

**THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE INTERNATIONAL HISTORY OF
PUBLIC RELATIONS CONFERENCE 2011**

Held at Bournemouth University

July 6-7, 2011

Conference Chair and Proceedings Editor: Professor Tom Watson

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ABSTRACT

Public relations education in Britain: a case history

Richard Bailey MCIPR (R.S.Bailey@leedsmet.ac.uk) and Lucy Laville MCIPR, Leeds Metropolitan University

Public relations has been taught as a degree-level qualification for only two decades in the UK (L'Etang 2004). Of the three UK universities to begin teaching the subject at BA level in academic year 1989-1990, two (Bournemouth and Leeds Metropolitan) remain well-established providers of public relations education.

These two decades, coinciding with a period of expansion of higher education (Tight 2009), have also been a time of growth for the discipline. Public relations has typically been taught in post-1992 'new' universities – and its perceived low academic status has been countered by the success graduates have achieved in the workplace, and the need of employers for a pool of talented young people during a period of rapid expansion in the sector (Miller and Dinan 2000).

Drawing on information from archives and on interviews, the authors will present a case study history of a well-established UK provider of public relations education. The paper will explore the establishing of the course, its emergence to prominence within the faculty and the university, the continuing definitional and domain issues alongside other subject disciplines, the relationship with professional bodies, the struggle for professional and academic respectability, and the development of a range of provision from undergraduate, to postgraduate and professional qualifications.

After this period of rapid expansion, higher education faces a challenging future with many institutions chasing declining numbers of demanding, fee-paying students – and with all seeking to attract greater numbers of international students. Not only is there competition from similar-ranked institutions, but the same pressure to justify a 'return on investment' is encouraging older universities to diversify into business and vocational education.

Oxford University, though not offering a public relