformed about the party's activities and agendas. This lack of information meant that party workers were unable to effectively engage and persuade targeted audiences. In this interaction, the speech was video-graphed at the party's media centre by Adam a day before the interaction was due for urgent publication on the party's official social media platforms such as Facebook and YouTube.

5.3.2 Exhibiting Special Knowledge and Experience

Seperich and McCalley (2006) state that in an organisation, seniority may be rewarded by a special title or a measure of security not provided to those who are newer to the organisation. However, to use authority requires specific circumstances. First, there must be general agreement that one individual is superior to the others. This superiority could be because an individual would have technical acumen or extensive experience. Moreover, a practitioner may be superior in some areas and not in others.

Although Adam and Paul were colleagues, they shared a hierarchical relationship within the department for two reasons. Firstly, the pair had complementary skill sets but differed in expertise and knowledge. In comparison to Paul, Adam was a videographer who routinely filmed politicians as they addressed the targeted public. Additionally, Adam had limited expertise in video editing and lacked the time to edit videos. While Adam filmed press conferences and statements made by politicians, Paul edited the videos, which made the skill sets of both practitioners complementary.

Adam was clear about why he was approaching Paul, telling the researcher that he "did not find the time" to edit the video. The other reason for the imbalance in power between the pair was Adam's seniority and experience. This meant that Adam was given more responsibility within the department by the two managers, Sonam and Nag[12].

Seperich and McCalley (2006) state that power is given to the various functional activities of the organisation and this form of authority is related to the importance of an activity or function. The two managers mentioned in this interaction managed two functions within the PPR departments. Sonam managed social media campaigns of the political party and he was senior to Nag who, as mentioned previously, was the media relations manager. The practitioners in the department reported to both managers. When asked about who Paul and Philo reported to, they told the researcher that "it depends on which manager's work they were doing". This meant that when managers had to complete specific tasks, they called on either a group of practitioners or individual practitioners. Furthermore, if the practitioners had questions, according to Paul, "If it had anything to do with the news media, then we could go to Nag. If it is related to social media campaigns, then we go to Sonam". Though Adam was placed below the managers, he was the go-to man for both Sonam and Nag when it came to video production. His filmed content was utilised on the party's regional platforms, and if the press conferences or statements made by leaders had national significance, they would be aired nationally. The content was also often broadcast by regional media. Consequently, Adam's work brought him into contact with members of the political class and members of the news media, which increased his social capital (Edwards, 2006) to usurp and assume power when required.

Another sign of the difference between Paul and Adam was their choice of professional attire. Kannangara (2019) states that professional groups have different dressing styles that reflect their social groups. Additionally, Carr et al. (2009) mentions that one way in which power can be denoted is through attire. The attire and style of managers and practitioners in Figures 4 and 5 help demonstrate the presence of an informal structure. Adam's clothes mixed the manager's style (white/off-white shirts) and blue jeans (similar to Paul's). Alternatively, the managers Sonam, head of the communications department, and Nag, head of media relations, wore formal pants and white or off-white shirts. Sonam wore a Nehru Jacket[13], which is worn generally by the political class in India (Tarlo, 1991) and signalled he was important. In contrast, the lower-level professionals dressed

[12] The names Sonam and Nag are a pseudonyms meant to protect the identity of the participants
[13] Nehru Jacket: is a hip-length tailored coat for men or women, with a mandarin collar, and with its front modelled on the Indian achkan or sherwani,

informally, wearing jeans, T-shirts (men and women) or Kurtis[14] (women). Adam's attire resembled a combination of the two choices. While his blue jeans were in keeping with what the lower-level professionals like Paul wore, the white/off-white shirts were identical to the manager's attire. This style was influenced by his interactions with different groups both within and outside the organisation.

Another indication of how Adam usurped and assumed power was by sharing the managerial space whenever the managers were present in the room. When the managers were away, and Adam was working on online campaigns, he shared space with the practitioners. Seperich and McCalley (2006) mention that usurping and assuming power are not too difficult when one is located in a branch office. Furthermore, the study of proxemics, concerning the distance between people and the physical space they acquire, highlights the presence of power (Lunenburg, 2010) between practitioners. The analysis of space indicated that managers usually seated themselves at a convenient distance from the practitioners, which enabled them to overlook practitioners and their computer screens as they worked.

As mentioned previously, the interaction below concerned the production of a video about a speech made by a local politician, which was filmed by Adam and edited by Paul. Some sections of the raw footage shot by Adam were interrupted by ambient noise and the audience, who periodically partook in sloganeering. This meant that the video needed editing. The following subsections below highlight how power was usurped and used by Adam to exert control over Paul. The interaction began when Adam was asked by Sonam, the manager, if the minister's speech was ready, to which Adam replied by saying "it's ready". On hearing this, Sonam walked out of the room and Adam made his way to Paul.

[14] Kurtis: is an upper garment worn by women in the Indian sub-continent

Figure 5

Usurping and Assuming Power: this interaction shows how a senior member of a PPR department (Adam, standing, in white shirt) assumes power and exerts control over the work of Paul (seated, blue T-shirt).

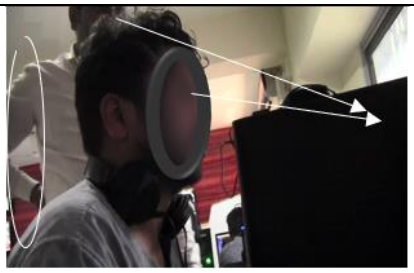
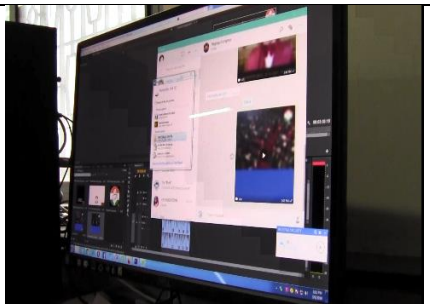
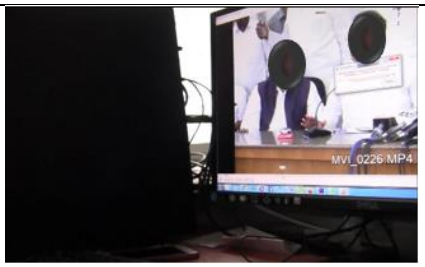
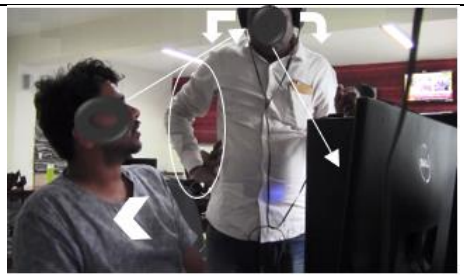
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಸರ್ ಬಿಡಿ ಇದು ಒಂದು ಬೇಗ ಬೇಕು	 Image 5.0
	English Script	sar bidi idu(.) >°idu ondu°< bega beku	
	Translation	sir leave this this-one is needed urgently	
Paul	**Kannada Script**	ಏನಿದು ಸರ್	 Image 5.1
	English Script	Yenide sar	
	Translation	what is this sir	
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಸ್ಪೀಚ್ ಇದೆ ಇದು ಕುಟ್ಮಾಡಿ ಇಟ್ಕೊಳ್ಳಿ ನಾನು ಆಧಾರಲಿ ಎಡಿಟ್ ಮಾಡಿಸ್ತೀನಿ	 Image 5.2
	English Script	↑spic ide: (.)idu kutmadi itko:lli nanu adhara:li edit madistini	
	Translation	It's a speech cut it and keep i will edit it	
Paul	**Kannada Script**	ಅಷ್ಟು ಎಡಿಟ್ ಮಾಡ್ಬೇಕಾ ಯೆನ್	
	English Script	↑astu edit madbeka,yen madbeka	
	Translation	how much do i edit the whole thing or what	

			Image 5.3
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಫುಲ್ ಇದೆ ಅಷ್ಟೂ ತಗೊಳ್ಳಿ ಏನ್ ಅಧರನು ಅಷ್ಟು ಕಟ್ ಮದ್ ಬೇಕು ವರ್ತಿಕಾದೆ ಕಟ್ ಮಧ್ ಬೇಡಿ	 Image 5.4
	English Script	phul ide as:tu tagolli: (.)>en adharanu astu kat mad beku< vartikade:(.) °kat madh bedi°	
	Translation:	It's the full thing take the whole thing and in that it has to be cut in some parts cut that	
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಆಡಿಯೋ ಚನಾಗ್ ಹೈಡ್ರೆ ತಗೋಳಿ ಆಡಿಯೋ ಹೇಗಿದೆ ನೋಡ್ಕೊಳ್ಳಿ	 Image 5.5
	English Script	adiyo:: hengide nodi >adiyo<chanag hadre tagoli	
	Translation	Take the bits in which the audio is good see how the audio is	
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಈಡೇರು ಇಲ್ಲ	 Image 5.6
	English Script	ideru illa	
	Translation	not here	
Paul	**Kannada Script**	ಇವರು ಕಾಂಗ್ರೆಸ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ಇದ್ರು	

	English Script	iva:ru ↑xxxxxsnalli: idr:u:,=	
	Translation	he was in the xxxxx (party name)	Image 5.7
			
Adam		=haa::	
			Image 5.8
	Kannada Script	ಇವರು ಕಾಂಗ್ರೆಸ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ಇದ್ರು	
	English Script	ivaru ↑xxxxx >nalli id[d-]	
	Translation	he was in the xxxxx (party name)	Image 5.9
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಕಾಂಗ್ರೆಸ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ಇದ್ರು ಬಿಜೆಪಿ ಹೋಗಿ ಮತ್ತೆ ಕಾಂಗ್ರೆಸ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ	
	English Script	[xxx]xxx >nalli id<ru:xxxxiya: hodru matte >xxx nalli °wapas°-	Image 5.10
	Translation	he was in the xxx then with the xxx and back to the xxxx (party name)	
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಇದು ಇಲ್ಲ ಈಡೇರಲಿ ಇನೊಂದು ಎಡ್	

	English Script	idu illa: (0.3) iderali:: >inondu ede:<	
	Translation	not this there is another one	Image 5.11
Paul	**Kannada Script**	ಇದು ಅಹ್	
	English Script	idu ehh-	
	Translation	this one eh	Image 5.12
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ನಂಗೂ ಯಾವು ಪ್ರೋಗ್ರಾಮ್ ಬಗ್ಗೆ ಮಾತಾಡ್ತಾರೆ ಅದು	
	English Script	>nangu yavu program bagge< matadtare (.) adu	
	Translation	i want the programmes he talks about	Image 5.13
Paul	**Kannada Script**	ಪ್ರೋಗ್ರಾಮ್ ಮಾತಾಡದು	
	English Script	programme bagge matadadu	
	Translation	the talk about the programmes	Image 5.14
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಅದು ಬೆಖಗ್ ಇಲ್ಲ	
	English Script	↑adu (.) bekh>ag illa<	
	Translation	that is not needed	

			Image 5.15
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಕೊಡಿ	
	English Script	Kodi	
	Translation	give it	Image 5.16
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಸಾಕ್ ಅಲ್ಲಾ	
	English Script	↑sa:k alla:	
	Translation	enough no	Image 5.17
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಬರತಾಳ ಆಡಿಯೋ	
	English Script	ba:rutala adiyo:	
	Translation	the audio will come no	Image 5.18
Paul	**Kannada Script**	ಉಮ್ಮ್ ಬರುತೆ	
	English Script	um:m baru:te:	
	Translation	umm it will come	
			Image 5.19
Paul	**Kannada Script**	ಫುಲ್ ಹಾಕ್ ಬೇಕಾ	

	English Script	°phul hak beka°	 Image 5.20
	Translation	put the full thing	

5.3.3 Establishing Seniority

The interaction began when Adam approached Paul and said "°sar bidi id u(.) >°idu ondu°< bega beku" which translates to "Sir, leave this, this one is needed urgently" (figure 5, image 5.0). The first part of the statement is said softly and at a faster pace. Speaking softly can indicate that a person wants to communicate discreetly (Walker, 2017). Before the interaction began, Adam told his manager that the video was ready. Hence, when Adam told Paul about the video, he may have tried to be discreet because he had just told the Sonam, the manager that the video was ready.

The use of the word "Sar" (Sir) by Adam and Paul, as stated previously, indicated that the pair belonged to different social groups. The difference between the practitioners was that of seniority. Additionally, as mentioned Adam often seated himself with the managers, which allowed him to usurp power. The opening line (Figure 5, image 5.0) is a demonstration of Adam's exercise of power, as he interrupted Paul, who was preoccupied. This interruption showed that Adam had little regard for the work Paul was doing as he attempted to push his agenda through. Paul responded by saying "Yenide sar" which translates to "What is this sir" (image 5.1). Paul turned his face away from the camera to meet Adam's gaze, and hence the analysis of Paul's facial expressions is inconclusive. However, the verbal cues indicated that Paul's tone was relaxed unlike his tone observed in the previous interaction with Nag (Figure 4).

When Paul conversed with Adam, he spoke loudly, which made him sound confident. This confidence is further endorsed as he took the pen drive from Adam without acknowledging his presence. Although Paul attempted to meet Adam's gaze, he could not because of his seated posture and the immovable chair (image 5.0). The analysis of gaze directions indicated that Paul was relaxed, and he did not fear Adam's presence. Furthermore, non-verbally, Adam stood behind Paul and gazed at the screen in front of Paul, who showed no uneasiness that can be attributed to Adam's presence, which is in contrast to the previous interaction (Figure 4). Adam and Paul had complementary skills and have

worked together in numerous instances to create online video content. However, on some occasions similar to this, Paul did not appreciate the additional workload. In Paul's interview, he stated:

> Every day I make between three to five videos, some are long, while others need more work. On days when this type of work (Adam's video) comes my way, it increases my workload. Everybody wants their work on time, so it is better if it is planned.

Therefore, the pair shared a comfortable relationship which at times could get difficult because of the pressure placed on a practitioner's professional output. The fact that Adam could pass on video editing work to Paul in the manner that he did demonstrates how Adam usurped power to ensure a task was completed. Seperich and McCalley (2006) mention that often those with seniority tend to rest on their past performances and contribute less than they should.

5.3.4 Urgent Need

As the interaction continued, Adam began to pass on instructions to Paul, which confirmed his hierarchal position. Paul questions Adam on the contents of the drive before plugging the drive into the USB port of the computer by saying, "yenide sar" which means "what is this sir". Adam replied by saying "↑spic ide: (.)idu kutmadi itko:lli nanu adhara:li edit madistini" which translates as "its a speech cut it and keep I will edit it" (image 5.2). The pause after the words "↑spic ide:" (it is a speech) was a result of Adam waiting for Paul to navigate through the contents of the pen drive. The other point in the analysis is the rest of the line "idu kutmadi itko:lli nanu adhara:li edit madistini" (cut this and keep, I will edit it). Here, Adam instructed Paul about the job that needed to be done urgently.

By stating "I will edit it" Adam softened the directive by implying that Paul had little to do and that most of the work would be done by Adam. This information about the task was a verbal strategy to help Adam make Paul help him complete the task. In reality, Adam was reducing the force of the directive. Paul, at this moment, is disadvantaged because he is unable to locate the file on the drive. Therefore, he does not know the extent of the job, which makes him dependent on Adam's instructions. The dependency is further highlighted when Paul asked Adam (image 5.3) "how much do I edit the whole thing or what" (↑ashtu edit madbeka ,yen madbeka), which is a question to which Adam replied by saying "phul ide as:tu tagolli:(.)>en adharanu astu kat mad beku< vartikade:(.),°kat madh bedi°" (it is the full thing take the whole thing and in that it has to be cut into some parts cut that)(image 5.4). Therefore, by providing Paul with information, Adam was making him aware of a urgent need.

As the interaction continued, Paul made Adam wait for some time before he looked for the video (image 5.0 to image 5.4). Adam has his right hand on his waist, referred to as arms akimbo[15] by Mehrabian (1969), which implies he was waiting. Interestingly, it is also a non-verbal signal that indicates an individual is overburdened (Burns, 1991). Adam was simultaneously working on an online campaign, and the added responsibility of completing this video caused him stress. Waleed (2018) observed that a person's akimbo posture is an expression of aggravation when something is beyond an individual's control. In image 5.5, Paul navigated through the different folders on the USB drive to find the file (image 5.5 and 5.6). He was assisted with verbal cues provided by Adam, who said "ideru illa" which translates as "not here" (image 5.6). Adam said "not here" or "not this one" because Paul was accessing the wrong folder.

5.3.5 Special Knowledge and Influence

Seperich and McCalley (2006) state that in organisations, some individuals can use persuasive skills to gain the attention of other individuals. In every organisation, certain members are recognised as having influence with those who hold power and authority. At times this influence is used for unselfish motives to benefit the organisation. However, if the one who has developed a rapport with members in power (like politicians within the party) is interested only in benefiting himself, others do not benefit and resentment is fostered (Seperich & McCalley, 2006). In the interaction, Adam is seen to draw on special knowledge, gained from his social network.

In image 5.7, Paul asked Adam "iva:ru xxxxxnalli: idr:u:,=" (he was in the xxxx). At this point, Adam leaned over Paul and latched on to his words by saying "=haa", implying that he was paying attention to Paul. The use of "=haa" (image 5.8) was a strategy to make Paul repeat his question, probably because Adam missed the question. Non-verbally, Adam's gaze is fixed on the monitor placed in front of Paul, indicating that Adam was paying attention. Paul by this time had found the file on the drive and began to play the video. As he scrolled through the different parts of the video, he pointed his finger at the screen, where the politician making the speech appeared (image 5.9). Paul's pointing was also the reason for Adam directing his gaze towards the screen. Paul said "ivaru XXX >nalli [idd-]" (he was in the xxxx) (image 5.9). Adam replied by cutting Paul off and saying [XX]XX >nalli id<ru:xxxxx: hodru matte >xxxxx nalli °wapas°-(he was in the xxx (party name) then with the xxx (party name) and back to the xxx (party name)). Here, Adam explained to Paul that the politician had defected to

[15] Arms akimbo: refers to placing hands on hips, arms bent at the elbows which are pointing outward, often in a standing position.

another party some time back, and now he had rejoined the party. Thus in this section, Adam can be seen to draw on special knowledge that he had gained from his networks.

In the Indian political environment, it is a common practice for politicians to switch parties as pointed out by Seema (2017). In this case, the fact that the politician had left the party and rejoined it confused Paul, whose question signalled that Paul was not merely listening to Adam but also taking an interest in the task at hand. In the feedback session, Paul said, "When I saw his face, I remembered that this politician had left the party and so I was a bit confused". This statement highlights that Adam had more knowledge compared to Paul about the people within the political party. During the feedback session, Adam was asked how he knew if a politician had joined a party or left the party. He said, "I don't know all the time, but sometimes, I know when people move in and out of the party before it is official". When asked about how he gets to know, he stated that "his friends (which includes the managers and the secretaries of the politicians) told him because most often he would have to record statements for publicity". Being privy to such information is another indicator of Adam's access to special knowledge that was used to usurp power.

The speaking overlap in the conversation observed above (images 5.9 and 5.10) is a wilful violation of the rules of turn allocation (Schegloff, 1999). The overlap also demonstrated a sense of urgency (Schegloff, 1999). Additionally, it showed that Adam knew the answer to Paul's question, as explained above. Furthermore, for the first time, Paul directed his gaze towards Adam when he answered his question. The end of the line accompanying image 5.10 highlights an incomplete sentence because Paul shifted his gaze towards the monitor and seemed no longer interested in continuing the conversation.

Adam continued the conversation by further instructing Paul. He said, ">nangu yav programme bagge< matadtare adu" (I want the programme he talks about). When Adam mentioned the programme, he referred to a policy employed by the party when it was previously in government. One such scheme to promote employment was called the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (MNREGA),[16] which had its funding reduced by the government of the day. Snippets from the video, each focussing on a specific issue, had to be edited into smaller clips. At this time, Paul said "programme bagge matadadu", (the talk about the programmes). The use of the words "I want" is an example of a direct and explicit directive from a superior to a subordinate

[16] Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Act 2005 or MNREGA, earlier known as the National Rural Employment Guarantee Act or NREGA, is an Indian labour law and social security measure that aims to guarantee the 'right to work'.

(Holmes & Stubbe, 2015). Here, Adam was using special knowledge to tell Paul what needed to be done. In this section, Adam shared information with Paul about the politician over several turns, which was a verbal strategy to attenuate the force of the directive. Additionally, it was also a stratagem by which Adam used special knowledge to usurp power and ensure Paul worked on editing the speech. As the interaction continued, Paul opened the pen drive and looked at the video, which showed that Adam had exerted control over him.

5.3.6 Regulating Practice to Exert Control

In the interaction, as Paul began to listen to the video, Adam asked him for the headset so that he could listen to the audio himself. He said "kodi" (image 5.16) which means "give it". The words "give it" in the context of the interaction is a direct directive that can display power. In image 5.16, Adam is observed positioning his right hand in close proximity to Paul's ear to take the headset from Paul, which is not polite because it shows Adam being impatient, trying to force Paul's actions.
A few moments later Paul hands over the audio headset to Adam.

In the next frame, Adam asked Paul if the audio was good enough by saying "↑sa:k alla:" (enough no?) (image 5.17). Given that at this point Paul could not listen to the speech (Adam had the headphones), this was a strategy to invite Paul to agree with him. Furthermore, before saying "↑sa:k alla:" (enough no?) Adam moved his head from right to left in a gesture that signalled satisfaction with the video (image 5.17 to 5.19). Paul responded by saying "um:m baru:te:" (image 5.19), with a reclining posture, stretching his back, and at times playing with his phone (obscured) as Adam continued to evaluate the video.

Paul's reclined posture and constant change in gaze direction appeared to signal a lower level of engagement. Meanwhile, Adam's eyes were open wider than usual, which demonstrated that he was continually evaluating information. The difference in the behaviour of the two practitioners could be put down to accountability. Therefore, when Adam reviewed the footage; he seemed focused, tense and attentive. After he reviewed the footage, Adam checked with Paul if the sound in the video would be acceptable. He said "barutala adiyo:" (image 5.18), which meant "will the audio come" (is the quality of the audio good enough?), to which Paul replied "um:m baru:te:" (um:m it will come) (image 5.18 and image 5.19).

The use of "um:m" can either be a filler indicating that a person is thinking (Schegloff, 2010), a boundary marker (Iimuro, 2006), or a hesitation (Brennan & Schober, 2001). In this instance "um:m" can be seen as a filler and boundary marker. In the feedback session, Paul said, "I wanted to start

working on the video as soon as I could". The repetition of the word "baru:te:" (will come) also signified that Paul agreed with Adam on the sound quality of the video (Tannen, 1987).

The above interactions highlight how power is employed by practitioners having unequal relationships. The difference between the two interactions is that the first interaction highlights how entitled power is used by the manager Nag to exert control over Paul, a practitioner in the department. In the second interaction, a senior member, Adam usurped power to exert control over Paul, to ensure an urgent task is completed. In both instances, the individuals in power, Nag and Adam, are seen to regulate the practice of Paul. These regulated practices shaped the experiences of Paul, who acknowledged that he did not take an interest in the PPR strategy of the department. He said, "I just do what is told to me", indicating that he was not motivated.

5.4 Conclusion

The chapter shows how in PPR practice power embedded in an organisation's structure is used to exert control over practitioners. The first interaction between two practitioners, Paul and his manager Nag highlighted how practitioners rely on organisational structures and persons of authority who regulate PPR practice. In contemporary PPR practice, managers primarily interact with the strategists, political secretaries and politicians, who are members of an organisation's hierarchy. Thus, the managers' reality was shaped by the department's structure, in turn, the managers exerted control over practitioners to ensure that they produced content that was in line with an organisation's narrative.

Both interactions show that the practitioner's autonomy is restricted by managers and senior practitioners who use authority to exert control. This infringement negatively impacted the experience of practitioners because it is known to reduce the morale of practitioners (Seperich & McCalley, 2006). Furthermore, how Nag and Adam exerted control over Paul can be seen as a way in which power was used to stifle Paul's creativity. Additionally, Paul's experience on social media and his opinion on what content was required to be produced by the department was silenced. By not taking notice of the practitioners, the manager did not take advantage of their practical knowledge, which could indirectly result in a loss of votes and negatively impact the goals of the PPR department.

Chapter Six

The Political Public Relations Environment Experience

6.0 Professional Culture and Discourse: An Overview

This chapter examines the production of a social media post, along with the post itself. Here, the focus is on power, embedded in the process by which individuals acquire specialised knowledge, skills, attitudes, norms and interests needed to perform their professional roles. These cultural attributes are a part of organisation culture that shape professional production processes through which regional, cultural and organisational ideologies are embedded in the products of the practice. More specifically, the focus of this chapter is the knowledge sources used in the production process of political content. Here, the analysis highlights how the different sources of knowledge, skills, and norms of the creation process exert control over the practitioners and embed the organisation's ideology in the products of the practice.

The examination of social discourse throws light on aspects of professional socialisation and its impact on professional practice. Hence, activities, behaviours and routines are often observed in a social environment, which must be examined to gain a proper understanding of how power is embedded in communication products (Irimiea, 2017). The examination of a social environment includes the examination of social structures which help practitioners orient themselves to essential resources required for conducting their practices. These resources can exert control over a practitioner's practice. Thus practitioners cannot be seen as pawns moved around at will by their social environment, but as knowledgeable actors who attribute meaning to the actions that can shape and renew the understanding of their social world (Schneider, 2007). Thus, the aim here is to investigate how social facts are assembled to produce objective social media content.

6.1 Attack Politics as a Professional Practice

Attack politics is an area of academic interest in political public relations (Pratheepwatanawong, 2017; Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2019), political communication (Brooks, 2010; Mattes, 2006) and political science (Roese & Sande, 1993). At times, the phenomenon of attack politics is referred to as "negative advertising" (Brooks, 2010; Mattes, 2006; McNair, 2017; Roese & Sande, 1993; Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2019). Negative advertising or negative campaigning is the process of deliberately spreading negative information about someone or something to worsen the public image of what is described. A colloquial, and somewhat more derogatory, term for the practice is "mudslinging". Attack politics is

defined as a strategy used in political campaigns where candidates or parties deliberately focus on criticizing and discrediting their opponents rather than promoting their own policies or achievements. Attack politics can manifest in various forms, including but not limited to political advertising, negative campaigning, public speeches, social media posts, and debates. According to Brooks (2010), attack politics involves the use of aggressive and often personal attacks to undermine the credibility and reputation of political opponents. This strategy aims to sway public opinion by highlighting the perceived flaws and failures of the opposition, thereby positioning the attacking party or candidate as the more favourable choice.

Empirical research concerning attack politics is growing, particularly with the rise of social media platforms as channels of political communication (Ansari & Riaz, 2020; Mattes, 2006; Valli & Nai, 2022). Early research by Roese and Sande (1993) asked voters what they thought about attack politics and found that they almost always expressed disdain. Roese and Sande (1993) also found that more frequently the perceived truthfulness of a political attack determines its effectiveness. Garramone (1984) found that negative advertising recalled by voters as untruthful tended to produce a backlash effect - for example, if attack politics content engendered strong feelings of negativity towards the source itself but had little impact on the audience's perceptions of the attacked object. Attack politics content interpreted as more truthful, however, had the intended effect of making evaluations of the target more negative. Another frequent finding is that voters' partisan affiliations and attitudes predict their reaction to negative advertising. Attack politics content can also be used to demoralise voters, negatively influence public trust and polarise communities. There is little to research available on what knowledge, skills or experiences are required to create attack politics content. Therefore, there is a scarcity of research on attack politics with a focus on the practitioners who produce political content which is meant to negatively impact other PPR campaigns.

Attack political content at times can be sourced from the news media and repurposed in a manner that attacks the opposing camp. Most commonly, this is done by using older, outdated videos of protests or riots from a news media publication and publishing it as current news (Kundu, 2022), also referred to as "malinformation" (Soares & Recuero, 2021). Here, the terms 'malinformation,' 'misinformation,' and 'disinformation' are used to describe different types of false or misleading information. According to Wardle and Derakhshan (2017), 'misinformation' refers to false information that is spread without the intent to deceive. 'Disinformation,' on the other hand, is false information that is deliberately created and disseminated with the intent to deceive and manipulate the audience. 'Malinformation' involves the use of genuine information that is shared with the intent to cause harm, often by taking it out of context or presenting it in a misleading way. These definitions are crucial for

understanding the different ways in which information can be manipulated in political public relations (PPR) practices. The creation of attack politics content is routinely restricted to short posts or images, with some text meant for circulation on social media platforms. Here the creation of attack politics content provides a professional context from which the interaction can be understood.

6.2 Background to the Interaction

After the terrorist attack in Pulwama, Kashmir[17], the Indian government attacked Balakot[18], a region in Pakistan, on 26 February 2019 (see section 5.2, Chapter 5). However, there were doubts cast over the success of the Indian mission in Balakot[19]; where alleged terrorists were reportedly killed (BBC, 2019). The opposition parties echoed these doubts, which drew a sharp response from the prime minister of India[20]. Hence, there were two narratives which conflicted with each other, creating the backdrop for the social situation and context of this interaction.

As mentioned previously, most politicians organise, attend and participate in election rallies because it is a powerful strategy to reach the masses (Jaffrelot, 2015). In one such election rally, the prime minister delivered a speech where he attacked the opposition by blaming previous governments for the lack of investment in the country's armed forces (Mahaprashasta, 2019). Furthermore, he stated that the country was feeling the absence of Rafale fighter jets[21] because the previous government of the Indian National Congress (INC) had failed to invest in the country's security. Thereby, he implied that the INC had compromised the country's national security by not purchasing fighter aircraft for the Indian Air Force.

This attack was a jibe at the government's principal opposition because the INC had formed governments for close to 59 years in different periods. Moreover, one of the campaign strategies of the Bharatiya Janatha Party (BJP) was to accuse and attack the INC for not doing anything to advance the country in the years after independence (Sharma, 2020). This narrative was challenged by the INC, whose leaders cited the establishment of defence companies in India and the procurement of defence equipment to arm the military by previous congress governments. Hence, both political parties were trying to control the narrative.

[17] Pulwama is a city and notified area council in the Pulwama district of the Indian-administered territory of Jammu and Kashmir. It is located approximately 25 kilometres south of the summer capital of Srinagar.
[18] Balakot is a town in Mansehra District in the Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province of Pakistan.
[19] The Indian mission refers to the Indian Air Force's mission to bomb a Jaish-e-Mohammed terror camp in Balakot, Pakistan in February 2019.
[20] Narendra Modi was the prime minister seeking re-election at the time.
[21] The Dassault Rafale is a French twin-engine, canard delta wing, multirole fighter aircraft designed and built by Dassault Aviation.

In an election rally, the prime minister made a speech which was accompanied by a Twitter campaign that aimed to negatively impact the INC. Social media, in particular, "X" (Twitter - an online social media platform popular among politicians and political followers), was used to create political debates that were fuelled by PPR practitioners belonging to both parties, as reported by *The News Minute* (TNM) (TNM Staff, 2019). In response to the allegations made in the speech, and the accompanying Twitter campaign, the INC accused the prime minister of corruption in the purchase of the Rafale jets procured by the Indian Air Force (A. Bhattacharya, 2019). Furthermore, a social media post was created as a reaction to highlight the contributions of the previous INC-led governments to the defence of the country. The social media post was about the "Hercules"[22], a cargo aeroplane produced by Lockheed Martin. Figure 5 shows the social media post produced by the PPR practitioners, with a translation of the text in the post.

Figure 6

The Indian Airforce Hercules social media post which was produced by the interaction presented in Figure 6. The post was created to respond to an attack made by a rival political party, which stated that the successive governments formed by the Congress Party had done nothing to modernise the Indian military. On the right is a word-to-word translation of the post.

What did the Congress do in 60 years?
The Indian Airforce was brought the famous Herculus aeroplane

a) The plane has four engines
b) It can land in any weather condition
c) It can fly for approximately 13 hours
d) India has 6 Herculus aeroplanes

This (cargo) aeroplane can carry more than 10 tanks, more than 10 millitary trucks and more the 100 soldiers at a time. Recently the plane made a record landing close to the Chinese border and the Chinese were scared.

[22] The Lockheed C-130 Hercules is an American four-engine turboprop military transport aircraft designed and built by Lockheed (now Lockheed Martin)

6.3 Introducing the Participants and their Knowledge Systems

The interaction presented below took place at the regional office of a national-level political party in India. The participants in the interaction belonged to the social media department and were observed collaborating within a professional work situation to create political content. The observations of participants when creating content showed that the process of creating attack political posts commonly began with practitioners forming "ecological huddles" (Goffman, 1957) to share ideas and experiences. Goffman (1957) used the term to describe specific situations or encounters where individuals (in this case, professionals) come together in a focused or unfocused manner. These gatherings are characterised by informal interactions, often devoid of institutionalised rules. An ecological huddle, in the context of this chapter, can be described as a group of PPRPs engaged in conversations, sharing glances, and reacting to each other's gestures. In what follows, the coming-together of the practitioners also brought together different skills and knowledge systems that played an important role in the production process.

The professional work situations that witnessed the formation of ecological huddles had some significant features that provide the interaction with context. One particular feature was the office environment in which practitioners were seated while collaborating. The space occupied by the practitioners was limited, which prevented them from facing each other and meant that they did not necessarily maintain eye contact during conversation. Their gaze was mostly directed towards the computer screens placed in front of them. Computers and mobile phones were an important resource used in the production of social media content, and hence practitioners interacted with screens (computer or mobile phone) alongside face-to-face interactions. All practitioners worked on computers placed against the wall and were therefore seated beside each other. Thus, face-to-face interactions were also a common resource observed in the creation process. Additionally, there were six television sets mounted on one of the walls in the room (the wall to the right of the practitioners), which were tuned to different news media channels.

The interaction below focused on two participants who were at the centre of the content creation process, named Philo and Ken[23]. While Philo possessed the technical skills required for the production of social media posts, Ken generated ideas for the posts. Furthermore, Ken had no official academic background in media or communication studies. However, he was an experienced screenwriter in the local film industry who specialised in creating digital content and was responsible for the creation of ideas in attack politics posts. Similarly, Philo had no formal education in communications. Having said

[23] Philo and Ken are pseudonyms meant to protect the identity of the practitioners.

that, she had received a diploma in graphic design and was responsible for designing social media posts, banners, brochures etc for the department. Though neither of these members of the department had a formal communication degree, they were trained by the political organisation to perform social media-related tasks through a series of workshops organised by the party. The lack of an education in public relations meant that the practitioners were not guided by public relations theory when conducting their practice. Hence, when producing PPR content the practitioners did not take into account legal requirements such as copyright law that are relevant to the practice of producing social media text. Instead, they relied on regularised practices of borrowing images from the internet. However, their experience of participating in political campaigns shaped their knowledge systems and impacted the production process.

In the interaction, as well as Ken and Philo there were two other, incidental participants (see Chapter Three), Joe and Harvey (names changed). Although Harvey and Joe are not visible because they were seated outside the camera's frame (Harvey is partially visible with his back to the camera), their contribution to the interaction was important to the analysis because they participated in the ideation process. Joe and Harvey shared a close relationship with Ken; in the moments before the interaction, the three men (Joe, Harvey and Ken) were observed taking a coffee break at the same time.

6.3.1 The Indian Airforce Hercules Interaction

The interaction began as Ken walked into the room and took his seat beside Philo, who was working on other tasks. Philo paid no attention to Ken, who interrupted her by asking her when she could begin creating content meant for circulation on WhatsApp and Instagram. Ken required Philo's assistance because he did not have the necessary technical skill set (computer software skills concerning design) to create a social media post. Here, the IAF Hercules is the subject of a social media post that challenged the opposing narrative (that congress has not done anything) by creating an alternative discourse which implied that the party has made the Indian Air Force a strong military unit.

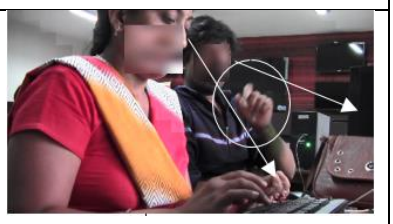
Ken was responsible for the creation and circulation of posts on WhatsApp, X (Twitter) and Instagram. Before the interaction, Ken looked at his phone and interacted with two mobile applications. One was a news application and the other was the X (Twitter) phone application. The mobile applications helped him read the news, which informed him about the prime minister's speech and the allegations made in the speech concerning the INC. Hence, the news media informed Ken about the allegations, which made it the first source of knowledge to contribute to the production of the IAF Hercules post. The following interaction began as Philo informed Ken of her readiness.

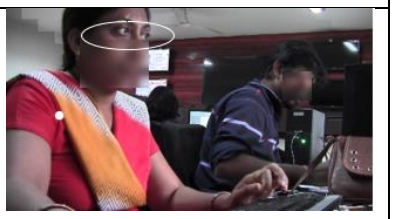
Figure 7

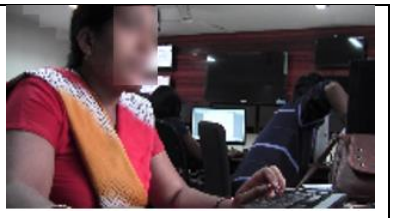
Creating the Indian Airforce Hercules Post: this interaction created the Indian Hercules social media post meant for circulation on sites such as Facebook, Instagram and WhatsApp. Philo is in the red, yellow and white dress and Paul wears a blue t-shirt with white stripes.

Ken	**Kannada Script**	ಆಯಿತಾ ಎದು ಮಾಡಿ ಒಂದು ಇಎಫ್ ಹೆರ್ಕ್ಯುಎಕ್ಸ್	 Image 7.0
	English Script	aita: (0.3) edu maḍi (.) ondu iaf hercu,les.	
	Translation	over do this one iaf hercules	
Ken	**Kannada Script**	ಇಎಫ್ ಹೆರ್ಕ್ಯುಎಕ್ಸ್ ಇದು ಒಂದು ಹಾಕಿ	 Image 7.1
	English Script	iaf hercules >idu ondu haki<	
	Translation	iaf hercules this one you put	
Philo	**Kannada Script**	ಇದುಅ	 Image 7.2
	English Script	°idua:a°	
	Translation	this one	
Ken	**Kannada Script**	ಇದು ಒಂದು ತಲ್ಲೂರಿ ಅಹ್ ಇದು ಒಂದು ಫೋಟ್ ಹಾಕಿ	 Image 7.3
	English Script	idu ondu (.) talluri (.) ah idu ondu photo haki:	
	Translation	this one move it ah this one photo you put	
Ken	**Kannada Script**	ಮತ್ತೆ ಅಹ್ ಒಂದು ಅದು ಒಂದು ಐತಲ್ಲಾ ಎದು ಎದು ಎದು	

	English Script	matte (.) ah ondu: adu italla (0.2) >edu edu edu<	
	Translation	and that one there was one this this this	Image 7.4
Philo		Hmm	
Ken	**Kannada Script**	ಇಎಫ್ ಹೆರ್ಕ್ಯುಎಕ್ಸ್ ಿದೆ ಅಲ್ಲ ಆದ್ ಯೀವದೇ ಡೋದ್ ಡೋದ್ ಪಾಯಿಂಟ್ಸ್ ಇದೆ ()ಆಮೇಲೆ ಎಷ್ಟು ಇದೆ	
	English Script	iaf hercules (.)ide alla (.) adhu yavadu dodh dodh points ide (0.4)amele: estu ide	Image 7.5
	Translation	iaf hercules is there no what are its big big points and how much is it	
		4 Minutes later	
Ken	**Kannada Script**	xxx ಎಪ್ಪತ್ತೆರಡು ವರ್ಷಗಳು ಅವರು ಏನು ಮಾಡಿದರು	
	English Script	xxx aravatuattu varsagalanu: enu mad□idaru	
	Translation	what did the xxx do in sixty years	Image 7.6
	Kannada Script	ಅದು ಬೇರೆ ಫಾಂಟ್ ನಲಿ ಪಟ್ಟಿ ತೆಗೆದು ಬಿಡಿ	
	English Script	(0.6) adu bere font nali (0.3) pati thegudu bidi	
	Translation	that's in a different font remove the margin	Image 7.7
Ken	**Kannada Script**	ಆಮೇಲೆ ಇಎಫ್ ಹೆರ್ಕ್ಯುಎಕ್ಸ್ ಇಎಫ್	
	English Script	Amele (0.2) iaf hercules (.) i(.)a(.)f indian iaf	

	Translation	then iaf hercules (.) i a f indian iaf	 Image 7.8
Harvey		↑indian airforce	
Ken	**Kannada Script**	ಈ ಆ ಫ್ ಹೇರ ಕ ಹರಡುಅ ಹಡಗು ಹರಡುಅ ಎದು ಎರೆದ line ಮಾಡಿ	 Image 7.9
	English Script	iaf her cu les haradu:a: °hadagu° (0.4) haradu:a: (0.1) edu eredu line madi	
	Translation	iaf hercules airship (0.4) ship (0.1) make this two lines	
Harvey		((indistinct))	
Ken	**Kannada Script**	ಒನ್ ನಿಮಿಷ ಸರ್ ಪೆಣ್ ಇದೆಯಾ ಪೆಣ್ ಪೆಣ್ ಪೆಣ್ ಪೆಣ್	 Image 7.10
	English Script	one nimisha sir pen ideya pen(.)>°pen pen pen°<	
	Translation	one minute sir is there a pen pen pen pen	
Philo	**Kannada Script**	ಪೆನು ಇದು ಒಂದು ಬಿಡ್ಲಾ ಸರ್ ಇಲ್ಲಿ	 Image 7.11
	English Script	pen:u idu ondu beda:la sir illi,	
	Translation	pen this one no body leaves here sir	
Ken	**Kannada Script**	ಹಕೀದಿರಾ	

			
	English Script	↑hakiddira,	
	Translation	Did you put	Image 7.12
Joe	Kannada Script	ಹಾಕುತ್ತೇನೆ	
	English Script	hakuteni:	
	Translation	I will put	Image 7.13
Ken	Kannada Script	ಯಾವ ವರ್ಷ	
	English Script	yava varsa	
	Translation	which year	Image 7.14
Harvey		1998	
	Kannada Script	೧೯೯೮ ತ್ತೇನೆ ಯಾರು ಇದ್ದರು xxxx ತ್ತೇನೆ	
	English Script	1998 tane: (0.2) yaru edaru (.) xxx (name of a popular leader) tane:	
	Translation	1998 who was there xxxx only no	Image 7.15
Harvey		((indistinct))	
Ken	Kannada Script	*indistinct* ಯಾರು ಇದ್ದರು ಪಿಎಂ	

	English Script	*indistinct* yaru edru pm	 Image 7.16
	Translation	*indistinct* who was the pm	
		indistinct	

6.3.2 The Object of Persuasion

The interaction in Figure 6 began with Ken saying “aita” which translates to “over” (image 7.0), as he enquired about Philo’s willingness to work on the creation of a post. Philo nodded slightly (along with a partial yawn) (image 7.0) as she moved back in her seat into a more relaxed position. The Kannada word “aita” is used as a transition marker to move the conversation from one topic to another, which in this case is the creation of the post (Holmes & Stubbe, 2015). Furthermore, “aita” is also used as a question, to which Ken expected no answer because he noticed Philo had completed the task she had previously been working on. Although Philo did not provide Ken with a verbal answer, she responded non-verbally. Philo’s body language, in particular the movement backwards and forwards along with the yawn, were indicators of her decreased interest in the task (Guggisberg et al. 2010). More importantly, it indicated that one task was complete and that she accepted another which was about to begin (Foley & Gentile, 2010).

Ken set the agenda by saying “(0.3) edu maḍi (.) ondu iaf herculus” which means “do this one Hercules” (image 7.0). Thereby, Ken communicated his intent to create a social media post concerning the Indian Airforce’s Hercules aeroplane. The first part of the conversation, which consisted of “edu madi” (do this), gave Ken time to think and process his thoughts (Schegloff, 1991). The other half, “onedu iaf hercuálus” (do this one Hercules), is where Ken announced the task at hand as he stated the subject of the post. At this point (image 7.0), Ken was sitting back in his chair in a relaxed manner with his gaze fixed on the monitor placed in front of Philo. Philo leaned forward and typed “IAF Hercules” into Google Images, and a series of images of the aeroplane appeared on the screen. The choice of the IAF aeroplane was strategic because it invoked ideological sentiments concerning nationalism to persuade the targeted audience. For the creation of the post, Google images can be seen as another source that impacted the creation of the post. However, Ken decided to use the IAF Hercules aeroplane because of the results of a Google search with the keywords

“Military Aeroplanes purchased by the congress government in India”. At the time of the interaction, when he was asked why a cargo plane and not a fighter (war) aeroplane, Ken said,

> I put this in the search (and showed the researcher his phone where a Google search of the keywords “military Aeroplanes purchased by the congress government in India”) the first result is about the Rafale controversy, the second is a list of all the aeroplanes that the military have and the third result is the “Super Hercules C-130J”, which only a few countries have so it is good for the post.

In doing so, Ken revealed that Wikipedia was another source which shaped the knowledge of the practitioners. Additionally, the idea that the IAF Hercules was a large aeroplane that only a few countries possessed was also a key factor that determined why it was selected by Ken.

As the interaction continued, Philo’s action of typing IAF Hercules on the screen prompted Ken to state the first part of the next line. As soon as the images appeared on the screen, Philo oriented herself towards them. Furthermore, she switched Windows from Internet Explorer (which had images of the IAF Hercules aeroplane) to the design software, which she used to select the background of the post. On the screen were three templates previously used to create similar posts. Philo selected the template with a black background. Her choice of the black background was practical. She explained, “When I start to make a post it is better if the background is of one colour, you can make changes”. These aspects of the practice are related to some of the regularised practices analysed in chapter 4 above. While Philo’s choice of a black background was functional, Ken’s background choice was ideological. The blue background which he chose signified the alternative (Kannangara, 2019) to the nationalist regime, represented by the colour saffron (Ahmed, 2019; Bhatia, 2020). Not only the background but the above choice of picture for the social media post contained hidden power within it and is analysed in the later part of the chapter. The following section begins with an analysis of the background.

At this point, Ken moved forward in his chair with his finger pointed towards the blue template (image 7.1) on the screen and said “IAF Hercules >idu ondu haki<,” (IAF Hercules this one you put), as shown in image 7.1. Philo responded to Ken by saying “iduaáa” (this one). The facial gestures of both participants are intense and tight (image 7.2), with the gazes of them both focused on the screen. This showed the high degree of attention required for creating a post.

6.3.3 Selecting the Image

As the interaction progressed, Ken said (image 7.3) “idu ondu” (“this one"), which was followed by a short pause. With these words, Ken directed Philo to select a particular digital picture. Philo followed

Ken's instructions without showing any signs of resistance to his selection of an image to accompany the text in the post. However, he asked Philo to continue scrolling through other images that could be used alternatively.

The pause between "idu ondu" (this one) and "talluri" (move) (image 7.3) showed Ken becoming irritated, which became evident as the interaction progressed. Philo understood the pause as a marker of Ken's satisfaction with his pictorial choice. Spatially, Philo was sitting straight, facing the computer screen, so she did not notice Ken's non-verbal signals. Ken expected Philo to scroll through the pictures available on the screen to find alternatives and select the best image. Instead, Philo minimised the screen and went back to working on the design software, an action that seemed to irritate Ken. His irritation was evident by the tightening of his facial muscles, and the blinking of his eyes (image 7.3) (Meadors & Murray, 2014). Furthermore, the word "talluri" (move) said with a raised intonation was accompanied by tight facial gestures. In the feedback session, Ken agreed that he looked irritated in the transcript. He said, "campaigns are usually stressful and the room is so noisy that it happens, I was just trying to show her so that it could be done fast". While noise and stressful situations are recognised to be factors that can cause anger, other factors that can cause irritation and anger are a lack of knowledge, inadequate preparation, fear of making mistakes, the pressure to perform and difficulty in problem-solving (Jackson & Wingfield, 2013). The analysis recognises that all factors may have caused Ken to be irritated, while the focus here is on Ken's lack of knowledge about the IAF Hercules aeroplane.

In image 7.3, Ken pointed at the monitor placed in front of Philo and made a particular hand gesture. The hand gesture represented Ken asking Philo to minimise the screen; his fingers were pointed outward at first, and then they moved to the centre where all the fingertips touched each other. The hand gesture was Ken's way of communicating to Philo so that he could continue to look at images of the IAF Hercules on the internet browser. On realising what Ken wanted her to do, Philo minimised the window (design software) and displayed the images available on the internet browser (Google Images) to Ken. Furthermore, she scrolled through the images on display until Ken said: "ah idu ondu photo haki" (ah this one photo you put) (image 7.3). The stress falls on "photo", which is a code-switch, an English word inserted into the Kannada. Code-switching refers to the practice of alternating between two or more languages or dialects in a conversation or communication context (Heller, 2010). Code-switching involves the seamless transition from one language or linguistic variety to another, often within the same conversation or even within the same sentence or phrase. Here, Ken used code-switching to help him draw Philo's attention to the task of selecting a digital photo.

The image selection process continued as Ken used a hand gesture which pointed at the screen and flicked the images repeatedly upward. The gesture is partially displayed in image 7.4 and it communicated to Philo that he wanted her to scroll up. Additionally, the hand gestures were accompanied by "matte (.) ah ondu: (.) adu italla >edu edu edu<", which means "and that one there was one, this, this, this". The pauses in the line are best explained as the time taken by Ken to find the picture he was looking for on the screen. The words "this, this, this" were repeated in quick succession because Ken tried to stop Philo from scrolling past the picture on the screen. In this line (image 7.4), Ken referred to the image he had first selected, which displayed the side profile of the aeroplane, which was aimed at showcasing its ability to carry cargo. Nonetheless, the image was not selected in the end because it portrayed the aeroplane's cargo-carrying ability but lacked a sense of aggression.

6.3.4 Selecting Text

This section observed Ken requesting a colleague (Harvey) to provide him with information that could help him create the textual elements of the post. Ken collaborated with Harvey because he did not have the necessary information to create the message of the post which, as the analysis in the previous section showed, had caused him to get irritated with Philo. In what follows, Ken is helped by Harvey, who sources information from Wikipedia to help Ken and Philo produce the textual element of the IAF Hercules social media post. In image 7.5, Philo was observed moving her head (from side to side, indicating that she was ready) and saying "hmm" (image 7.5) to indicate to Ken that she had completed the previous task and was ready to receive further instructions. Ken turned his head towards Harvey (obscured in image 7.5), who was sitting on the other side of Ken's chair (image 7.5). Ken reached out to Harvey by tapping his elbow.

Ken did not address Harvey by name or the customary "Sir" (as explained in Chapter Four). Instead, he tapped Harvey's elbow (image 7.5), which signified the equal relationship between the two practitioners. Harvey glanced in the direction of Ken, who at the time was going through the news to track the developments of the day. Harvey like Ken was trying to make a social media post but on another topic, which further confirmed that sourcing ideas to create an attack politics post from the news media was a routine practice.

As Harvey's glance met Ken's gaze and the pair made eye contact, he said "IAF Hercules" and leaned forward towards Harvey (image 7.5). There was a short pause that followed, apparently caused because Ken appeared to take time to process his thoughts and formulate his words (Brennan & Schober, 2001). The analysis of non-verbal cues is unavailable for this line because Ken turned away

from the camera towards Harvey. Nevertheless, he was heard saying “idu alla”, translated as “this one”, before pausing again. “idu alla” (image 7.5) was used as a filler (Brennan & Schober, 2001), which appeared to indicate Ken’s struggle with processing his thoughts and finding the words to express himself properly.

A short pause followed as Harvey turned towards Ken and made eye contact with him. Ken then said to Harvey “IAF Hercules (.)ide alla (.) adhu yavadu dodh dodh points ide (0.4) amele: estu ide”, the translation of which is “IAF Hercules is there no what are its big big points and how much is it” (image 7.5). The use of “adhu yavadu”(that) is similar to “what's that or which one is that”. It was used routinely by Ken, apparently as a filler (Brennan & Schober, 2001). In this conversation, the filler further draws attention to Ken’s possible struggle with processing his thoughts. Ken asked Harvey to help him find relevant points for the social media post. Harvey responded by saying “ok” and continued to go through the Google News webpage. Therefore, Harvey did not immediately start looking for the information that Ken wanted. Ken’s request to Harvey for relevant points about the IAF Hercules aeroplane showed that although the practitioners selected elements of the post that carried hidden ideology, there was an intention to provide accurate information.

As Ken completed his interaction with Harvey he moved back into his chair. Philo altered the post’s background, most notably the selection of different shades of blue. Ken looked at the monitor and then back at the phone. He then said “amale: eshtu ide” (and how much more) a line intended for Harvey as he attempted to re-engage with Harvey. Again, the non-verbal cues were unavailable because Harvey was seated away from Ken. Because Harvey did not respond to Ken, it is difficult to analyse Ken’s intention. However, at the time of feedback, Ken explained:

> I must have asked for the cost of the aircraft to show that our government (referring to his employer; the political party which was previously in government) had invested in the country’s security. When these posts are made, we gather all the information and then select what best conveys the message.

Ken’s constant engagement with X (Twitter) via his phone showed that social media platforms were an information source that exerted control over Ken’s actions. Ken's seating position, which was away from the camera, prevented the camera from capturing his interaction with X (Twitter). However, in his interview, Ken explained that he used X (Twitter) to update himself about current debates that needed to be addressed by creating similar content. Therefore, he read content on X (Twitter) and sourced information on current political trends, issues and ongoing allegations made by the rival camp.

6.3.5 Hidden Power and Propaganda

The following section analyses the lines that deal with the textual element of the post. The analysis of how text and images are selected is essential because they encode ideologies (Kong, 2014), which are significant elements in persuading the targeted public. The interaction continued with Ken saying to Philo "xxx aravattu varsagalanu: enumadáidaru", which translates as "what did the xxx do in sixty years". Ken shares with Philo the headline of the social media post attacking the rival narrative. By using this headline, Ken offered a rebuttal to the prime minister's speech, in which he stated that the opposing party had not invested in national security in the last sixty years.

What followed was a long pause (0.6) (Image 7.7), which is explained by Ken's willingness to wait for Philo to type what was said. Simultaneously, Philo applied margins to the post and experimented with blue shades to complement the background. Ken noticed Philo applying margins and continued to provide her with further instructions on aspects of design. He told Philo to increase the font by saying "adu bere font nali", the translation of which is "that's in a different font" (image 7.7). Although Ken verbally asked Philo to choose a different font, he really wanted Philo to increase the font size, as evidenced by the nonverbal signals which can be seen in the Figure above.

Ken pointed towards the computer screen placed in front of Philo when he delivered the line. His hand gesture is shown in image 7.7, four fingers pointing outwards and parallel to the thumb moving to the centre simultaneously. The hand gesture appeared to have two objectives. The first was to help him express his ideas (McNeill, 2005) to Philo, and the other was to help Philo visually understand the instructions (Guellaï et al., 2014). On her part, Philo acknowledged Ken by saying "hmm" and nodded her head (side-to-side direction) (image 7.7), signifying her acknowledgement of him (Helweg-Larsen et al., 2004). After a brief pause (0.3), Ken gave Philo additional instructions regarding the header, which contained some written text. When Philo added margins to the post; Ken asked her to remove the margins by saying "pati thegudu bidi" which translates to "remove the margin" (image 7.7). Philo acknowledged Ken by saying "°haa°" softly. The choice to remove the margins was practical because Ken realised the text needed adequate space.

Philo made changes to the post by moving the mouse positioned in front of her and awaited further instructions (image 7.8). The movement alerted Ken to the need to come up with content for Philo. He continued by saying "amele (0.2) I a f hercules indian iaf". The translation of "amele" is "after that" or "then", employed as a marker to continue the conversation (Yu, 2013). However, it was also a filler used by Ken, as he took time to mentally create the textual elements of the post (Brennan & Schober, 2001). In image 7.8, Ken was observed shifting his gaze away from Philo's monitor, in front

of him, to Harvey's monitor beside him. Harvey was looking for information related to the aeroplane, which was essential to Ken's future instructions to Philo. This is another demonstration of Ken's reliance on Harvey to source information for the post.

Harvey's computer monitor, at this time, was displaying relevant information about the IAF Hercules aeroplane, which explains Ken's shifted gaze direction. Ken, said "iaf hercules (.) I(.) a (.)f Indian iaf." (image 7.8) The pauses in the line allowed Ken to process his thoughts (Schegloff, 1991). Moreover, they helped him with his effort, with the abbreviation "IAF" used several times earlier. Harvey realised Ken was struggling and prompted him by saying "Indian Airforce". Ken acknowledged Harvey by turning his head towards him, and then turned his head back towards Philo's monitor. Ken continued by saying "iaf hercules", thereby effectively echoing what Harvey had said, which further underlined Ken's acknowledgement of Harvey's prompt.

Ken utilised Harvey's prompt in saying (image 7.9) "iaf hercules haradua °hadagu° (0.4) ha:ra:du:a: (0.1) edu erdu line madi". This line is crucial because it attempts to inform the targeted public about initiatives of the previous governments led by the party which employs these participants. The verbal analysis is broken down into two parts, the first part "iaf hercules haradua °hadagu° (0.4) ha:ra:du:a: (0.1)" (iaf hercules airship). The first part of the line also has three pauses, which were caused because Ken was mindful of Philo, who needed time to type in Kannada. Furthermore, the word °hadagu° is said in a low tone because Ken realised that Philo was aware of what needed to be typed. Another pause preceded the second part of the line (Image 7.9), which was "edu eredu line madi" which was said slightly quicker than the first part of the line. The translation of "edu eredu line madi" is "make this two lines". Philo immediately broke the line and refitted the words into two lines, thereby demonstrating her responsiveness. Additionally, it highlighted Ken's interest in the design of the post as well as its message.

6.3.6 Accuracy and Propaganda

This section begins with Ken struggling to create the message of the IAF social media post. In the line "iaf hercules haradua °hadagu° (0.4) ha:ra:du:a: (0.1) edu erdu line madi" (image 7.9) discussed above, Ken's interest in the design of the post stemmed from the fact that he was waiting for Harvey to find information about the issue. This reliance on Harvey for information was confirmed by Ken's constant shift in gaze direction from Harvey's monitor to Philo's monitor, observed in images 7.8 to 7.10. Once Harvey sourced information from the Internet, he said something which could not be seen and heard by the camera and the microphone and hence remained "((indistinct))" in the transcript (image 7.9). Having said that, Ken responded by taking a piece of paper to write down what Harvey

was saying. But Ken did not have a pen to write down what Harvey was telling him (image 6.10) and so, he replied to Harvey saying “one nimisha sir” (one minute sir). His gaze was directed towards the table in front of him as he searched for a pen (image 7.10). Unable to find what he was looking for, he asked Philo for a pen in the second part of the line “pen ideya pen (.) >pen pen pen<” (one minute sir is there a pen pen pen). Soon, Ken realised that she did not have a pen, and therefore he continued searching for a pen (image 7.10 and 7.11). Philo responded to Ken by saying “pen:u idu ondu beda:la: sir illi” (image 7.11), the translation of which is “pen this one nobody leaves here sir”. Here, she implied that she did not have a pen. The verbal cues are accompanied by her gaze direction, which scans the table (image 7.11). Ultimately, Ken’s colleague Joe provided him with a pen, allowing Philo to redirect her gaze towards the monitor.

After Ken got a pen, his attention was attracted by Joe, who asked Ken about a task that was unrelated to the social media post analysed in this chapter. Following this interruption, Ken went back to his paper and asked Harvey “which year” by saying “yava varsa”. Ken wanted to know which year the government acquired the aeroplane for the armed forces. Harvey responded by saying “1998” (image 7.14), which caused some confusion amongst the practitioners. Ken was unsure about which government was responsible for the purchase of the aeroplane. The information regarding which government was crucial because it raised concerns about the accuracy of the information. If the post highlighted that the rival camp had purchased the aeroplane, the post could become an embarrassment to the social media team as they would be highlighting the achievements of their rivals. Hence, Ken tried to reconfirm the information he had about the introduction of the Hercules airplane.

Ken replied by saying “1998 tane: (0.2) yaru edaru (.) xxx tane:”, the translation of which is “1998? who was in power? Xxx (party name)?” Harvey’s response could not be picked up by the audio recorder or the camera. Yet, it drew Ken’s attention, and so Ken began to move towards Harvey’s chair (image 7.14). The non-verbal analysis for this part of the interaction is unavailable because Ken turned his back to the camera and Harvey was outside the camera's frame. Therefore, the interaction is marked *indistinct* (images 7.15 and 7.16). Nonetheless, some of the text picked up by the audio recorder provided some verbal cues for the analysis. Ken asked Harvey who the Prime Minister of the country was in the year 1998, only to discover that the rival camp occupied the government in the year 1998. It was only later that both practitioners discovered, that 1998 was an election year that caused the government to change (Jalan, 1999).

Although the aeroplane had been delivered to the Indian armed forces in 1998 when the rival party was in government, the government that had ordered the plane in 1995 was led by the party that

employed Ken and Harvey. One way of making sure which party was responsible for buying the plane was to confirm which prime minister had ordered the aeroplane, and that is why Ken asked Harvey who the prime minister was when he said: “yaru edru pm” (who was the PM) (image 7.16).
Once Ken and Harvey realised the prime minister responsible for ordering the aeroplane was a former party leader from their party, they decided to continue with the post. In the interview, Ken was asked why he decided to continue with the post, and he responded by stating two reasons. The first was that their client had sanctioned the purchase of the aeroplane in 1995, a year in which the government was led by Ken’s employer, and that the aeroplane was delivered to the same government before the elections of 1998. The other was Ken’s belief that on social media platforms such as WhatsApp, individuals do not fact-check so the chance of people remembering that 1998 was an election year was low. The decision to focus on the organisation rather than the prime minister responsible was strategic, because the post claimed that the party purchased the plane, attempting to equate the party and the government as a single entity.

6.4 Analysing the Post

The interaction between Ken, Philo and Harvey resulted in the creation of the social media post presented above in Figure 6 and meant primarily for circulation on WhatsApp. However, the post was utilised on other platforms such as Facebook, X (Twitter), and Instagram. For the practitioners, the text and the image of the post were of equal importance because using texts along with images was a regular practice, as shown in chapter 4. The purpose of the post was to create a narrative to show that the previous government had invested in national security. This section of the analysis highlights how practitioners frame political power into military power, to pursue an agenda and persuade audiences. In doing so, it demonstrates how the products of practice are ideological. The following is an analysis of the post (Figure 6) created by the interaction analysed above.

6.4.1 Analysing the Text

The tool kit employed to analyse the textual element of the social media post (Figure 6) is guided by the critical discourse studies framework (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Some tools such as lexical analysis, iconographical or iconological analysis, foregrounding and backgrounding and over-lexicalisation have previously helped analyse social media posts by scholars examining strategies in PPR (Buccoliero et al., 2020; Hunt, 2019; Manor & Crilley, 2018; Pratheepwatanawong, 2017; Shami et al., 2019; Zappavigna, 2012). These tools are employed to analyse the textual and graphical elements of the social media post presented above. The textual components of the social media post are in Kannada, and therefore the translations are also analysed.

The first line in the analysis of the textual component is “xxx 60 warshadalli yenu madi du”, which means “what did the party do in 60 years”. In this line, individuals are hidden, and the entity “the party” takes the shape of a person. The lexical choice of “the party” forms the first point of analysis because Ken was unsure about who was in government in 1998 and who the prime minister of the country was at the time. Hence, the strategy of highlighting the party concealed information about the individual who signed off on the purchase of the aeroplane. Moreover, the current prime ministerial candidate (in the 2019 election) played no part in the process of signing off on the purchase of the aeroplane. Therefore, the strategy to highlight the party and not the candidate appealed to a political ideology represented by the party.

The translation of the second line is “The Indian Airforce was given the famous aeroplane”. In this line, the choice of the word “famous” is used to persuade individuals who interact with the social media post. When individuals engage with the post, they remain unaware of the aeroplane being famous and its technical abilities. Nevertheless, the choice of “famous” in this context is intended to make the audience believe that the aeroplane is the best choice (positive attitude). Furthermore, the post is silent on what makes the aeroplane famous when compared to other aeroplanes in its class. Regardless, the post lists some of the capabilities of the aeroplane, which are discussed below.

The following segment of the post has four bullet points. The analysis of these points reconfirms the argument that the bullet points were strategically placed to cater to the nationalistic ideologies of the target audience. The first line (Figure 6) “The plane has four engines” emphasises the number of engines on the aeroplane, but that is not what made the aeroplane famous. On the contrary, it was common for cargo aeroplanes manufactured at the time to have four engines (Dreher & Feigelson, 1984). Moreover, at the time of producing the social media post, several aeroplanes, both cargo and passenger, had four engines (Alves et al., 2020). Having said that, the choice to highlight the engines signified technological advancements which ideologically stimulate nationalism (Makhortykh & Sydorova, 2017). Thereby, the post catered to the nationalist sentiments of the targeted public. The second bullet point “It can land in any weather condition” is best described as misleading because every aircraft requires certain acceptable conditions to make a landing (Smalikho et al., 2019). Additionally, the role of the pilot, who contributes significantly to the process of landing, is undisclosed in this bullet point. Ideologically, the analysis revealed that the post removes the human element of the armed forces.

The third bullet point “it can fly for approximately 13 hours” showcases the ability of aircraft to continuously fly long distances. Though the maximum duration of all modern cargo flights was similar, the line misleads audiences into believing this aircraft is special. Lastly, the fourth line declares that

India has six Hercules aeroplanes, but it remains silent about how many aeroplanes of this type are owned by similar-sized militaries around the world. Moreover, at the time of creating the post, there were several reports of how the Indian Air Force was severely short of fighter aircraft. As a result, the post misleads the intended audience by highlighting the benefits of the Hercules aircraft over the Indian Air Force's immediate needs, which were fighter aircraft.

The next few lines of the post read: "This (cargo) aero plane can carry more than 10 tanks, more than 10 military trucks and more than 100 soldiers at a time. Recently the plane made a record landing close to the Chinese border and the Chinese were scared" (figure 6). This part of the post claimed that the aeroplane could carry vast amounts of cargo. As mentioned earlier, the claims made in the post were not exclusive to this aeroplane. Several other aeroplanes, perhaps bigger ones available at the time, could carry the same load as the IAF Hercules (Panda, 2019). Therefore, the claims were strategic and misleading, they were intended to arouse the nationalistic sentiments of the targeted audience because it gave them a sense of superiority that fuelled national pride.

The final lines reference neighbouring China by highlighting that the aeroplane created a record by landing in rugged terrain close to the Chinese border (Pandey, 2013). The words state that "Recently the plane made a record landing close to the Chinese border and the Chinese were scared". In this line, a comparison is drawn with China, which highlights the discourse around nationalism. Geographically, India shares a border with Pakistan and China, which have previously been at war with India (Holslag, 2009). However, over the last decade, China and Pakistan have strategically aligned with each other and increased tensions with India (Pant, 2012). Historically, India claimed victory over Pakistan, though disputed, in a war that created Bangladesh, another neighbouring country to India. Similarly, the Chinese claimed victory over the Indians (also disputed) in the Indo-China War of 1962 (Wagner, 2016). The choice of comparison with China is ideological because it is a suitable alternative to Pakistan. Therefore, a comparison with China ideologically implied progress because China was considered a superpower by India (Sidhu & Yuan, 2003), whereas comparisons with Pakistan were considered regressive. After all, Pakistan's economy was not as strong as India's or China's (Pant, 2012).

6.4.2 Analysing the Images

Several theorists concerned with critical discourse studies have contributed models for analysing visual images (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018; Machin & Mayr, 2012; Van Leeuwen, 2008; Wodak & Meyer, 2016). The analysis presented below is referred to as "multimodal analysis" (Machin & Mayr,

2012, p7). The following section makes use of this analytical framework and analyses the visual component of the social media post presented above (Figure 6).

The analysis of the textual element in the Indian Airforce Hercules post highlighted strategies concerning hidden ideologies employed by the practitioners to persuade targeted groups by invoking nationalistic ideologies. Therefore, the text implied that previous governments which were headed by the political organisation represented by the practitioners contributed significantly to nation-building. Furthermore, the progress allowed for comparisons with other world superpowers such as China. The analysis of the visual elements of the social media post contributes significantly to enhancing that narrative, which aids persuasion, as Machin and Mayr (2012) have shown.

In the following section, five points of analysis were selected. They are the colour scheme, foreground and background, attributes, setting and salience (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The analysis of these visual elements of the post highlights the hidden ideologies present in the post, as discussed below. Therefore, by doing so, the analysis provides the chapter with a greater understanding of how ideologies are hidden for persuasion.

6.4.2.1 Analysing the Colours

The first point of the analysis is the colour scheme used in the post, which is separated into three different colours. The primary colour highlighted in Figure 6 is blue, and it is accompanied by other shades of blue. Additionally, the colours of the font used in the post are green, white, and yellow. The observations of the designing process witnessed Philo trying different colour schemes before finally selecting a combination of yellow-green and white. Initially, Philo chose yellow for all the words on the post. The choice of contrasting shades of blue meant that Philo settled on using a combination of three colours to highlight written text.

The analysis of the written text in the post is interesting because the font colours used are blue, green and white, which represent the colours of the Indian flag. Nevertheless, saffron which is also a colour in the flag, was left out of the social media post. Over the years saffron has become symbolical of the right-wing party (Bhatia, 2020), which was campaigning against Ken and Philo's employer. Therefore, as Philo stated in her interview, the use of saffron was "minimal" for content that targeted their audiences. Here, the practitioners' experience with the regularised practices of the department was the knowledge source that dictated the choice of colour. Therefore, the choice of colours used was deliberate and had significance for the participants.

Additionally, another colour (not on the Indian flag) was yellow, yet it was used because Philo wanted a colour that offered some contrast with the shades of blue. The use of yellow was also deliberate because yellow was one of the colours of the state (Karnataka) flag[24]. Here, the use of yellow was deliberate as it aimed at targeting the regional audiences of Karnataka, whose state flag is a combination of red and yellow (Prasanna, 2020). Therefore, the colours used in the post catered to the regional and nationalist sentiments of the targeted audiences.

As stated previously, the main colour scheme used in the post was blue, which is an alternate colour scheme that rivals saffron, which represents the rival political party (Bhatia, 2020). Jacobsohn (2009) analysed the Indian flag and pointed out that the middle of the flag is white, accompanied by the blue chakra (wheel). This combination represents the integration of different religious groups in the country (Jacobsohn, 2009). Furthermore, he states that the blue chakra represents the "balanced wheel of religion that sustains society"(Jacobsohn, 2009, p .9). Therefore, the analysis highlights that the colour scheme used in the social media post was intended to incite nationalistic sentiments.

6.4.2.2 Foregrounding and Background

In the foreground of the image is the Indian Airforce Hercules aeroplane, there are blue skies and an airport in the background. There is also extensive colour coordination in the images with the combination of light blue, dark blue and text, which is written in yellow and white. The part of the image which contains the aeroplane is bright with natural light being the light source. The post in Figure 6 shows an image of the aeroplane, which was strategically selected, as highlighted by the interaction analysed above. As the interaction showed, two pictures were initially selected by Ken. The first was a side profile of the aeroplane, which showcased the aeroplane's cargo-carrying prowess. The second image highlighted in Figure 6, is the front profile of the Indian Airforce Hercules aeroplane, which connotes aggression (Simonsen, 2005). The above description of the image and the consequent selection of the image indicate that this is an image intended to be aggressive.

The image depicts the front of the aeroplane, which creates an overwhelming experience, but this denotation is not its primary or only purpose. The front of the aeroplane projects aggression, which references the raids carried out by the fighter aircraft in Balakot, Pakistan, on the 26th of February 2019 in retaliation for the attack in Pulwama, Kashmir (see the background of the post above). The bullet points also reference the fighter jets in order to convey a sentiment related to conflict and nationalism. Further, Figure 6 connotes that previous governments were either equal to or more aggressive than the current government in matters concerning national security. It gives the idea that

[24] The colours of the Karnataka State flag are red and yellow (Prasanna, 2020).

India is one of the leading countries in the world because of the advances made by the previous government, which supports the textual component that reads “India is one of six countries in the world to possess this aeroplane”. This was another misleading statement because other countries had purchased this aircraft.

6.4.2.3 Attributes

The attributes of an image are concerned with the ideas and values communicated by objects (for example, an aeroplane or airport), which in this context is the IAF Hercules aeroplane. The attributes of an image are also about how objects in an image are represented and what discourses they communicate (Flowerdew & Richardson, 2018). In carrying out the analysis of objects, the meaning of every object is considered (Machin & Mayr, 2012). In Figure 6, the image of the aeroplane displays four engines of large size, which is typical of a technologically driven discourse that reflects the ideology of advancement (Simonsen, 2005). One remarkable feature of the image is the lack of personnel accompanying the aircraft; after all, as stated previously, humans control and operate machinery, in this case the aircraft. Moreover, the notion of investing in national security includes investing in the human element of the army, which was ignored. Instead, it focuses on the idea of one particular political organisation investing in national security by investing in military hardware and being aggressive with its neighbours.

6.4.2.4 Settings

In the image (Figure 6), the setting is an airport. Here, settings are used to communicate general ideas and to connote discourses and their values, identities and actions (Machin & Mayr, 2012). The airport observed in the image resembles a civilian airport, which can be distinguished from a military airport, which is usually smaller in size and harbours smaller fighter and trainer jets. Comparatively, a civilian airport accommodates larger passenger and cargo aircraft. In this case, the airport in the background contradicts the military discourse fuelled by the social media post. Nevertheless, in India, the expansion of air transport to different parts of the country was enabled by the policy of jointly using airports for military and civil purposes (Lal, 2015). Hence, it is a common practice in India for military planes to be stationed at civilian airports. Therefore, none of the attributes identified, such as the ability to carry cargo or land in rugged terrains, is highlighted in the social media post. The image does not portray evidence of any activity which the text highlights as the unique features of the aircraft. Furthermore, in magazines that cater to civilians, the sky in the background shows the luxury of space as found in civilian aeroplane magazines, which showcase the aeroplane as majestic and luxurious because it does not accompany other aeroplanes in the image.

6.4.2.5 Salience

Salience is where certain features in a composition stand out and draw attention, which foregrounds meaning (Machin & Mayr, 2012). Such features have central symbolic value in composition. In Figure 6 above, the text is foregrounded, and the image of the aeroplane is backgrounded. The text is foregrounded because it highlights the significant features of the aeroplane. The analysis of lighting shows that the picture is well-illuminated. This salient feature ensures that the aeroplane in the image stands out and draws the audience's attention. Therefore, by placing the aeroplane at the centre of the post, the symbolic value of aggression is utilized to convey sentiments of nationalism and persuade the audience. The analysis of text and image in Figure 6 underscores that hidden military power helps persuade the targeted audiences (Machin & Mayr, 2012) of PPR practitioners. The chapter demonstrates that power lies at an implicit level, and therefore it is only through critical attention to linguistic data and visual details that the implicit meanings are revealed.

6.5 Conclusion

Attack politics is a practice of organised persuasive communication, and organised persuasive communication involves professional situations in which practitioners are required to produce content that can be viewed as disinformation and/or misinformation. The regularisation of routine practices, in the context of sourcing knowledge (information) are observed exerting control over the beliefs and the actions of practitioners that help the organisation shape narratives. In this chapter, the focus on interactions highlights the power of information sources involved in the production of attack politics content. By doing so, this chapter adds knowledge of how power is embedded in the products of PPR practice. As practitioners of PPR produce content that can be classified as disinformation and malinformation, the analysis of interaction showed them making a conscious effort to provide accurate information to the audiences via social media posts. However, the analysis of the post shows that elements of the post mislead the audience. The fact that practitioners, as the interactions show, design content to mislead audiences has significant underpinning for research on misinformation or disinformation - practices that public relations practitioners have been accused of in the recent past.

The chapter demonstrates the practitioners' lack of knowledge and their reliance on internet sources to create content. The sources of information include professional knowledge and experiences, along with Google Images to select images for social media post. Additionally, the chapter helps identify the use of the Google Search Engine, Wikipedia, Social media platforms such as X (Twitter) and news media pages as important sources of information that contribute to the production of social media posts. These information sources have been observed to give rise to issues of polarisation that are caused by disinformation. Nevertheless, public relations research has rarely considered the sources of

information as components of organisation culture that can exert control over the practices of practitioners within a public relations department.

This chapter has presented empirical evidence to show that the elements of the post carry hidden power. An analysis of the textual and pictorial elements using the critical discourse studies framework accentuates how language is employed to create discourse. The analysis of the post further indicates the use of propaganda as a strategy in the practice of PPR in India.

Chapter Seven

The Language Experience

7.0 Language and Power: An Overview

The previous chapters examined different aspects of power and showed how power is exerted on the practitioners of political public relations (PPR) in India. Similarly, this chapter examines the use of language as a professional cultural factor. Here, language is understood as a factor associated with professional culture that must be considered, investigated and given attention to by organisations employing public relations services, because it impacts the outcome of public relations campaigns and the practice of PPR, as this chapter will show.

Language has been recognised as a tool of cultural unification (Salagare, 2017). Therefore, in the context of this research, which is focussed on a multilingual society like India, the use of dominant languages in political campaigns is both meaningful and impactful. Additionally, the status of a language and its spread in the public domain are achievements of conflict and power. Language domination in the context of this research refers to the process through which a language gains official status and is practised in institutions such as education, the judiciary etc. The problems concerning lingual conflict, power and politics are manifold in a country like India (Bhattacharya, 1988). This chapter focuses on how language, which is a part of an organisation's culture, is used to exert control over practitioners and shape their experiences as PPR practitioners.

7.1 Multilingualism and Organisation Culture in India

Language use and language-based identities have assumed a key role in Indian sociopolitical matters since the country's independence (Bhattacharya, 1988). There are 22 official languages in India and these languages are associated with specific regions and their respective cultural backgrounds (Bardhan & Gower, 2022). To bring together a diverse linguistic populace, Hindi was declared the official language of the country in 1950 (Bardhan & Gower, 2022). However, as Bardhan and Gower (2022) state, the declaration was met with grave objections by non-Hindi-speaking states, and some protests turned violent. As a result, according to the Official Languages Act, 1963 (amended in 1967) both Hindi and English are used for specified purposes such as resolutions, general orders, press communiqués and other official papers placed before the Parliament. Thus in India Hindi and English have gained the status of dominant languages.

The domination of one language gives that individual language power over other languages (Fairclough, 2001). The observations in this study indicate that practitioners of PPR used dominant languages to mobilise, persuade and reach the targeted public. This meant that PPR practitioners had to use multiple languages to interact with practitioners, which meant that multilingualism was an important aspect of the department's culture. In the PPR practice, the hierarchical sequence of languages was English, Hindi and Kannada. This was because the news media followed the same hierarchical sequence, and to attract the news media coverage, public relations departments had to prioritise English and Hindi. But, for the participants' department, Kannada was preferred because it was the local language and the practitioners spoke in Kannada. The practitioners had some level of competence in English and Hindi but these were less preferred.

In this chapter, language is observed as an inter-group phenomenon which fosters attitudes, social categorisation and identity, especially as it allows for comparisons with groups belonging to different regions and having different cultures (M. Kulkarni, 2014). Language use can create social boundaries, and divide and identify individuals as insiders or outsiders on the basis of assumed meanings (M. Kulkarni, 2014). Furthermore, language-based identities can be further cemented by accents and word choices that are seen as distinctive of certain language communities. The interaction presented below examines language as not only a communication tool but as a cultural mechanism that constitutes personal and collective identity which can be used to practise power. The interaction in this chapter is divided into two extracts.

7.2 Background to the Interaction

The interactions presented took place in the context of the 2019 Indian general elections, in which politicians used both modern tactics (social media campaigns) along with older tactics (door-to door campaigns and election rallies) to reach voters. Election rallies are an important part of an election campaign because they enable politicians to reach the targeted public (voters) of specific constituencies. The election rally mentioned here took place in the district of Gulbarga, Karnataka, India. The event witnessed several high-profile politicians share the stage (The News Minute Staff, 2019). Among the event's attractions were speeches, delivered by the prime minster (PM) and a former chief minister (CM). The first was delivered in Hindi by the incumbent prime minister (PM) seeking re-election. The PM was in the opposing party to the participants and so his speech was the object of the practitioners' attention. The other speech was in English and it was delivered by a former chief minister (CM) of the state of Karnataka, who was also the regional face of the political organisation. For the practitioners, election rallies were accompanied by online X (Twitter) campaigns, for which they produced content in the form of Tweets.

The interactions presented below (Extracts I and II) can be best understood when placed in the context of the politics of the multilingual practices of India. Lee (2023) in his introduction to his book on multilingualism in India states that "India is a multilingual country, with 1652 languages and dialects belonging to the five language families of India. Of these, 122 languages are spoken by over 10,000 speakers" (Lee, 2023 p. 57). While the Indian subcontinent has witnessed linguistic conflict before the 2014 General Elections (Nault, 2012), the BJP led by Narendra Modi[25] fuelled the linguistic conflict by creating a strategy that sought to persuade voters by promising them "economic development" that would eventually mobilise a "Hindu Rashtra" (land of the Hindus, for the Hindus) (Lee, 2023 p.63). The seeds of linguistic conflict began to take shape with the creation of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan and Nagari Pracharani Sabha (organisations created for the promotion of Hindi). These pushed for Hindi to be recognised as a national language (Lee, 2023). Hindi speakers began to accept Hindi as a symbol of national identity, which was not acceptable to non-Hindi speakers (particularly in the south of India), who began an anti-Hindi movement.

The languages used by practitioners as they participated in online campaigns are the subject of investigation in this chapter. The participants in the interaction that follows were South Indian and therefore they identified with the anti-Hindi movement. As a part of the practice, PPR practitioners participating in online campaigns created "Tweets" in English, Hindi and Kannada. To create content, they reacted to the speeches delivered by both politicians. However, the prime minister's speech was in Hindi, and the former CM spoke in English. The event (rally) was organised in the district of Gulbarga. Kannada is the official language of the district, which is situated in northern Karnataka. However, two local languages, Kannada and Marathi, are both commonly used in the region. Marathi is the local language of Maharashtra, the state which shares its borders with the district of Gulbarga and also influences the region linguistically (Sridhar, 2008). The practitioners in the social media team came from different parts of Karnataka. While Joe came from North Karnataka (close to Gulbarga), Adam came from the southernmost region of the state (close to Tamil Nadu). Pearl had an urban upbringing (Bangalore, southern half of the state). The practitioners had different language abilities. Although they all conversed in Kannada, they spoke different dialects. The following sections demonstrate how this lingual conflict impacts the practice of PPR in India.

[25] Narendra Modi is the current prime minister of India. He was born into a poor, low-caste family in Gujrat and began his political career by joining the Hindu right-wing group RSS (Lee, 2023).

7.2.1 Setting the Scene

The interactions took place in the office of the political organisation that employed the participants. The three participants partaking in the interactions in this chapter belonged to the social media team, and hence they shared the task of creating and posting messages on X (Twitter), referred to as "Tweeting". While participants created and posted Tweets from individual accounts created by them for work purposes, they also created Tweets for the official X (Twitter) handle of the party's regional office. Nevertheless, the posting of Tweets was organised by the manager, who had authority.
The participants were initially observed sitting in front of their computers. Ahead of them was a wall which had four large television screens, which broadcast news and live events. On the day of the interaction, the first speech broadcast was that of the incumbent prime minister at an election rally in Gulbarga, and he spoke in Hindi.

Pearl (name changed) is the primary participant observed in this chapter and the camera follows her in both interactions. The others were incidental participants: Joe and Adam and all three practitioners shared a relationship in which power was balanced. Both Adam and Pearl were senior members of the team however, at times and as noted in chapter Five, Adam assumed power to regulate the activities of the team on behalf of the managers. In the following interaction, the three participants were tasked with producing content (Tweets) for the online campaigns.

The online campaigns involved were the #Modimosa and #GoBackModi[26]. The #ModiMosa[27] campaign was regional and required content to be created in Kannada. The #GoBackModi campaign catered to the dominant, official languages of the region (English and Hindi). Before the interaction began, Pearl asked her colleague to turn on the television screens. A few minutes later she was joined by Joe, who sat behind her and indulged in some unrelated small talk. Joe was interrupted by Adam, who walked into the room and announced, "It is time for the speech". Pearl replied by saying the television was on and maybe the speech was being broadcast on another channel. Adam

[26] #GoBackModi is a hashtag and movement that protests and voices opposition to the Indian prime minister Narendra Modi's visits to various places. The hashtag is coined from "Go Back Modi", which is a slogan that was used during India's 2014 general election campaign against Narendra Modi, who later became Prime Minister. The campaign was led by opposition parties who accused Modi of being an outsider and not belonging to India due to his Gujarati background.
[27] #ModiMosa is a hashtag (social media campaign) run in opposition to the online campaigns by the BJP claiming good governance. The word Mosa, refers to "cheat" and it implies that Modi is cheating people by making claims about his government's achievements. More information on the campaign can be found on *The Quint's* report titled "*Modi Mahadayi Mosa: Cong, BJP Spar Over PM's Speech in B'luru*" https://www.thequint.com/news/politics/mum-on-mahadayi-and-corruption-of-bjp-leaders-congress-attacks-modi.

recommended a channel to Joe, who tuned in to the speech. Once the event was displayed, the practitioners shifted their gaze towards the television set.

Figure 8

Televised Visuals: Images showing on the television sets placed in front of the practitioners at the time of video ethnographic observations. The televised event was taking place in the region of Gulbargha (North Karnataka) and practitioners were reacting to the event in the city of Bangalore.

7.3 Extract I: The National and the Regional

The images in Figure 8 were broadcasting on the television sets as the interaction began, and show the Master of Ceremonies (MC) introducing the politicians to the audience. What follows is the first extract of the interaction examined in this chapter. In this section, two instances of language conflict are observed, wherein power and solidarity in professional relations are negotiated along linguistic lines. The languages in conflict in the first extract are Hindi and Kannada. Furthermore, Hindi is viewed as the dominant language because of its extensive use in Indian politics by politicians (Lee, 2023). Karan (2009) mentioned that Hindi is viewed as the language of political events, as it is common for Indian politicians, particularly national leaders, to speak in Hindi at rallies. This is largely because Hindi includes several Central, East-central, Eastern and North Zone languages, and certain words which sound similar are found in other Indian languages. However, these words may not necessarily have the same meaning. Additionally, Hindi has been seen as a unifying language by political leaders of Northern India, which is viewed as a seat of national power and has also been referred to as the

"Hindi Heartland"[28]. In the more recent 2019 Indian general elections, Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party's campaign was based on Hindu nationalism that was built on "Hindu, Hindustan, Hindi" (Lee, 2023). Here, Hindu refers to Hinduism as the religion, Hindustan (the land of the Hindus) refers to the country (India), and Hindi the language.

Hindi has thus become the dominant language of politics in India. In the extract, the practitioners took certain words in Hindi that have different meanings in Kannada and used them to create humour. Holmes (2000) states that humour is a less explicit way to "do power" and is generally acceptable in an informal setting, where there is a trend toward democratisation. Therefore, the analysis of humour in the following section is important for understanding how the Kannada language is used by the practitioners to create solidarity within the PPR department.

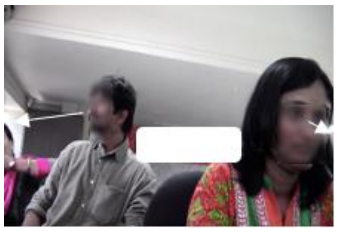
Figure 9

Sarcasm, Humour and Group Solidarity: The participant Pearl (dressed in orange and green) is interacting with Joe (Khaki shirt). The interaction highlights the use of humour to build group solidarity.

Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಮೋದಿ ಶುರುಮಾಧ್ಯ್ ಕ್ಸನ ಟೀವೀಟ್ಸ್ ಬೇಕು	 Image 9.0
	English Script	MODI SURU:MADH,>TAKSANA< TWEETS BEKU:	
	Translation	as soon as modi starts we need tweets	
Pearl	**Kannada Script**	ಮೋದಿ ಸಾಹೇಬ್ರಿಗೆ	 Image 9.1
	English Script	modi sahibrige	
	Translation	to modi the boss	

[28] The Hindi Belt, also known as the Hindi Heartland, is a linguistic region encompassing parts of Northern, Central, Eastern and Western India where various Central Indo-Aryan languages, subsumed (by the Indian census) under the term Hindi, are spoken (Lee, 2023).

Joe	**Kannada Script**	ಸಾಹೇಬ್ರಿ	 Image 9.2
	English Script	shaib↑ra	
	Translation	boss eh	
Pearl		*laughter*	
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಸಾಹೇಬ್ರು	 Image 9.3
	English Script	sahib ↓ ru	
	Translation	the boss	
Joe	**Kannada Script**	ಮೋದಿ ಸಾಹೇಬ್ರಿಗೆ ಒಟ್ಟಿಗೆ ಯಾರದು ಹೇಳಿದರು	 Image 9.4
	English Script	modi sahibrige (.) ottige yellaru heli:daru:	
	Translation	to Modi the boss together they said	
Polit-ician on TV	**Kannada Script**	ವಾಯು ಪುತ್ರ ಹನುಮಂತನ ಗಾಢವನ ಈಸಂದ್ರ ದಲ್ಲಿ ಪ್ರಧಾನಿ ಮೋದಿ ಅವರಿಗೆ ಕೋಟು ಸನ್ಮಾನಿಸುತ್ತೆನೆ	 Image 9.5
	English Script	vayu putra (.) hanu:mantana: (.) gada:,vana >isandrbhadalli< manya modi avarige (.) ko:tu: sama:ni::suttene:	

	Translation	The son of the air hanuman's gadha at this moment is given to honourable Modi to felicitate him	
Joe	**Kannada Script**	ಗಾಢವನ ((laughter))	 Image 9.6
	English Script	gadha:vana:: ((laughter))	
	Translation	donkey ((laughter))	
Joe	**Kannada Script**	>ಗದವನ ಅಂದ್ರೆ< (.) ಇದಿರೇ (0.2) ಕಥೆ	 Image 9.7
	English Script	>gadavana aandre< (.) idire (0.2) kathe:	
	Translation	gadavana means this (0.2) donkey	
Pearl	**Kannada Script**	ಕಥೆ	 Image 9.8
	English Script	↑kathe: ((laughter))	
	Translation	donkey ((laughter))	

7.3.1 Language as a Tool of Unification

Figure 8 shows images observed on the television screen during the introduction of the keynote speaker at the political rally. At the office of the political party, the practitioners are observed reacting. As the MC began speaking, there were instances in which he used certain words which had different meanings in the local language of the practitioners. Such words are examples of a "homonym", that is, a word which shares the same spelling or pronunciation with another word but has a different meaning. Homonyms can be a source of humour, wordplay and linguistic complexity in language (Ingram, 2023). The following sections focus on the use of specific words in Hindi that have different meanings in Kannada, which creates a humorous situation.

Whether a practitioner laughs and with whom, whether they are at work or somewhere else, and when and how are they laugh, are all important aspects of laughter as a social action influenced by sociocultural factors (Du, 2022). In Figure 9, the practitioner's gaze was directed towards the television sets (3 TVs were placed on the wall in front of the practitioners), which indicated that they were paying attention to the broadcast. This gesture of gaze marked the beginning of the interaction.

The first line was delivered by Adam, who moved away from the television set towards the back of the room and said: "MODI SURU:MADH,>TAKSANA< TWEETS BEKU:" (image 9.0). The translation of the line is "as soon as Modi starts we need Tweets". This line was directed to all the team members and not at any particular practitioner in the room. Therefore, Adam spoke loudly because the room was noisy on account of the volume of the TV, three other practitioners in the room talking, and the traffic outside the office. Additionally, as mentioned, Adam was the senior in the team and hence he was regulating the campaign activities in the absence of the manager. Loudness is often understood as an impolite gesture in conversation analysis literature (Walker, 2017). Nevertheless, the culture of the election war room[29] was such that practitioners routinely communicated loudly (particularly when making announcements) because the office was usually noisy. Moreover, Adam's seniority and the fact that he had to regulate the practice meant that he had power which may also be a reason why he was comfortable with speaking loudly.

The opening non-verbal cues observed in image 9.0, show Pearl reacting to Adam's announcement by shifting her gaze direction from the monitor towards the television screen placed on the wall beyond her computer. Hence, Pearl looked over the top of her monitor to catch the broadcast on the television. Her eyes were widened, which pointed towards her taking in information (McNeill, 2006). At this point, Pearl found that the speech had not yet commenced, so she shifted her gaze back to the monitor and continued to do some work unrelated to this interaction.

In his introduction of the politicians on the stage, the MC first referred to the Prime minister as "Modi Sahib" (Modi the boss). On hearing this, Pearl smiled as she continued to direct her gaze towards the monitor. Ekman and his colleagues (Ekman et al., 1990; Frank et al., 1993), state that there are two types of smiles, named "Duchenne smiles" and "non-Duchenne smiles". The Duchenne smile is genuine and felt, and is often said to be a spontaneous reflection of experienced emotion. Pearl's smile was authentic because it was a spontaneous reaction to the word "Sahib". Further proof of spontaneity is found in the verbal cue "modi sahibrige" (to Modi the boss) (image 9.1), which was a

[29] "Election war room" is a room in the building of a political organisation equipped with the technical means to gather information, plan strategy and direct activities in a political campaign.

repeat of the MC's words when he introduced the politician. As she said "modi sahibrige" (Modi the boss) her smile changed, here her eyebrows were slightly raised along with her right cheekbone. This type of smile has also been referred to as a false smile or "non-Duchenne" smile. In this case, it signalled sarcasm (Cheang & Pell, 2008). Pearl's reaction starts a series of genuine humorous exchanges between the participating practitioners.

Taking his turn in the conversation, Joe, who was seated beside Pearl, said "sahib↑ra" (Boss eh?) (image 9.2). While the intonation towards the end of the word implied that it was a question, the use of "sahib↑ra" is sarcasm (Holmes, 2007). Sarcasm in this instance is similarly signalled by Joe which, as Tabacaru and Lemmens (2014) showed, includes the verbal cues of a high intonation and the nonverbal cues of a raised eyebrow and cheekbone along with closed lips. Additionally, Joe's gaze shifted towards Pearl, which meant that he was engaging with her.

Immediately, laughter broke out amongst all three of the participants (Adam, Joe and Pearl) because of the colonial connotations of the word "sahib", which means "master", used especially among the native inhabitants of colonial India when addressing or speaking of a European of some social status. The use of "sahib" in Karnataka is rooted in colonial history, when native Indian officers of the British army were referred to as "sahib". The practice continues to this day and is observed in the present-day army of independent India to refer to an officer. The use of the word "sahib" has been observed in other Indian languages such as Hindi, Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali, Gujarati and Marathi. Although these languages are predominantly present in north India (Brass, 2005) they have a presence in the north of Karnataka.

Holmes (2000) states that humour can be used to emphasize power imbalance or challenge the status hierarchy. In this case, the word "sahib" is used to express respect (see Chapter 5). Nevertheless, sahib was used in Hindi to refer to the owner or master. The completion of the word "sahib↑ra" prompts Adam to respond to Joe by saying "sahib↓ru" (the boss) (image 8.3) and smiling. However, his laughter was subdued, unlike Joe and Pearl's. It can be suggested that Adam's laughter was forced because his right cheek was raised slightly as he reacted to the laughter around him. The intonated word "sahib↑ra" (boss) appeared to be a question and "sahib↓ru" appeared to signify agreement.

7.3.2 Creating Solidarity through Humour

Holmes (2000) mentioned that most workplace humour is inextricably context-bound and maintains solidarity amongst workers. The context here was the "Pradhan Sevak[30]"(prime servant) (A. Singh, 2019) and "Chowkidar Modi[31]"(watchman Modi) (Bose, 2019) campaigns aimed at projecting politicians of the opposing party as "servants and watchmen of Indian democracy". This throws light on the reasons for the laughter. On the one hand, the politician (Modi) strategically portrayed himself as a servant of the masses, and on the other hand, the MC referred to him as "Sahib", implying "Owner" or "Boss". The MC introduced the politician using the word "Sahib", which for the MC was a cultural title that can be equated to the use of "Mr" in western culture. However, the word "sahib" was interpreted by the practitioners as the "owner". Pearl appeared to be offended by the introduction and so, she reacted with laughter, possibly as a mechanism to minimise the offence.

The idea that humour and mockery can form resistance is a popular theme in humour studies (S. Weaver, 2010). In the above extract the word "sahib" is weaponised to mock Modi, and performs the function of building solidarity within the group. In image 9.4, Pearl continued "*modi sahibrige (.)* ottige yellaru heli:daru:", (Modi the boss, together they said), which was a reference to everybody at the rally cheering for "Modi the boss/master". Here, Pearl brought attention to the fact that everybody at the rally cheered for Modi the boss and in doing so, confirmed that she had found the usage of Sahib offensive.

7.3.3 Recognising the Opponent

At political rallies, it is customary for regional leaders to present guests with gifts and mementos. In this case, the prime minister (the chief guest) was presented with a garland, a traditional memento, and with some traditional attire which, as S. Kumar (2014) has pointed out, is a common cultural practice in India. Traditional mementos and attire gifted to politicians can also be ideological symbols which help them connect with audiences (Lilleker & Jackson, 2010). In this case, Modi was gifted the "gada[32]" see Figure 8 image 8.2, a weapon used by the mythological character Hanuman[33]

[30] Pradhan Sevak means "prime servant", a title coined by Narendra Modi during the 2019 Indian general elections.
[31] Chowkidar Modi: Narendra Modi has often referred to himself as a "chowkidar" (watchman), implying that he would not allow any corruption in the country. While campaigning in the 2014 general election, Modi in his speeches had promised that he would serve the country, not as a Prime Minister but as a "watchman".
[32] The gada:is the main weapon of the Hindu God Hanuman. It is a mallet or blunt mace from the Indian subcontinent. Made either of wood or metal, it consists essentially of a spherical head mounted on a shaft, with a spike on the top. Outside India, the gada was also adopted in Southeast Asia.
[33] Hanuman is a Hindu god and a divine companion of the god Rama. He is one of the central characters of the Hindu epic Ramayana.

(Lutgendorf, 1994). To many Hindu believers, Hanuman is a god (Lutgendorf, 1994), and hence the presentation of the "Gada" was an ideological message sent to the audience. Furthermore, as mentioned in the introduction, the BJP's 2019 general election campaign was built on "Hindi, Hindustan, Hindu" (Lee, 2023 p.67). The presence of the Gadha therefore brought together two ideological components of the campaign, which were language (Hindi) and religion (Hindu, symbolised in the form of the gadha)

While presenting the prime minister with gifts to felicitate him, the MC said "vayu putra (.) hanu:mantana: (.) gada:,vana >isandrbhadalli< manya modi avarige (.) ko:tu: sama:ni::suttene:" (Image 9.5). The translation is "the son of the air, Hanuman's gadha, at this moment, is given to honourable Modi to felicitate him". In this line the speaker, is narrating what is happening on the stage to the audience, which is why the MC uses the phrases "at this moment". The word "gadavana" is of importance to the analysis because it sparked a reaction from Joe. On hearing the word "gadhavana" Joe's facial expression changed to one of surprise, and his gaze direction shifted towards Adam, who remained out of the camera's frame (Image 9.6). Adam knitted his eyebrows (image 8.6), a signal of unfamiliarity with a situation (Sadr et al., 2003) because he appeared to have found the usage of "gadavana" unusual and funny. The reason was because of how it was said by the MC and what the first half of the word "Gada" means. In the line (image 9.6) the word "gadavana" is split into two, "gada:," and "vana" because of the MC's accent. The gadha (weapon used by Hanuman) is a homonym that can also mean "donkey" in Hindi. Hence, the practitioner made it appear like the MC had called Modi a donkey.

The manner in which the MC had said gadavana was used by Joe as a mechanism to not only create group solidarity but to recognise the people on the stage (who were members of the BJP) as opponents (also referred to as "othering"). Here, the process of othering refers to how individuals or groups are depicted as different, foreign, or "other". M. Kulkarni (2014) states that users of a language create social boundaries and identify insiders and outsiders on the basis of assumed meanings derived from language. Language-based identities are further cemented by accents and word choices that are seen as distinctive of certain language communities (M. Kulkarni, 2014). Hence, in this case, language was not only a communication tool but also constitutive of Joe's, Adam's and Pearl's collective identity. Thereby, language use served as a foundation for inter-group divides and fault lines.

In the next line, Joe was heard saying ">gadhavana aandre< (.) idire (0.2) ↑kathe:", the translation of which is "gadhavana means (.) this (0.2) donkey" (Image 9.7). In the line, the words "gadhavana" and "aandre" are said at a relatively faster pace possibly because Joe was eager to provide the other

practitioners with the translations of “Kathe”. Non-verbally, both practitioners engaged each other with their gaze, showing that Joe and Pearl were involved in the conversation. The first pause enabled Joe to process his thoughts (Brennan & Schober, 2001). Additionally, the use of “idire” as a filler (Schegloff, 2010) confirmed Joe needed time to code-switch from the Hindi word “gadha” to the Kannada translation of “gadha” (kathe/donkey). Other verbal cues such as the pause before “↑kathe” also highlights the time taken to mentally translate the word (Brennan & Schober, 2001).

In the meantime, Pearl’s gaze remained fixed on the monitor. Soon after Joe said “↑kathe” (donkey), as observed in image 9.8, she repeated “↑kathe”, which initiated laughter among the practitioners. Pearl glanced back and the three practitioners laughed. In addition, both Pearl and Joe said “↑kathe” at the same time, and by overlapping each other also indicated emotion (Lynch, 2019) and agreement between each other (Zhang, 1998). Humour which involves laughing at someone is commonly learned as a social act. Individuals are not only taught to laugh but also that the breakdown of hegemonic codes of social behaviour will be sanctioned (Dumitrica, 2022). Hence, if the interaction was taking place in the physical presence of the MC, perhaps the practitioner would not laugh at the MC for what he was saying (politeness). Nevertheless, in this case, because the MC and the event unfolding on the stage is happening in another city, away from the PPRPs, empathy towards the MC is temporarily suspended in favour of hedonistic pleasure. Here, disparagement humour has two specific functions: the building of solidarity between the practitioners, and the ideological creation of the other (othering), which is an important aspect of the professional culture of PPR practice because of the role it plays in building group solidarity.

Muzafer Sherif (1958) suggests that in order to make people work together, give them a common enemy. In the first extract, the practitioners are seen to be joking about two specific situations where the words “sahibrige” and “gadavana” are taken out of context to create group solidarity, along with a common enemy. This is done using language as a weapon to exert symbolic violence. Tankosić and Dovchin (2023) identified the potential to use language as a tool to exert symbolic violence and termed it linguistic racism. Linguistic racism is a socially and discursively constructed form of language-based racism that often includes different types of microaggressions directed at one’s language and communication style. Tankosić and Dovchin's (2023) understanding of linguistic racism was built on Barker's (1981) concept of “new racism”. It expands discrimination from biology-based inequality to encompass practices and discrimination against people based on cultural and linguistic inequalities.

Linguistic racism, according to Barker (1981), is usually based on language background and language practices. In the context of the PPR department, the language background, communication

repositories and language practices of the practitioners were aligned. Thus, Kannada at the national level is a minority language and Hindi the dominant language. But within the department, Kannada was dominant and the MC and his use of Hindi were marginalised. Hence, the examination of language use shows how the culture of the department was in opposition to the national culture of India, which manifests itself in Hindi.

7.4 Extract II: Multilingualism and Power

Research on linguistic racism in multilingual workplaces has indicated that in professional settings the hegemonic ideologies of practitioners are embedded in language use that can stigmatise the victims as being less capable in various areas of life. This leads to the common assumption that "poor" knowledge of the dominant language also entails inadequacy in one's native language, hence indicating low status in the social and professional hierarchy (Dobinson & Mercieca, 2020). Furthermore, the terms describing the extent to which a language is acquired or learned - such as proficiency, fluency, and native ability - become tools through which power can be enacted (M. Kulkarni, 2014). Hence, in multilingual societies like India, practitioners need to have multilingual capabilities.

On the use of multilingualism in South East Asia, Ashraf (2023) states that while people in Pakistani society are linguistically diverse, Urdu represents their ethnolinguistic identity. But other languages are incorporated in everyday living for business transactions, official matters, religious practices, entertainment, and education, indicating that one language may not be sufficient for meeting all the communicative requirements across various social situations. Similarly, in the context of this interaction, all three practitioners were fluent in Kannada and Tamil, both being regional languages of the South. However, they were not fluent in English or Hindi. In the feedback session, the practitioners were asked to place the three languages in a hierarchical structure. All of them preferred Kannada primarily because it is their mother tongue. Their second language in terms of preference was Tamil, which was followed by Hindi and English.

Despite the practitioners coming from diverse linguistic backgrounds, they shared a common South Indian identity. In the past, non-Hindi speakers in India have accused administrators/politicians of imposing Hindi on them (specifically the BJP in contemporary India) (Ranjan, 2021). Moreover, Hindi is seen as an Aryan[34] language spoken by northern Indians (Sahgal, 1991). By contrast, Tamil (along with

[34] Indo-Aryan refers to the populations speaking an Indo-Aryan language or identifying as Indo-Aryan, who form the predominant group in Northern India. The largest Indo-Aryan ethnolinguistic groups are Hindi–Urdu, Bengali, Punjabi, Marathi, Gujarati, Rajasthani, Bhojpuri, Maithili, Odia, and Sindhi.

other South Indian languages) is a Dravidian[35] language,(Hardgrave, 2022), which is the language of the Dravidians, who are considered the original inhabitants of India (Iyengar, 1914). This racial divide has seen demands for regions to be divided on the basis of language (linguistic states) in the colonial years, which are now accelerated in post-independent India. Therefore, for the practitioners, representing of a language can be equated to the representation of race.

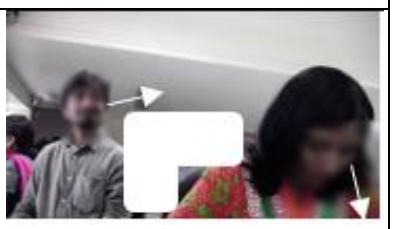
In the extract in Figure 10, Pearl was observed sitting in front of Joe, who does not participate in the conversation. Hence, what follows is a conversation between Pearl and Adam that demonstrates how national dominant languages (Hindi and English) exert control over the regional language, Kannada. By so doing, they exert control over the practitioners, thereby shaping their experiences. In what follows, the practitioners were seen reacting to a speech made by a popular regional leader. The speech was made in English by a former chief minister, which was odd because he often spoke to his audiences in the regional language, Kannada. This section shows how practitioners are challenged and made uncomfortable by the use of English. The interaction begins a few minutes after the politician begins his speech.

Figure 10

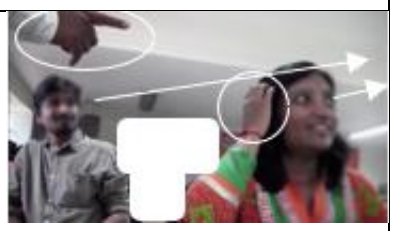
Multilingualism and Regional Ideologies: PPRPs negotiating ideologies and regional identities embedded in language. Pearl, in an orange and green printed dress, is interacting with Joe (Khaki shirt) and Adam, partially seen in a white shirt.

Pearl	**Kannada Script**	ಯೆಡ್ಯೂರಪ್ಪನ್ ಭಾಷೆ ಕಳ್ಸಿಕೋಡ್ಲಾ ಬೇಡವಾ	 Image 10.0
	English Script	xxx:: bha:se >kalsi:kodla< bed,ava:	
	Translation	should i translate xxx s speech or not	
Pearl	**Kannada Script**	ಥು ಎಡ್ಡ್ಯೂರಪ್ಪ ಇಂಗ್ಲಿಷ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತಾಡತಾರೆ ನಾನು ಮದಲ	
	English Script	thu: xxx englise nalli matadtare (.)>↑nanu madala<	

[35] Dravidians are a cultural and linguistic ethnic group. The largest Dravidian ethnic groups are the Telugus from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, the Tamils from Tamil Nadu, Sri Lanka, Malaysia and Singapore, the Kannadigas from Karnataka, the Malayalis from Kerala, and the Tulu people from Karnataka. Badagas are found in Tamil Nadu.

			
	Translation	damn xxx is speaking in english i am not doing this	Image 10.1
Adam		ah:	
Pearl	**Kannada Script**	ಎಡ್ಯೂ ರಪ್ಪ ಇಂಗ್ಲಿಷ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತಾಡ್ತಾರೆ ನಂ ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಬರಿಯಾಳ	
	English Script	xxx englis nalli matadtare na:an illi: bari:ya,la:	Image 10.2
	Translation	xxx is talking in English I will not write	
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಅರ್ಥಗಳ ಮೋದಿ ಗೆ	
	English Script	arth:ag bekala: modi ge	
	Translations	modi should understand	Image 10.3
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಅವರು ಕನ್ನಡ ದಲ್ಲಿ ಮಠಾಧೀದ್ರೆ ಅರ್ಥ್ ಆಗಿಲ್ಲ	
	English Script	ava:ru, >kannad< alimatha:didre arth,agilla:	
	Translation	he won't understand if he speaks in Kannada	Image10.4
Pearl	**Kannada Script**	ಹಿಂದಿ ಮಾತಾಡಿದ್ರೆ ನಂ ಇಂಗ್ಲ್ ಹೇಳ್ತೀನಿ ಇಂಗ್ಲಿಷ್ ಮಾತಾಡಿದ್ರೆ ನಂ ಕೈ ಯೆನ್ ಬಾರಿಯೇಕೆ ಅಗಲ	
	English Script	hindi mata:did,re: nan-- >ighle heltini< (.) english mata:didre: nan kai yen bari:yeke agala	

	Translation	if he speaks in Hindi I am telling you now if he speaks in english my hands can't write anything	 Image 10.5  Image 10.6
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಮೋದಿ ಇಂಗ್ಲಿಷ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತಾಡ್ತಾರ ಕಳ್ಳಬುರ್ಗಿ ಯಲ್ಲಿ ಎಲ್ಲಿ ಲಿ ಅವರು ತಮಿಳ್ ನಾಡು ಹೋಗಿದ್ರೆ ಇಂಗ್ಲಿಷ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ತಮಿಳ್ ನಾಡು ದಲ್ಲಿ ವಡೀತಾರೆ ಅಧಿಕೆ ತಮಿಳ್ ನಾಡು ದಲ್ಲಿ ವಡೀತಾರೆ ಅಧಿಕೆ ಇಂಗ್ಲಿಷ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ ಮಾತಾಡಿದ್ರೆ ಹಿಂದಿ ಮಾತಾಡ್ಲಿಕೆ ಇಲ್ಲ	 Image 10.7  Image 10.8  Image 10.9  Image 10.10
	English Script	Xxx >english nalli matadtara< kal:burgi,nalli (0.3) >elllili< ava,ru: tamil nadu ↑hogi,dre: eng,li:sh nalli, mata:dtare: (0.1) tamil nadu dalli (.) vadi,tare adhike (.) english mata:dta,re hindi mata:dlike illa:	
	Translation	Will xxx speak in english in Kalburgi, only if he goes to tamil-nadu he will speak in english in tamil nadu they will beat him if he speaks in hindi	

Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಎಲ್ಲೆರೂ ಕಲ್ಲು ಬಿಡ್ತಾರೆ	 Image 10.11
	English Script	elleru (0.3) kallu bidtare	
	Translation	everywhere they will stone him	
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ಇಲ್ಲಿ ಹಿಂದಿ ಕಲ್ಬುರ್ಗಿ ಉತ್ತರ ಕನ್ನಡ ಬೆಲ್ಟ್ ಎಲ್ಲಿ ಎಲ್ಲರಿಗು ಹಿಂದಿ ಭರಾಟೆ	 Image 10.12
	English Script	ili, hindi (.) ka:lburgi utta:r >karnatak< beltu: (.) elli: ella,ri:gu: hindi bar,ute:	
	Translation	here hindi kalburgi is in the uttar karnataka belt everyone understands hindi	
Adam	**Kannada Script**	ತಮಿಳ್ ನಾಡು ಒಂದುಕಡೆ ಬಖೋರ್ನ್ಡ್ ಹೋಗ್ತಾರೆ ಇಂಗ್ಲಿನ್ಷ್ ನಲ್ಲಿ	 Image 10.13  Image 10.14
	English Script	tamil nadu (.) ondu:,kade: barakhond hogta,re: english na:lli:	
	Translation	tamil nadu is the only place where he reads out the speech in english	

7.4.1 The English Challenge

A few minutes after the politician started his speech, Pearl said, “xxx (politician’s name) bha:se >kalsi:kodla< bed,ava:”, (should I translate xxx’s speech or not). In this line, Pearl was asking Adam if she needed to translate an earlier speech made by a politician. The speech was in Hindi and the following speech, which is the subject of this interaction, was made by the former chief minister of the state in English. The tempo of this line was unusually quick, which appeared to indicate that she feared a negative response (Yu, C et al., 2004). While the negative response was that she had to translate Tweets, the positive outcome might have been that Adam would tell Pearl she did not have to translate the Tweets because somebody else in the team either had done it or was going to do it.

Pearl's facial gestures, observed in Figure 10, image 10.0 were tight, which was commonly observed when practitioners were involved in online campaigns. Moreover, when she delivered the lines, her gaze was directed towards her phone (Image 10.0) from which she looked at the campaign's X (Twitter) page. Pearl received no response because Adam did not hear her, and so she continued the interaction by saying "thu: xxx englise nalli matadtare (.) >↑nanu madala<" "(spit (damn)) xxx is speaking in English I am not doing this". The fact that she observed that the politician was speaking in English showed that she was being attentive. Spitting (Pear, 2010) - or in this case mimicking the sound of spitting in the context of South India - is a common cultural expression of displeasure. This was coupled with tight facial muscles and frowning eyebrows (Lunenburg, 2010; Mahmoud & Robinson, 2015; Sadr et al., 2003), which appeared to confirm her unhappiness with the situation, caused by the need to produce Tweets in English.

In the line "xxx(name of the politician) englise nalli matadtare"(xxx is speaking in English) (Image 10.1), the stress on the politician's name signalled an emotional stance (Keltner & Anderson, 2000; Osgood, 1969) that indicated her discomfort with English. The second part ">↑nanu madala< (i will not do it) is a direct declaration and is said in a faster tempo. While the intonation reconfirmed her unhappiness, the increased tempo was in expectation of a negative response (Yu, 2001). In this instance, "I won't write" is a refusal (Caponetto, 2023). Here, the analysis recognises that Adam had authority as he was regulating the production of Tweets. However, Pearl was also a senior member of the team and she had expert power that enabled her to refuse Adam's request. The focus here is on the use of "I won't write" as an expression of resistance that was not directed towards Adam himself but towards the force exerted by the demands of expected practice (the need to produce Tweets in English as a routine task).

Unlike the previous time where she received no reaction, this time Adam responded with an "aha". Adam's reaction enabled Pearl to take her turn in the conversation (Goffman, 1957; Lauerbach, 2007). She said "xxx englis nalli matadtare na:an illi: bari:ya,la:", the translation of which is "the politician is talking in English, I will not write". Here, she repeats herself, with a similar stress on the politician's name and on "English" showed emotion and irritation (Koda & Mori, 2014). In the feedback session, Pearl confirmed that she was irritated as she said:

> I do not like working on English campaigns because when the speech is in English, it is hard to find opposing points because (xxxx) the politician in this speech only praises Modi by saying he is this and that. Usually, if the speech is in English the target is the national media (English or Hindi) who prefer to focus on the personality rather than the work they have done.

In political communication literature, this is a characteristic of the Americanisation of elections, where elections are turned into personality contests (Plasser & G. Plasser, 2023; Senthivel, 2021). From the above analysis of the use of English, which is a dominant language, the need to produce texts in English can be equated to a "one-language policy" usually observed in corporate settings (Angouri, 2014). Additionally, the use of one language in multinational organisations and their workplaces is a common practice. However, divergence (Angouri 2014) is noted in which the co-existence of multiple languages is managed at the individual level, which shows conflicting language practices.

Research on multilingual workplaces shows that the language practices of practitioners do not turn monolingual because of the adoption of a working language (Angouri, 2014). In the case of this department, the use of English and Hindi is observed as similar to the one-language policy used in corporate organisations because they satisfy the communication function of the political party. Both Hindi and English were dominant languages in the national culture (Lee, 2023), and the organisation culture of the political party reflected this domination.

7.4.2 Language Politics and Identity

Both Adam and Pearl had similar linguistic abilities. They were fluent in Kannada and Tamil (both South Indian languages) and less fluent in Hindi and English. As the interaction continued, Adam replied to Pearl by saying "arth:ag bekala: xxxx ge" which means "xxxx(politician on the stage) should understand". The line is an attempt at using sarcasm (Cheang & Pell, 2008), aimed at highlighting the politician's inability to understand Kannada. Here, the use of English to address the audience made Adam speculate that the use of English to deliver the speech was deliberate. After the interaction was over, Adam was asked if using a language that the crowd was unfamiliar with was a routine practice for politicians addressing election rallies, Adam said:

> It is not a general thing, some do it and some do not, not all politicians are the same, they have their own ideas. But English is popular only in urban areas, and only a few urbanites participate in political rallies if they are held in the city. Political rallies held in the city are attended primarily by people from the rural areas bordering the city. Every minister at whatever level is in charge of bringing a set number of people (facilitated by the PPR practitioners). These people do not speak English, so if and when they use English it is not for the crowd, there will be an agenda, mostly it will be for the press people.

Thus Adam indicated that politicians who use English at times as a medium of communication may do so for two functional reasons. The first was to communicate with the Hindi and English news media, and the other was to ensure that what they were communicating was accurate. Furthermore, the

English language can be viewed as more politically neutral than Hindi (Lee, 2023). When asked why English was preferred over Hindi, Adam said:

> Local leaders particularly in South India, irrespective of which party they belong to will try to avoid speaking in Hindi if they are in speaking anywhere in South India. The only time they will speak Hindi is when they visit Delhi (the National Capital of India, where Hindi is the dominant language). Using Hindi in the south will upset South Indian voters.

Hence, Adam indicated that the use of language as a medium of communication for politics was related to regional identity. For south Indians, as Lee (2023) pointed out, the use of Hindi is an attempt to relegate them to second-class citizens, and they refer to it as "Hindi Imperialism" (Lee, 2023 p 66). Furthermore, the imposition of Hindi on the southern states of India was the reason behind the Dravidian movement[36]. Therefore, for politicians from South India, language was an important factor in maintaining favourable standing among voters. There have been several instances where calls for Hindi to be given national status by the senior leadership of national parties have been opposed by south Indian leaders of the same party[37].

Adam also mentioned that Modi's skills in English were poor, a fact that is documented in the news media (Joseph, 2019). But, more importantly, Modi and the BJP have constantly attempted to make Hindi the language of Hindustan (India) (Lee, 2023). At the same time, the former Chief Minister of the state was also not fluent in English - but his English was better than his spoken Hindi. This has not been researched and is thus only anecdotal evidence. Nevertheless, in the public domain the minister was seen responding in English on rare occasions, but never in Hindi. The fact that he chose to read his speech was deliberate, Adam said,

> Most politicians in Karnataka when they speak to journalists rarely read a script. Last week he (the regional politician) was asked something and he gave the press some wrong information. He received a lot of backlash because of that from his party. Today, in front of the prime minister he cannot make those mistakes.

As the interaction continued, Adam said "ava:ru, >kannad< ali matha:didre arth,agilla:", which means "he won't understand if he speaks in Kannada". Here, Adam explained to Pearl what he believed to be

[36] The Dravidian movement, which emerged in British India during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, played a pivotal role in shaping regional identity, particularly in Tamil Nadu. It was a response to the dominance of Brahmins in public life, especially government positions. Key features of this movement included challenging Brahmin hegemony, revitalizing Dravidian languages (such as Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Malayalam), and advocating for social reform. The movement fostered a sense of pride and identity among the Dravidian population, influencing political ideologies and policies in the region (Lee, 2023).

[37] For example, See Deccan Herald's report on the BJP's State President
Deccan Herald, https://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/politics/131022/tamil-nadu-bjp-chief-speaks-against-hindi-imposition-as-dmk-calls-for.html

the reason why the former Chief Minister was not going to make his speech in Kannada. The first 'he' in this line is a reference to Modi, the prime minister. Over the last ten years, the public discourse around Narendra Modi has characterised him as uneducated. In the 2014 general election, Modi branded himself as a common tea seller who came from humble origins (Kuchay, 2019). Therefore, the word "he" here is an attack on Modi, who in this context is a symbol of the dominant ideology. By saying that "He won't understand if he speaks in Kannada", Adam implies that Modi is not one of them (south Indian). Additionally, the line can also be seen as a way for Adam to reference the dominant federal structure of India that permits an individual from the north to govern the south. The fact that Modi does not know Kannada is equated to Modi not being a representative of Kannadigas (people of Karnataka). Hence, as Chiriyankandath (2018) states, Modi was seen as the embodiment of North Indian domination over the South.

A minute and a half after his last utterance, Adam got up from his chair and placed it beside Pearl. This movement drew Pearl's attention, she responded by saying "hindi mata:did,re:-- nan-- >ighle heltini< (.) english mata:didre: nan kai yen bari:yeke agala" (Image 10.5), which translates as: "if he speaks in Hindi, I am telling you now if he speaks in English my hands can't write anything". Pearl's reaction to Adam's movement was because she thought he was leaving the room, which meant she would have to complete the task irrespective of her discomfort with the language. The first half of the statement "hindi mata:did,>re:-- nan-- ighle heltini<" (Image 10.5), indicated that Pearl preferred working in Hindi rather than English. The tempo at which she said the above was so fast that certain parts of the line remained incomplete, which highlights her frustration (Yu, C et al., 2004).

To help emphasise her words, Pearl used hand gestures (Image 10.5, 10.6 and 10.7), which included a clenched fist, with her index finger pointing upward. These hand gestures, as Scherer (2013) mentions, are known to signal aggression and signify a warning. The verbal cue "I am telling you now" served as a confirmation of the warning. In addition, the tone was firm, which indicated seriousness. The second line was accompanied by another hand signal. Pearl's palm was open, and her fingers were spread as they pointed upward. The hand gesture accompanied "nan kai yen bari:yeke agala", which means "my hands can't write anything" (image 10.6). The hand signal and the line are expressions meaning "stop", which indicated that Pearl would "stop" working if the speech was in English. In this section, it is clear that Pearl was being impolite (Holmes, 2000) towards Adam. The reason for her behaviour was her displeasure at being forced to produce content in the dominant languages.

7.4.3 Maintaining Control Linguistically

In response to Pearl, Adam said "xxx >english nalli matadtara< kal:burgi,yalli (0.3) >elllili< ava,ru: tamil nadu ↑hogi,dre: eng,li:sh nalli, mata:dtare: (0.1) tamil nadu dalli (.) vadi,tare adhike (.) english mata:dta,re hindi mata:dli,ke illa:" (Image 10.6 to Image 10.10). The first part of the line (xxx >english nalli matadtara< kal:burgi,yalli (0.3)) is separated by a pause and means "will xxx speak in English in Kalburgi". Though disguised as a question, the line is a statement and not a question because Adam did not expect Pearl to reply. The stress on the politician's name and "kalburgi" was intentional and contextual. Nonverbally, Adam's palm was open, while his fingers were together, as they pointed towards the television set, referencing the politician.

Pearl's facial expressions in image 10.7 appeared to be slightly more relaxed. The reason for this relaxation was the humour employed by Adam to reduce the tension (Holmes & Marra, 2002). The second part of the line (>elllili< ava,ru: tamil nadu ↑hogi,dre: eng,li:sh nalli, mata:dtare: (0.1) tamil nadu dalli (.) vadi,tare adhike) sparked humour. The translation is "only if he goes to Tamil Nadu will he speak in English. In Tamil Nadu, they will beat him" (Image 10.9 and 10.10). The raised pitch and faster tempo signalled Adam's increased emotional stance (Günthner, 1999) on the topic. The stress on the name of the state was also intentional as it contextualised the region's lingual politics and the Dravidian movement.

The continuation of the line (tamil nadu dalli (.) vadi,tare adhike) translates to " in Tamil Nadu they will beat him". The usage of "beat him" is a popular cultural expression to aid humour. It is an expression that displays authority over another. Such an expression is similar to the examples of humour presented by Holmes and Stubbe (2015) to show how humour is used against people in authority. Dumitrica (2022) points out that in humour situations, empathy is suspended as it reaffirms a group's identity. The idea of the politician getting beaten by members of the South is interpretable in the context of regionalism. In Image 10.6, Adam moved his arm outward and in Image 10.8, his outstretched palm faced downward, moving from side to side. This indicates "No", that is, a disagreement with the idea that Modi will speak in Hindi when he is in Tamil Nadu. After this, Adam used a gesture of beating the desk three times and said, "in Tamil Nadu", implying that in Tamil Nadu the usage of Hindi as a linguistic strategy would not work. The beat gesture involves hand movements which are symmetrical and rhythmic (i.e. each move is similar in tension and speed to the others) (Chen & Adolphs, 2023). The beat gesture can have different hand shapes but is defined by the biphasic movements of the hand (e.g., up and down, left and right, forwards and backwards, etc.), which perform the pragmatic function of highlighting noteworthy information in utterances. Hence, in this case, Adam used the beat gesture to emphasize that Modi would not use Hindi in Tamil Nadu.

The two hand gestures analysed above demonstrate that they helped Adam process his thoughts. Additionally, both hand gestures can be considered as impolite and emotional. The increase in emotion is further confirmed by the use of high pitch on words such as "↑hogi,dre". In this line, Adam makes an emotional appeal to Pearl (that is, a persuasive strategy), and in the process attempts disparagement humour, aimed at maintaining group identity through collegiality.

As the interaction continued, Adam said, "elleru (0.3) kallu bidtare", "everybody will stone him", which is similar to the "they will beat him" used earlier. Adam continued by saying, "ili, hindi ka:l↑burgi utta:r >karnatak< beltu: (.) elli: ella,ri:gu: hindi bar,ute:" ("Here it is Hindi, Kalburgi is in the North Karnataka belt, everyone understands Hindi" (image 10.12). Here, Adam appeared to invoke symbolic violence, as an act of resistance to the use of Hindi in South India. M. Kulkarni (2014) states that when a dominant linguistic group is threatened, members of this group may respond by enacting symbolic violence. In this case, Adam reaffirms his linguistic identity by enacting symbolic violence against Modi.

Image 10.12 showed Pearl relaxed, with a smile on her face, which indicated Adam had used humour to diffuse a tense situation. Furthermore, the above statement helped Pearl put aside her fear of producing Tweets in English. Adam, continued with "tamil nadu (.) ondu:,kade: barakhond hogta,re: english na:lli:" (Image 10.13), which is "Tamil Nadu is the only place where he reads out the speech in English". This disparaging humour helped Adam bring attention to the regional and linguistic divide discussed earlier. The purpose of this humour was building solidarity by reproducing regional identity. The pause and stress on "ondukade" (the only place) confirmed Adam's intention to highlight the presence of linguistic politics. The interaction ended soon after, as Adam left the room and Pearl began to listen to the speech which was in English. In the feedback session, Pearl confirmed that she did produce Tweets in English and Hindi. She said: "that is the job so you have to do it".

In the interaction, two cultures are represented by their languages. The dominant languages are English and Hindi and they are a part of the national culture that impacts the culture of the department. National cultures provide a broader cultural context that shapes organisational culture. The functional need for the use of Hindi and English to attract the News media meant that Hindi and English were imposed on the practitioners. The Tweets produced in English had an agenda, which was different from the agenda of the Tweets produced for the Hindi campaign. These practices have similarly been observed by Sharma (2020), who also found that Twitter campaigns helped attract the news media.

Although the speeches made by the politicians raised issues about the local region, those issues were not a part of the national news media agenda. Furthermore, the practitioners created Tweets that raised national issues at the expense of the local region. They thus endorsed the dominance of the national over the regional.

7.5 Conclusion

The chapter examines the use of language as a part of organisation culture which is used to exert control over the practitioners. The interaction presented for analysis is divided into two extracts. In the first extract, language is used as a mechanism to maintain group solidarity, and in the second interaction, group solidarity along with regional identity is shaped by the language used in the interaction. For the practice of public relations in the political context, particularly in multilingual societies, there are massive implications because practitioners were not able to represent their regions in their products because of language.

Furthermore, in the professional multilingual setting examined in the chapter, there is a conflict between the national culture and the culture of the regional department. Additionally, the organisation's culture may or may not be representative of the department's culture, because the public relations departments are required to interact with external groups who are a part of the larger society. The department’s culture interacts with the dominant culture of the society within which the department operates. In such situations, practitioners were controlled because they were forced to use dominant languages to communicate. Thereby, the practitioners reproduced existing power structures.

Chapter Eight

Discussion, Implications and Theoretical Contributions

8.0 Overview

This chapter provides a discussion of the key research findings drawn from the analyses. Here, the analysis is considered alongside the previous research outlined in chapter two. The first section discusses the timeliness of the study of political public relations (PPR); the second reviews the methodological approach adopted by the study, and the third section discusses the findings. The final, fourth, section discusses the theoretical contributions made by this research to the field of public relations and PPR.

8.1 The Timeliness of the Study

This research is the only one of its kind primarily because of its methodology. The use of video ethnography to access the election war rooms of a political party provides fresh perspectives concerning the practice of PPR. The study began in the year 2017, and it is one of the few studies on PPR to focus on practitioners employed by political organisations and politicians in India. In 2017, a Google Scholar search of the term PPR yielded one result, a book titled *Political Public Relations: Principals and Applications* by scholars Strömbäck and Kiousis (2011). A more detailed search yielded Tarrega's (2017) doctoral thesis titled *Political Public Relations Practice in Catalonia and Scotland.* Since then, Strömbäck and Kiousis (2019) have released the second edition of their book under the banner of PPR. Today there is increased research on the communication functions of political parties, primarily because scholars have begun to recognise the professional communicative services used in political communication (Martinelli, 2019; Panasenko & Khlivniuk, 2021; Tarrega, 2017). At the moment, an advanced Google Scholar search, with the timeline parameter set for research between 2018 and 2024, yields a page-long list of articles also using the nomenclature of PPR, which shows the growth of PPR as a field of academic research. Much of this increase in scholarship can be attributed to the changing nature of electoral campaign practices and their increasing complexities.

Given that the literature on PPR is not vast, this study reviewed research in the context of public diplomacy (Dodd & Collins, 2017; Zaharna & Uysal, 2016), democracy (Kent, 2013; Moloney & McGrath, 2019), electioneering (MacNamara & Kenning, 2011) and citizenship (Fitch, 2018), as these fields have contributed to the understanding of communication practices related to election processes that shape democratic representation. Additionally, this study is also informed by research

on Social Media in Public Relations (SMPR) (Y. Wang et al., 2021) and social media research in the political context. The reason for the difference in disciplinary approaches can be attributed to the nature of political practices. Political communication scholars have continued to contribute maximum scholarship on election campaign practices, political messages, the different platforms used for political communication and their impact on democratic societies (Robinson, 2019). However, as Robinson (2019) states:

> the academic field of political communication, however is in need of a rethink, to the extent that its horizons must be broadened if it is to succeed in furthering our understanding of the relationship between power and communication and addressing major issues shaping current debates. The field of political communication reflects a problem-solving approach, which funnels time and energy toward addressing narrowly focused instrumental or administrative concerns that reflect the interests and concerns of powerful actors in society. A second problem concerns over-attention to media itself which, in turn, diverts attentions away from broader and more deep-rooted institutions, structures and processes that are involved in the manipulation of information (Robinson, 2019 p. 26).

To address this problem, Robinson (2019) proposed the use of propaganda studies. In preference, this thesis proposes the use of political public relations for two main reasons. The first is that within the scope of propaganda studies, there is little chance that the practices observed can be used to positively impact society. This is because the association of public relations with propaganda has resulted in public relations being viewed negatively in Asia (Sriramesh, 2004), which means that although practitioners indulge in practices that resemble the practice of propaganda, they rarely acknowledge performing such practices. Yet contemporary election campaign practices in the recent past have been considerably modernised and normalised, to the extent that they are now an essential requirement for individuals seeking a position in politics, as Sajjanhar's (2021) and Tarrega's (2017) interviews have documented. The negative connotation attributed to the term "propaganda" may result in political parties not acknowledging its use, which can result in the continuation of what Franklin (2004) called "a lack of transparency" concerning the use of such services by politicians and political organisations.

By treating PPR as a specialised field of public relations research and practice, this thesis shows that PPR is an organised persuasive communication (OPC). OPC as a conceptual frame was used by Bakir et al., (2019) to examine persuasive communication practices in order to manipulate people in democratic contexts. Furthermore, this research shows that by using the OPC approach, scholars and practitioners have an opportunity to examine campaign-related activities that are professionalised.

PPR research using an OPC framework can enable the creation of ethical codes, specialised education and increased transparency and scrutiny of the practice.

8.2 Power as an Interactional Accomplishment

The contributions public relations makes to democratic practice are of central concern to scholars in several disciplines (Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2019). This research adds knowledge from a critical perspective to the discussion on public relations practices employed by political parties. This is done by examining the relationship between the social context and the professional cultural practices of public relations. More specifically, the study considers how power embedded in professional culture enables political organisations to exert control over practitioners, and how political parties produce narratives that are of benefit to them. Hence the aim has been to show that practitioners of PPR produce and reproduce existing power structures within an organisation in order to shape the larger social order.

Since Reed (1996) described power as "the most overused and least understood" (Reed, 1996 p. 40) concept in organisation studies, research examining power in organisations has grown. Nevertheless, the organisations examined have rarely been political parties. By equating a political party with an organisation and by examining power as an interactional accomplishment in the context of PPR, this thesis shows how power is held, used, manipulated, wielded, exercised, transferred, shared, delegated, increased and lost in professional PPR interactions. Hence, the understanding of power is different from the understanding of power highlighted in the literature review, where power was understood as symbolic by public relations scholar Edwards (2009) or as discourse (Weaver, 2021). In this thesis, power was approached much as Sissons (2014) and Theunissen and Sissons (2018) have done, which is as an interactional accomplishment produced by participants in the course of social interaction.

In this view, power is understood as a discrete entity, conferred on managers by virtue of their position within the organisation's hierarchy. Nevertheless, power has to be accomplished over and over again in every social interaction by practitioners and managers who use subtle modes of communication to enforce and reinforce their power (Schneider, 2007). In the analysis chapters, the research examined routine everyday practices as aspects of professional culture. For example, power labels such as "sir", were used often as a means to reinforce the power relations between the manager and practitioners. Similarly, managerial practices such as regulating tasks ensured that practitioners were subtly told who had power and who did not have power. This examination of

power put into focus a complex mechanism through which power in professional culture was used to exert control over practitioners.

The approach to understanding power from an interactional accomplishment perspective was inspired by the work of Harold Garfinkel (1967) and his followers in the field of ethnomethodology. In the context of research on communicative practice, Schneider (2007) suggested that power be regarded as a practical achievement. This means power is produced by participants in social interaction, who through conversations produce some versions or accounts of events (narratives), which ultimately come to dominate other narratives of the same events. For the practice and in the context of elections, this means that dominant narratives of particular issues can be shaped by political organisations who use PPR to produce dominant narratives on issues that are of concern to democracy. An example of this "practical achievement" (Schneider, 2007) is seen in the first interaction presented in chapter five, where the manager, Nag, tells the practitioner, Paul, that "the war was over". Nag's understanding that the war was over was made possible by his interaction with a political strategist who wanted the agenda to be shifted to other topics such as unemployment.

The video Paul selected incidentally was about a few young individuals (youth from South India) expressing their opinions on what the focus of the government should be. However, Paul was not able to select the video for publication for two reasons. The first was the authoritarian relation between Nag and Paul. In the conduct of the conversation, Paul was not given proper attention by Nag because the professional culture within the organisation did not mandate that he listen to Paul. Second was the power of fear which, as Prakash and Bajpai (2021) have mentioned, is linked to professional culture in India. By exerting control over Paul, Nag ensured that the content Paul eventually created focused on unemployment (Paul reproduced a video of a leader speaking to college students about employment). However, in the feedback session, both Nag and Paul admitted that it was not their best outcome. Nag said, "Sometimes it happens, there is so much pressure from the top". The use of "from the top" by Nag was in reference to the hierarchical structure of the political party, which had exerted control on his professional practice. Furthermore, Nag's statement implied the use of fear in professional practice. Additionally, the interaction is an example of how fear can hinder the quality of the practice.

The interaction between Philo and Mitch, where the regularised practices of creating a social media post guided the creation of the Women's Day Post, is another example of how professional culture in the form of style guidelines (regularised practices) exert control over practitioners. Similarly, knowledge sources examined in Chapter Six, where the practitioners created the IAF Hercules Post are examples of how every day routine practice can shape the outcome of PPR practice. The examples

demonstrate that PPR practitioners' backgrounds, ideas and experiences are restricted by the professional culture of a PPR department. The cases presented in the thesis show that power and control exerted by organisational culture on PPR practice reduces the public relations function of a political party to a promotional function.

8.2.1 The Political Public Relations Function

The literature review documented research by scholars who have studied public relations and power (Edwards & Hodges, 2011; Gezgin, 2019; Heath & Xifra, 2016; L'Etang, 2005; Weaver et al., 2006). Here the focus has largely been on power from the perspective of practitioners (Edwards 2009; Sissons, 2014) and the discourse of public relations (Weaver, 2021). In this respect, the examination of power embedded in professional culture, particularly in the context of PPR, is not only fresh but, as Valentini and Edwards (2019) have stated, needs further attention.

Hardy and Clegg (1996) mention that from the functionalist perspective, the dominant voice is a managerial one, in which organisational interests are equated with managerial interests. However, in PPR the founding voice is that of a politician. In the case of the PPR departments, the manager's interests can be equated to and aligned with the interests of politicians and their respective political parties. Managers were not able to not defy politicians because they did not have symbolic power or entitled power to do so because politicians were above managers in the organisation hierarchy. More importantly, managers relied on the goodwill of politicians for rewards, which came in the form of salary hikes, promotions or political opportunities (for example, a chance to contest municipal elections and become cooperators). This aspect of managerial practice was noted by Johnston and Rowney (2018) in general public relations and is therefore not only applicable to PPR.

8.2.1.1 Managers as Regulators of the Political Public Relations Function

The hierarchical distribution of power within organisations legitimates the use of power by managers to regulate professional work. Here, the hierarchical distribution of power ensured that the managers were the ones who allotted work to practitioners, and they were responsible for the messages produced. There were key functions that managers performed in this regard. For example, practitioners who created Tweets for political campaigns did not have access to the organisation's official social media handles. These Tweets, when published from the organisation's official social media handles, could only be done by the managers. This ensured that agency in PPR practice rested with the managers.

In smaller teams of individual political leaders, the politicians would authorise a member of the team, who would put up posts only after they were approved by the politician. For PPR practice this showed

a lack of trust between the politician/organisation and the practitioners in the department, which signified that the political organisation did not want to give up control of its communicative activities.

Managers as regulators of PPR practice ensured that the organisation maintained control over the content produced, and thereby controlled the organisation's narrative on specific issues. In organisation studies, structures have been recognised as an integral part of professional culture. This thesis agrees that organisation structures are important because they enable the smooth functioning of departments. Nevertheless, hierarchies and the subsequent regulation of work also ensure that the creativity of practitioners is limited to an extent that practitioners' experience of the social media climate is not considered. That is a challenge for PPR practice because it ensures that PPR practice follows one-way communication, making it difficult if not impossible for practitioners to represent communities.

For the practice of PPR, the role of managers is important because, as this thesis shows, managers of a PPR department maintain the existing power structures within the organisation. In public relations, the role of management in relation to the concept of authority has rarely been explored, as the literature review showed. Additionally, the area of public relations management as a contributing factor to the creation of public relations discourse in the context of India has received little attention (Sahoo & Nayak, 2022). Here, L'Etang and Pieczka's (2006) call to develop a culturally specific take on public relations is important because, as this thesis shows, cultural practitioners in India may choose to "obey" their managers instead of being representatives of communities or, as Fawkes (2019) mentions, being the conscience of the organisation.

8.2.2 Political Public Relations as a Means of Exerting Power.

The foundations of the critical perspective is rooted in the work of Marx and Weber (1964). It focuses on the existence of conflicting interests in organisations, and studies power as domination. In this view, power is derived from ownership and control of the means of production. However in the context of political organisations, a political party is not owned by a single person: individuals become members who are then given positions both within the party and in government. Furthermore, who owns the means of production within the political party is in itself a debate. What is known is that politicians who generate funds have greater authority within the political party (Tandel et al., 2023).

Concerning the means of production within the PPR department, each politician who was a member of the political party employed a practitioner, and practitioners who worked exclusively for a politician would join the team when the team was short-staffed, particularly during elections. Some practitioners who were permanent employees of the department were paid by the political party. The

budget of the department was set by the regional president of the party who had a three-year term as president. Therefore, the regional president of the party had authority over the department.

8.2.2.1 The Notion of Relation in Corporate Control

Bayne (1964), on the philosophy of corporate control, mentions that control is present in all areas of human activity, which can be applied to any situation including corporations and/or political parties. There are three common philosophical elements constituting control. These include the notion of relation, the notion of custody, and the principle of finality. On the notion of relation, individuals have a complex understanding of their individual rights and these rights must be respected by every other individual, irrespective of their position within an organisation. Practitioners in these settings also freely assume many relationships. These relationships are formalised by contract through which the parties established the terms of the relation.

The relationship between the managers and the practitioners in the PPR department was authoritarian, and the display of authority was subtle. For example, the managers of the PPR were always seated together in a space away from the practitioners when they were in the office, and they would only sit next to the practitioners when they had to oversee the work done by the practitioners. Additionally, all managers were referred to as "Sir" which, as discussed in Chapter Five, is a power label that gave managers authority. These subtle displays are important because, as Patwardhan (2015) states, managers in India prefer informal interpersonal relationships with practitioners.

Prakash (2011) mentions that social systems in India are hierarchical, where working as superiors and subordinates comes more naturally than working as equals. Moreover, it is a common practice in India to avoid open conflict. Prakash and Bajpai (2021) elaborate on this type of superior-subordinate relationship. They mention that this particular dynamic is characterised by the values of affection (sneh) and deference and respect (shraddha) for the manager who is placed above them in the hierarchical structure of the department. Hence in the PPR department, the practitioners were accustomed to being told what to do. As Seperich and McCalley (2006) note, that is because entitled power provides unquestioned authority. However, such types of relationships can become counterproductive, particularly in the context of PPR practice in India.

For the practice of PPR in India, this meant that the managers were mostly unquestioned in a formal setting, which stifled the practitioners' creativity and passion to be agents of social change. Therefore, the thesis maintains that PPR practitioners, even those with backgrounds in activism, resembled blue-collared labourers in the context of the practice - more interested in impressing their managers in the hope of getting rewards.

8.2.2.2 The Notion of Custody

The notion of custody is a prominent concept in the philosophy of control. Simply put, those who are in custody have the power to control. Additionally, when custody is of another's goods, the governing principles do not change nor does accountability diminish. The custodians of the PPR department examined in this thesis were the managers, and the manager must guard and keep that property as he would his own. In this instance the property can be seen as the PPR department itself because, according to Bayne (1949), custody involves more than physical possession: it is a stewardship.

When applied to the context of PPR, the notion of custody meant that the managers of the PPR department viewed themselves as custodians, responsible for the content produced and published by the team. While they celebrated positive coverage received by politicians and the political party, any negative coverage meant that they did not encourage interactions with media houses or platforms responsible for such coverage. The managers of the PPR department ensured continued positive coverage by maintaining personal influence with members of media houses. The reason for the limited effort to interact with organisations critical of the political party can be attributed to the polarised media environment.

8.2.2.3 The Principle of Finality

The principle of finality states that every practitioner acts with her or his eye on a final goal (Bayne, 1964). In PPR practice in India, the principle of finality is related to politicians using PPR services to get favourable coverage from the media. Similarly, for the political party, PPR was a means to shape perception concerning specific issues that were of concern to the political party.

According to Bayne (1964), when this principle of finality is applied to the realm of human conduct it is expressed in terms of duties and rights. While a duty is an obligatory end, a right is a guaranteed, inalienable means to the fulfilment of the duty-end. This understanding is crucial to the philosophy of how content was produced by the PPR department. In the department, the practitioners were duty-bound to produce content. As the analysis of interactions in Chapters Four, Five and Six showed, practitioners used images taken from websites such as Google Images and quotes taken from the internet to produce social media posts. For the practitioners, using such resources was a means to produce a high volume of political content, so that the narrative of the organisation could be dominant in the public and virtual sphere.

Weber (1964) examined the nature of work because he was interested in the formation of the social order after the Industrial Revolution. He referred to factories as new organisations and maintained that the workers in factories had abandoned their traditional values in favour of more rationalistic

values. While traditional values orient people towards conformity (religious and social values), rationalistic values involve weighing alternative means towards specific goals and choosing the means most directly leading to the goal. Therefore, for Weber (1964) a formal organisation was set up to achieve some definite goal or goals and was governed by a set of rules and regulations designed to accomplish these organisational goals. In the field of PPR, this might imply that in a professional setting PPR practitioners do not consider the ethics and morals of producing content meant for mass distribution. The only task, the worker's goal, was to produce a type of content that would build a narrative. This meant that the public relations department was a means to an end for the political party, the end being the establishment of a political order that would keep the party in power. Therefore, in this case the organisation's goals were aligned with the worker's (practitioner's) goals.

8.2.2 Political Public Relations Culture

The ideas of Foucault (1996) and Bourdieu (1991) on power are embedded in both the functionalist and the critical perspectives: power is imposed by the hierarchy, and power "is embedded in the fibre and fabric of everyday life" (Hardy & Clegg, 1996, p. 631). In Foucault's (1996) perspective, power is a set of discursive formations, historically and culturally located systems of power and knowledge. Discursive formations provide interpretive frameworks that organise understanding of particular social settings and relationships. Here, Foucault's (1996) understanding of power is used to show how rules are regularised in professional settings, for example, what can be spoken and how, and what kinds of things will count as legitimate knowledge. In this view, power is widely dispersed, and embedded in the network of relationships in organisations. In Chapter Four, the interaction between Philo and Mitch showed that although Mitch had status and experience that gave her power to dominate Philo, both practitioners were controlled by the regularised practices of the department, which enabled the political organisation to maintain control.

Bourdieu (1987) was influenced by Foucault's concepts of power relations and social control. He theorised that individuals are inculcated from birth with a "habitus" - a "system of durable, transposable dispositions . . . principles which generate and organise practices and representations" (Bourdieu, 1990 p. 14). Here, Bourdieu's (1987) conceptualisation of power relations and social control is equated to power relations and organisation control. For example, the use of habitus to exert control is seen in Chapter Six, which identified a series of knowledge sources used by the practitioners, who were heavily reliant on them for producing content and discourse.

The reliance on particular information sources had become a part of the practitioner's habitus. These content-producing habits of the practitioners meant that other habits such as checking for unbiased

sources or accuracy, even if prioritized, were manipulated to fit a narrative (malinformation). For the practitioners, bits of information could be used to further a narrative as long as they benefited the organisation. This aspect of PPR has given rise to challenges such as misinformation and disinformation that are circulated on social media. Chapters Four and Six showed practitioners routinely sourcing information from internet sources that were largely organised by algorithms which dictated the order of content sources. Hence the PPR department's process was impacted by what Bartlett (2015) called a self-brainwashing process: certain ideas embedded in the content are repeated so often and with no contrary or alternative point of view that they fulfil the classic definition of brainwashing. Practitioners looked at the top two or three sources and selected content that could support the larger discourse that benefited the organisation. Thus whatever websites were visible to the practitioners were decided by algorithms controlled by private industry, which shaped the environment in which PPRPs practised their trade.

Additionally, the work environment created necessary conditions through which the knowledge sources practitioners used were controlled by the professional culture of the organisation. For example, the practitioner believed certain news channels were unbiased because they were not overtly critical of the party. That meant that practitioners prioritised interactions with only specific media houses. Similarly, social media sites were a key influence source that dictated and identified specific issues that would be discussed and debated on social media. These social media discussions, in turn, helped the organisation shape the discourse of issues that were of interest to it. Therefore, the practitioners took for granted the accuracy of the information they found on websites that had their own ideologies.

In Chapter Seven, the practice of social media campaigns was observed being used to create trends. This practice has been referred to as astroturfing (Hobbs et al., 2020) and is a technique used to influence news media discourse. However, the existence of language spheres on social media platforms (for example, #KannadaTwitter or language specific threads like #ModiMosa) meant that the issues not generated in the dominant language were not represented in the larger national discourse. Therefore, for the communities that did not identify and use the dominant language, PPR discourse ensured that these communities continued to remain outside discussions and debates on social and economic progress. This was largely because power was exerted on the practice of PPR by discursive technologies which include social media technology that is largely unregulated.

Bourdieu (1990) further suggested that the interaction between habitus and field is complex. A back-and-forth negotiation exists between the context and the individual. Moments of agency also exist, but they are structured by what is allowed. Here, Bourdieu's (1990) work is related to the practice of

regularised content. The fact that Mitch and Philo used the photo of a female leader in extract two (Figure 3) of Chapter Four, and the use of specific colour schemes in the production of the IAF Hercules social media post (Figure 5), showed that, in situations where there is a balance of power, the organisation continued to exert control over the practitioners through internal regularisation of the production process.

For PPR practice, the theory of fields (Bourdieu, 1997) is also of importance. In the context of organisations that have public relations departments, public relations is in competition with other departments (Ihlen, 2009), for example, marketing and/or human resources. In the context of PPR, the area of political consulting dominated PPR practice and reduced the PPR function to a back-office function. The mechanism of national election campaigns in India being handed over to consultants is increasingly widespread (Sajjanhar, 2021). In contemporary political practice, political consultation is outsourced and although the practitioners may not identify with the nomenclature of PPR, the tasks they perform show that they are engaging in public relations work. The growth of political consultation is mirrored by the growth of PPR.

On the growth of political consultancy in India over the last decade Sajjanhar (2021) mentions that the industry body Assocham identified 150 firms in 2014 that referred to themselves as political consultants. Additionally, Sajjanhar (2021) stated that almost all politicians now have a social media team, which means the number of PPR teams in the country was substantially higher than the number of political firms. Therefore both political consultation (Plasser & G. Plasser, 2023) and PPR are growing (Strömbäck & Kiousis, 2019).

The job of the political consultant involves building data sets, compiling demographic data, and systematically strategising political campaigns - one that works through rational calculation of the "odds" of winning (Sharma, 2020). Political consultants, therefore gave PPR practitioners messaging themes and the PPR teams were required to create and amplify those messages. This functional arrangement gave the field of political consultation more power over the field of PPR.

The consultants are usually young graduates with degrees in the sciences, technology, engineering, and management fields, who are well-versed in the use of data mining and strategic technological tools to target voters and effectively tell them what they want to hear (Shivam, 2020; Sruthijith & Katiyar, 2020; Sajjanhar, 2021). By contrast, PPR practitioners had varied educational backgrounds (Science/Commerce/Arts). However, most of those who performed technical work had diplomas that were related to Visual Communication (for example, graphic design, photography and animation). For PPR practice, this meant that the practitioners saw themselves as technicians, who needed to be told

what was to be done. During elections, these practitioners were joined by on-the-ground party workers, who received technical training in producing political content. These party workers were the foot soldiers, cadres that were a part of the traditional party who relied on instructions to perform tasks related to the spread of messages and mobilisation. Hence the practice of PPR in India performed the back office function of producing content that could be amplified. In doing so, the field of PPR was reduced to what resembled a propaganda machine built and maintained to serve the interests of the organisation.

8.3 Theoretical Contributions

In the introduction and literature review, it was stated that the concept of power was the central theme of this thesis. Additionally, critical theory was selected because it was considered adequate to examine power embedded in professional culture. Therefore, this study contributes to the critical theory of public relations and PPR. In public relations research critical theory has primarily guided research on power in the context of public relations discourse (Weaver, 2021), the public relations department (L. A Grunig, 1990) and public relations practitioners (Edwards, 2009; Wolf, 2018). These studies have built on social theories of power (Bourdieu, 1991), which have been discussed in the section above. Research on public relations from the perspective of power as an interactional accomplishment is rare (Theunissen & Sissons, 2018). This study contributes to critical theory from a perspective of power as an interactional accomplishment, which has been used to examine the mechanics of professional culture in relation to power and control.

In the literature review on public relations and culture (not from a critical perspective but from a macro functional perspective), scholars have looked to examine how culture can contribute to the growth of public relations (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2012). Alternatively, some studies on public relations and culture reviewed in Chapter Two understood culture from a macro, national culture perspective (AlSaquer, 2008; Al Tamimi, 2014). These approaches have described public relations practices in different geographic regions. The understanding of culture in the context of this research is different. Here critical theory is used to identify professional culture as a system of control. This perspective, in the context of PPR, contributes by highlighting factors that enable the use of power, such as labels, languages in multilingual departments, organisation hierarchies concerned with authority, regulation and the regularisation of activities that are specific to processes of PPR. These factors are unique to departments and organisations, and are cultural factors that shape how PPR is practised. Additionally, the languages used within a department and in interactions between practitioners enact power embedded in professional culture. Therefore, it is through these interactions that power is produced and reproduced to make PPR a discursive practice. Power is thus theorised as an interactional

accomplishment that is enacted in relation to professional culture, which includes professional space, language, regularised practices, regulatory mechanisms, etc. that are unique to organisations.

On organisation structures, there is agreement that public relations departments are primarily hierarchical, and organisation structures are sources of power (Moss et al., 2017). Here, the study provides further evidence by showing how PPR departments practise hierarchy. The study acknowledges that the organisation structures of the PPR department within a political organisation require a hierarchical structure because that enables PPR departments to function. This study contributes to critical theory by showing that power is an interactional accomplishment in which managers regulate work, and in doing so exert power over the practitioners so as to ensure control over an organisation's narrative.

In situations where professionals work together, public relations research has shown practitioners draw on symbolic power (Edwards, 2009) to dominate their peers. This research adds to critical theory in that when practitioners interact with each other they exchange knowledge about professional processes related to the activities of the PPR department. Hence, power in the context of interactions where there is a balance of power between colleagues is controlled by regularised practices.

Regularised practices are produced and reproduced in interactions between practitioners. In the context of public relations discourse, the study adds to critical theory by proposing that PPR is impacted by discourses of the public sphere. Practitioners interact with specific knowledge sources, regularised in professional activities that are unique to every organisation. Therefore, PPR practice is controlled by knowledge reserves, which have their own ideologies. PPR practitioners reproduce these discourses in a manner which benefits the organisation. The discourse present in knowledge resources, and the interaction of practitioners with those knowledge sources, is made possible by the use of dominant languages, which is an important aspect of professional culture.

The study of the use of language in public relations has largely been in the context of discourse (Motion & Weaver, 2009). Critical public relations theory has rarely looked to guide research on the use of dominant languages in public relations practice in relation to power. This study adds to critical public relations theory by proposing that PPR departments in multilingual societies form avenues where organisations and their departments have a hierarchy of languages. In this hierarchy, the dominant language is a functional language like English (M. Kulkarni, 2014), which dominates and exerts power over regional ideologies that are related and represented through language.

Lastly, In this thesis, Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was employed as a key analytical framework to examine the use of power in communication within political public relations (PPR). CDA provided a robust methodological approach to uncovering the ways in which power dynamics are embedded in language and communication practices. By analysing the discourse of PPR practitioners, this study revealed how power is exercised, negotiated, and resisted in various communicative interactions. By employing CDA, the study uncovered the underlying power relations and ideological messages embedded in the post, illustrating how PPR practitioners use discourse to align their content with the party's narrative and persuade the audience. The use of CDA allowed for a deeper understanding of the ideological underpinnings of PPR practices and how these practices serve to maintain or challenge existing power structures. This analytical approach was integral to identifying the four key themes of power and control between colleagues, through structures (managers), through discourse, and through regional languages. The insights gained from CDA have significant implications for the field of political communication, highlighting the critical role of discourse in shaping political narratives and influencing public opinion

8.4 Conclusion

This perspective on power has implications for public relations research that focuses on workplaces and professionals. The focus of the study was the interplay between PPR practitioners and aspects of professional culture. The examination of power by focusing on professional culture, PPR practitioners and their professional interactions is best achieved by analysing practitioners' lives as they navigate the challenges of everyday professional work.

Investigating interactions helped examine the artful ways in which PPR practitioners draw on the conditions of possibility available in organisational settings to accomplish their practical purposes and, in doing so, reproduce or resist aspects of power and control. Power is constructed in interaction and reproduced over time and through organisational processes. In conclusion, the view of power proposed in this thesis reveals that the regulation of communicative activity in organisations is not a simple matter of larger forces controlling the activities of individuals in organisations. It includes processes, discourses and the power of individuals in relation to communicative activities.

Chapter Nine

Conclusion

9.0 Overview

In this final chapter of the thesis, a summary of the key findings of the research is provided along with a recap of the aims and methodology employed in the study. The following sections are a summation of the findings, in which the research questions are answered. The second half of the chapter outlines the significance of the study and recommends some ways in which the study may be of use to practitioners of PPR. The limitations of the study are listed, followed by a section of recommendations for future research, which concludes this thesis.

9.1 The Aims of the Study

The thesis is a multimodal investigation of how professional culture within a PPR department impacts the practice. More specifically, it explains how power is used by a political organisation to exert control over PPR practitioners and the practice of PPR, to ensure public relations content supports and amplifies the organisation's message. The research process began in late 2017, at a time when Christopher Wylie, a political activist and whistleblower, gained attention for his role in the Cambridge Analytica scandal.[38] Cambridge Analytica was about a private political consultancy that worked for the Trump campaign. The consultancy had illegally obtained the private Facebook information of 87 million people and used it to build psychological profiles of voters. Using cutting-edge research, Cambridge Analytica, funded by the billionaire hedge-fund owner Robert Mercer,[39] and effectively run by Steve Bannon[40] from 2014 onward, created narratives through public relations content to ignite culture wars, suppress voter turnout and exacerbate racist views held by some voters. Nevertheless, Trump's campaign staff have continued to deny Cambridge Analytica played a major role in the campaign.

By 2018 the use of public relations social media content and technology to shape the election process had been normalised. This marked a point of departure for this thesis which aimed to understand

[38] See The New York Times: Cambridge Analytica and Facebook: The Scandal and the Fallout So Far https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/04/us/politics/cambridge-analytica-scandal-fallout.html

[39] See Jane Mayer (2017) article in the New York Times: The Reclusive Hedge-Fund Tycoon Behind the Trump Presidency https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2017/03/27/the-reclusive-hedge-fund-tycoon-behind-the-trump-presidency

[40] See The BBC report on the downfall of Steve Bannon https://www.bbc.com/news/election-us-2016-37971742

how political parties were using PPR services. This thesis argues that PPR is a specialised field of public relations. Approaching PPR as a specialised field enables the use of critical theory (as employed by public relations scholars) to examine specific aspects of professional culture. The result of this examination is that PPR in India largely resembles the practice of propaganda and is controlled by the political organisation. Thus, PPR practitioners have little opportunities to use their profession for social good.

This research collected video data of PPR practitioners actively participating in political campaigns, a relatively rare research methodology. Accessing PPR practitioners, as Tarrega (2017) and Jahng et al. (2020) mention, is difficult. An extensive survey of the literature identified that research utilising video data to examine how power sourced through professional culture shapes PPR practice within the PPR department of a political party has never been carried out before in India. The closest researchers have come to PPR professionals as a source of data is through in-depth interviews (Jahng et al., 2020; Pratheepwatanawong, 2017; Sajjanhar, 2021; Sharma, 2020; Tarrega, 2017), which have their disadvantages (Seidman, 2006), as discussed in Chapter Three.

Three research questions guided the study; they were:

RQ1 How do the professional lived experiences of PPR practitioners influence the political messages they produce?

RQ2 How in practice do interactions of practitioners lead to decision-making?

RQ3 How do PPR practitioners represent their publics in interactions amongst themselves and the politicians they serve?

To address these research questions, the research focussed on practitioners within the PPR department of a political party with a strong presence all over India. The study throws light on how organisations exert control over the practitioners of PPR within a political party. Additionally, it also highlights the role of professional culture as a mechanism of organisation control.

9.2 Summary of the Methodological Approach

The study involved participant observations in two communication departments of a political organisation in India. A total of 56 hours were spent in the public relations department of a political party. In addition, twelve interviews were conducted with public relations practitioners working in public relations agencies. These practitioners had in the past provided services to political clients, and therefore their input was instrumental to the analysis.

The thesis addressed the research questions through a critical approach. Sissons (2014) evaluated how power is present, reproduced and resisted by analysing the professional interactions of public

relations practitioners. Similarly, in this thesis professional interactions are analysed as data and they focus on different aspects of power related to the professional culture of PPR. Sissons's (2021) Ethnographic Communication Analysis (ECA) framework combines Critical Discourse Studies with Conversational Analysis (Garfinkel, 1967; Lynch, 2019; Schegloff, 1991, 1999) and non-verbal gesture analysis (Mahmoud & Robinson, 2015; McNeill, 2005). As mentioned in Chapter Three, these approaches helped show how power embedded in professional culture is exerted by political organisations to control the practice of PPR.

To examine power, the research focused on professional culture in the awareness that there were going to be parts of national culture that would be a part of the professional culture of the PPR department. More importantly, by acknowledging that language is a means through which professional culture is carried, enacted and resisted, the study analysed data in the form of professional interactions. The data presented in this thesis was analysed in the interpretative tradition (Geertz, 1973; Heracleous, 2004), which considers discourse as context-dependent. Heracleous (2004) has said that interactions are goal-oriented, and therefore participants in interactions have a purpose. Therefore, power in the thesis is an interactional accomplishment, which means power was produced and reproduced by professionals in a professional context within a PPR department of a political party. This perspective on power has useful implications for research on communication in workplaces and professions. In particular, this applies to research that focuses on the interplay between practitioners at different levels of the organisational hierarchy, the mechanisms of reporting, the products of practice, and the procedures and resources used to produce those products. These routine activities are largely ignored by researchers and practitioners. However as this research shows, aspects of professional culture require attention to understand what contributions public relations departments and agencies engaging in political work can make to society. This focus is best achieved through the study of professional interaction as it occurs in professional settings rather than through more conventional means of data gathering such as interviews with practitioners about their intentions and motivations related to professional practice.

The method used in this study helped examine how narratives that are in line with the organisation's narrative are produced. Understanding power as constructed in interaction also allows us to see why power is not only a commodity that people have in varying amounts, but also an interactional accomplishment. It is not accomplished once and for all, rather it is re-accomplished time and again, every day, in every social interaction. Furthermore, power is not something that one can own; it is accomplished through access to interactional resources that allow one to have one's narrative of an event accepted as the facts of the matter. Therefore, the methodology of this research showed that

every professional communicative interaction in the context of PPR is an occasion to reproduce, undermine, or change power relations.

9.3 Summary of the Findings

This research has four key findings:

1 The first finding is concerned with the practice of collegiality in a context where there is a balance of power between practitioners. The practice of collegiality, as Holmes's (2019) research showed, is common in work-related culture. It is in a collegial setting that managerial control is minimally exerted over the activities of practitioners. In such a situation, the study demonstrates how regularised practices can be a mechanism through which certain practices such as in-house-style sheets and production processes are transferred between practitioners. These regularised practices, as Seperich and McCalley (2006) state, are forms of control.

2 Just like most organisations, in PPR the organisation's structure is hierarchical because it enables the department to function smoothly and ensures that the tasks allotted to the department are completed. Hence, the organisation structure ensured that the manager's agency was maintained. In the PPR department, managers were held accountable for the functioning of the department by politicians and political consultants. Hence, managers allotted work to the practitioners, which is a way of exerting power. In addition, managers also regulate the work of the practitioners, and it is through this function of regulation that the exercise of power is seen to influence the practitioners and the products of their work.

3 The thesis finds that power is exerted by the sources of knowledge that shape the understanding of practitioners about context-dependent social issues. More specifically, the third finding identified the role of information infrastructures (i.e. social media or internet sources of information) that are external to the organisation. Here, through regulated and regularised practices, information sources that benefit the narratives of a political organisation are selected by practitioners. Power is embedded in the content produced by practitioners in the form of hidden ideologies that they encode in the products of the practice. The information sources, which carry hidden ideologies, are reproduced by the practitioners to benefit the organisation's narrative on specific issues.

4 Lastly, a professional culture contains within it aspects of national culture, which in itself is a site of cultural conflict between the dominant culture and counter cultures of a region. These conflicts, particularly in the context of a multilingual society like India, can be used to build

group solidarity. However, this chapter finds that in PPR practice in India, the dominant culture of the country exerts control over the department and over the practitioners belonging to regional communities by ensuring they communicate with their audiences through the dominant language. Hence, it is through the use of dominant languages that PPR practitioners are controlled by political organisations. In addition, the products produced by the practice help political elites maintain the existing power structures within a society.

Below each research question is addressed in greater depth.

RQ1 How do the professional lived experiences of PPR practitioners influence the political messages they produce?

The professional lived experiences of practitioners engaged in PPR practice within the communication department of a political party forms an area that has received limited attention in the context of political communication (Fisher et al., 2023) or public relations (Valentini & Edwards, 2019). Therefore, little to no knowledge exists about how the professional lived experiences of PPR practitioners influence the messages they produce. In this context, the professional culture of an organisation is of key importance because it helps create shared beliefs and enables the practice to function. Consequently, aspects of professional culture such as the presence of an organisation structure, a functional language, professional discourse and the practice of collaboration between practitioners were shown to be factors that shaped the practitioners' professional lived experiences and the products they produced.

In organisational studies, research has highlighted the phenomenon of competing departments within an organisation (Seperich & McCalley, 2006). Similarly, public relations departments are also known to compete with other departments such as the Human Resources department and/or the Marketing department of an organisation (Berger, 2021; L. Grunig, 1990). The study has shown that in the context of the organisation structure of the political party, the PPR department competed with political consultants. However, the PPR department and its managers had accepted that the consultants were prioritised by the politicians, who were placed higher than the managers in the organisation's hierarchy.

The role of the consultants involved using computational algorithms to set the agenda to dictate strategies (in terms of the selection of themes). The messaging themes were provided to the manager of the PPR department, who then relayed this information to the practitioners so that they could create the necessary content accordingly. The themes for messages were passed down to the managers, who were responsible for the production and spread of the messages. Politicians in India

are known to prioritise the input of political consultants (Sajjanhar, 2021) over the managers of the PPR department (as observed in this thesis), which gives them more status than their counterparts in the PPR department. The managers understood their role in the organisation was to regulate the working of the party's communication apparatus. Therefore, the managers never believed they should be consulted in deciding the organisation's communication strategy. Furthermore, managers viewed their role as enforcers of authority. Hence, the culture of the organisation was authoritarian, and the organisation's structure ensured that the lived experience of the managers was limited as they were not encouraged to share their views and insights on strategy.

This experience of the managers was passed down to the practitioners, who understood their role as producers and distributors of political content. For their practice, this meant that practitioners were constantly engaging with social media. However, they seldom made attempts to understand what the audience thought about the content. Functionally, this is because the practitioners believed that the comments and other parameters of engagement (such as likes and shares on social media such as Facebook and X (Twitter) were not a true reflection of the mood of the public on social media platforms. Hence, the practitioners were restricted because the organisation structure made them believe that the role they performed was to support the efforts of the political consultants.

Additionally, the understanding of their role helped practitioners make sense of their function within the PPR department, which was that of producers and distributors of political content, and not as agents who represented regional communities (as seen in Chapter 6). Although some of the participants had a background in political activism, when they joined the practice of the PPR department, they did not see the department as a platform through which they could represent communities. Instead, the role for the practitioners in the PPR department was to produce content that benefitted the organisation and the politician who employed them.

Therefore, in response to the question of how professional lived experiences impacted the messages produced by the practitioners in the practice of PPR, this research showed that the experiences of restriction brought about by regulated and regularised practices ensured that the practitioners produced content that benefited the organisations. Furthermore, the messages produced by the practitioners ensured that the organisation's narrative of events and issues that are of importance to society was maintained.

RQ 2 How in practice do interactions of practitioners lead to decision-making?

This research observed different practitioners of the PPR department engage in different types of interactions. These interactions included conversations among practitioners, between practitioners

and their managers, and between practitioners and members of the news media and social media. In the context of this research question, decision-making is related to the choices made by practitioners in the process of content creation.

In interactions between practitioners where there was a balance of power, regularised practices – i.e. procedures used to create content - dictated how decisions were made by the practitioners. Research on technical writers and their use of regularised practices has shown how the creativity of these practitioners (technical writers) is curtailed by the use of in-house style sheets and procedures for producing content (Zachry & Thralls, 2017). Similarly in PPR practice, when professional interactions resulted in the creation of political content, the practitioners were guided by regularised practices that dictated the selection of the images, texts and colours used to produce social media content.

In interactions between managers and practitioners, the use of power labels by practitioners ("Sir") ensured that the power relations between the practitioners and the managers were reproduced within the department. Additionally, the use of power labels was an identifier of authority. This authority was used by the managers through interactions in the form of directives to ensure that the decisions made by the practitioners concerning the production of PPR content benefited the organisation and adhered to the instructions passed down from the organisation's hierarchy (as seen in Chapter Five.

In PPR practice, practitioners often reacted to specific groups on social media, which in this case were the news media and social media. The practitioners made decisions on content selection based on these mediated interactions with their targeted publics. However, the managers who interacted with political consultants were informed of their content selection decisions. Managers not only relayed this information to the practitioners but also ensured that practitioners abided by the decisions made by the consultants. These decisions, as Sajjanhar (2021) states, were largely influenced by computational algorithms. In this context, managers received and sent information electronically, and the language of these directives, though not analysed here, represented the use of authority in practice.

Similarly, the interactions of practitioners with internet-based technological platforms formed another set of mediated interactions. These interactions were perhaps some of the most influential on the issue of how practitioners made decisions. For example, when selecting topics for the production of attack politics content, practitioners interacted with X (Twitter). In these professional situations, trending topics decided the selection of themes and issues used to create political content (Shami et al., 2019). Furthermore, the reliance of practitioners on internet-based technologies influenced their ability to make decisions concerning the selection of topics.

While the above aspects related to decision-making are concerned with professional culture, another aspect of the practice that influenced the decisions of practitioners belonged to the influence of the national culture on the practice. The languages used in a region were more likely than not to influence the professional practice of PPR. In such situations, PPR practitioners took decisions that favoured content created for the dominant class because they were required to use dominant languages. Thus, the decision to produce content for the dominant class was made possible by the use of dominant languages in professional practices, as Chapter Six showed. In the practice of PPR, practitioners were observed to interact with different groups, and the interactions with these groups ensured that the decisions practitioners took were in favour of their organisation.

RQ3 How do PPR practitioners represent their publics in interactions amongst themselves and the politicians they serve?

PPR practitioners used public relations as a service that could help them promote the ideas of the political party. The PPR department and the practitioners did not concern themselves with representing the public in interactions between themselves or their clients (see Chapter 7). In interactions with each other, the practitioners were more concerned with how the political party and their politicians were represented on social media and in the news media (image management). Additionally, when the practitioners participated in online campaigns, they were concerned about how the political party and their politicians were targeted by the opposition.

Chapter Four, in which two women produced a social media post, showed one rare example of how women practitioners represented Indian women in a professional interaction. Before the interaction, the practitioners spoke about ideas such as equity and progress for all women in India. However, during the interaction (The Women's Day Post) presented in Chapter Four, the practitioners - albeit because of the regularised practices of the department - framed the social media post as promotional for the party. The former leader's image was used to embed the ideologies of the political party showing that the practitioners unknowingly but routinely prioritised the political party over the social group of women in India.

In the interactions between practitioners presented in this thesis, the central focus was commonly on producing content. Most often in interactions, practitioners exchanged information on the use of attack politics by the opposition. Nevertheless, they also engaged in the same practices by producing content that itself attacked the opposition. During the observations, instances when practitioners produced inaccurate information (misinformation and malinformation) were observed. Thus they harmed the regional public, a social group to which they belonged. The PPR practitioners represented here are members of the larger social media audience, and interactions between practitioners who

reacted to social media was divided into two. One group consisted of those who supported the organisation (for example, party members) and the other consisted of those who were critical of the organisation (opposition). The people who were critical of the political party were considered as members of the opposing camp and in interactions they were ridiculed by the PPR practitioners for their political orientations. This process of othering helped the practitioners create group solidarity. By talking about the members of the opposing political party, the department built group solidarity and in doing so reinforced their own political ideologies.

In conclusion, the findings show that PPR practitioners used public relations functions predominantly as a method of one-way promotion, rather than engaging their publics via conversations (dialogue). As mentioned earlier, the fact that the practitioners who participated in the study had no formal public relations education underscores the need for formal PR education to equip practitioners with the skills and knowledge necessary for effective and ethical public relations practice.

9.4 The Significance of the Study and Implications of the Findings

The thesis considered a range of products produced by PPR practice in India, along with interactions within communication departments. These two sets of data present empirical evidence about the practice of PPR in India. Therefore, the research informs the debate in political science, political communications, public relations and PPR on matters concerning the impact of public relations on democratic processes such as elections (Dulio, 2004; Farrell, 2006; Franklin, 2004; Hung & Chen 2004; McNair, 2017). The thesis addresses issues in the field of public relations on the use of persuasion (Sanders, 2012), manipulation (J. Atkinson, 2005) and propaganda (Moloney, 2006) as a legitimate PPR practice (L. Porter, 2010) used by political parties to control narratives on particular issues that impact society.

The use of PPR strategies has altered democratic practices by making the process a personality contest, which has been referred to as the "Americanisation" of electoral practice (Jaffrelot, 2015). The promotional culture centres on personalities representing dominant groups and contributes to the rise of dominant cultures that seek to marginalise smaller subcultures by employing public relations services. Therefore, the thesis shows that PPR in India is a practice through which dominant cultures and their structures are maintained.

9.5 Practical Implications of the Study

As previously mentioned, the thesis adds knowledge to the practice of PPR in the context of India. It thereby informs the debate concerning the use of public relations in political processes such as

elections. Furthermore, as India is a democracy, it is assumed that the findings highlighted above are relevant to other countries with similar cultures and political systems, such as Bangladesh, Pakistan and Nepal. For practitioners of PPR, it is hoped that the data assembled in this study help them examine their practice and its impact on society. In particular, it is expected that this study increases awareness about how power embedded in the professional culture of a political organisation shapes the practices of a PPR department.

The thesis makes contributions to the literature on how aspects of professional culture - such as the use of dominant language within PPR departments in multilingual societies, regulated practices of PPRPs, and the standardisation of the content creation process - can shape the overall lived experience of professional practitioners and the profession of PPR. These aspects of professional culture, as the thesis shows, have the potential to shape how public relations is used in the political context of India. Additionally, understanding professional culture as a set of professional practices and beliefs held by members of the organisation can help members of the industry better implement public relations services on behalf of organisations.

9.6 Limitations of the Study

This study's main limitation is that it is restricted to the examination of a small sample size, as is common in qualitative research of this nature. The video ethnographic data was collected in two departments belonging to one political organisation, in a country that follows a multi-party system. Therefore, the research draws on Serini's (1993, p. 6) argument, that the thesis's limitation is the fact that it relies on the experiences of a few practitioners. Furthermore, PPR is a complex practice that includes interactions with several professional groups, and not all interactions were captured to draw a more comprehensive understanding of how, for example, political consultants exert pressure on the managers of the PPR department, and how competing departments exert pressure on the department. This means the research does not provide a full description of PPR practice. Additionally, it does not provide examples of other aspects of PPR practice, such as lobbying (Kantola, 2016), the role of social media platforms in spreading information (Machado et al., 2019), in mobilising audiences (Jaffrelot, 2015), and in inciting violence (Okigbo, 2016).

However, the study's strength is that it observes first-hand the complex and dynamic practice of PPR. Furthermore, Small (2009) mentions that a single-case study (provided the execution is robust) can demonstrate reliably that a particular process, relationship, dynamic, or practice exists. The use of the ethnographic communication analysis of Sissons (2014), combined sociolinguistic theories, data-gathering and analysis methods to ensure the robustness and reliability of the research.

Moreover, ethnographic data combined with unstructured interviews of participants to help confirm the experiences of participants. It also incorporated the analysis of the products (social media posts) created by the practice. Therefore, this triangulation helped increase confidence in the interpretation of the findings, as similarly discussed by Singer (2009). Another limitation was the time scale: an average of a week in each PPR department. The fact that the data were gathered in India but analysed in New Zealand created challenges, as data had to be collected over a specific period. In similar studies conducted by scholars such as Middleton (2020) and Sissons (2014), the data were gathered over more extended periods. However, these scholars highlight that access is a limitation to any ethnographic research (Middleton, 2020; Reich, 2015; Sissons, 2014). Moreover, political organisations have never been enthusiastic about giving long-term access to a visiting researcher.

9.7 Recommendations

The thesis demonstrates, through specific examples, how professional culture is a mechanism through which control is exerted on the practitioners who create PPR content in a manner that ensures the products benefit the organisation. Political parties benefit from PPR because it is through PPR content that narratives concerning societal issues are created to shape public opinion. In doing so PPR practitioners produce and reproduce power that contributes to the maintenance of existing power structures in society. Therefore, the study recommends that the PPR function should encompass both relationship-building and promotional activities. While promotion is a key aspect of public relations, building and maintaining relationships with various stakeholders is equally important. By integrating both functions, PPR practitioners can create more effective and sustainable communication. The use of PPR as a relationship-building function will ensure that the communication between politicians and their constituencies is two-way. Furthermore, a two-way model of communication can enable politicians to have a dialogue with their constituencies, and in that dialogue PPR practitioners can represent regional communities, thus enabling the practice of PPR to be a practice for social change.

The employment of PPR services in their current form causes practitioners to create content with the express aim of manipulating audiences. This aspect of PPR ensures that the citizens of a democracy are not well informed for making decisions that benefit their society. However, with the increasing use of social media platforms to enable politicians to reach audiences, PPR practitioners largely interacted with social media audiences. Thus they were representing social media audiences in interactions with their managers. More specifically, because PPR practitioners were constantly engaging with their competition, they represented the dominant ideologies related to specific issues in the content they produced. More often than not, the agenda and the ideologies embedded in

political content catered to issues of national importance to which the regional population paid little attention. This was largely a consequence of the input from political consultants and the power relations between politicians at the national level and at the regional level.

Hence, in the context of PPR practice, the thesis recommends that PPR departments be decentralised, with more power to be given to regional PPR departments. While this recommendation may negatively impact the speed at which the political organisation communicates, it will make the political organisation more democratic, which in turn will strengthen the democratic practice of the region.

PPR is a complex, multifaceted field of study, and this study has focussed only on the internal dynamics of a PPR department. This thesis recognises PPR as a specialised field of public relations and, by doing so, it provides future researchers with a platform through which concepts such as dialogue, trust, activism and diversity can be applied to enrich the practice of PPR. It provides further evidence of PPR being a specialised and critical area for public relations scholarship, which is important because there is very little evidence or knowledge of the precise nature of PPR work in many regions of the world (Sriramesh & Verčič, 2009).

Methodologically, ethnographic-style research would promote a better understanding of PPRPs and communication professionals. Ethnographic communication analysis (ECA) (Sissons, 2021) has created a more nuanced discussion of power embedded in professional culture than that provided by "empowered versus disempowered" and similar binary approaches to culture. Using a cultural approach helped an understanding of organisational power embedded in discourses, technologies, practices and traditions which can exert control over practitioners.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Ethics Application

An ethics application was tabled in July 2018 and ethical approval (application number 18/298) was received in August 2018.

Ethics Approval: **18/298 An analysis of communication practices amongst Indian political public relations practitioners**

Appendix 2: Transcription symbols

Transcription conventions used in this thesis are based on the contributions of Gail Jefferson (2004),. A few additions to the transcription list such as (xxx) have been made to accommodate the nature of the research and the linguistic data gathered.

Transcription Symbols	Meaning of the symbols used
(0.2)	Indicates intervals between talk
(.)	Indicates short pauses
=	Latching
:	Preceding sound or letter is stretched. The more colons, the more stretched the sound.
,	Indicates a slight upwards continuing intonation, such as when someone is reciting a list
-	Abrupt cut-off sound
[ ]	Shows overlapping talk
WORD	Speaker's emphasis
WORD	Words spoken are louder than surrounding talk
°word°	Words are softer than those before or after degree symbols
↓ ↑	Pitch markedly lower or higher
((indistinct))	Unidentified translation (Words and phrases that could not be heard clearly)
((word))	Translator's best guess
<word	Indicates a hurried start to a complete word
word>	Indicates a hurried finish to a complete word
>word<	Bracketed material is speeded up compared to surrounding talk
<word>	Bracketed material is slowed down comparted to surrounding talk
((laughter))	Participants break into laughter
haha	Laughter within a conversation
(XXXXX)	Names of people and organisations (such as political parties) masked to protect the identity of participants

Where necessary standard punctuations are used for clarity.

Appendix 3: Nonverbal Markings

List of signs used in this thesis to highlight nonverbal gestures in accordance with those used in a similar video-ethnographic study by Sisson (2014).

	Arrows to mark gaze direction.
	Arrows to show participants leaning forward and backward and to show direction of head movement.
	Circles to highlight hand gesture
	Arrows to show circular hand movement
	Participant standing over another participant
	Arrows to indicate two participants engaged through gaze.

Appendix 4: Video-ethnographic participant Information

Name	Age Range	Gender	Party Membership	Education	Roles Performed	Previous Experience
Paul	30-35	Male	No	Degree, Diploma in Design	Edits video and designs social media content	Designer for a sports magazine
Philo	25-30	Female	No	Degree, Diploma in Design	Digital Media Designer	Freelance Designer
Adam	40-45	Male	Yes	Degree	Videographer (Camera Man) and Social Media Specialist	Cameraman
Pearl	25-30	Female	No	Degree in Social Sciences	Social Media Specialist and Media Relations Practitioner	Journalist
Joe	25-30	Male	No	Degree	Social Media Content Creator	Film Script writer
Sonam	45-50	Male	Yes	Degree	Social Media Team Manager	Political Activist
Nag	45-50	Male	Yes	Degree	Manager Media Relations	Journalist
Mitch	30-35	Female	No	Degree	Activist, Spokesperson, and PPR Practitioner	Social Worker
Ken	25-30	Male	No	Degree	Content Creator	Activist
Harvey	25-30	Male	No	Degree	Content Creator	Activist

Appendix 5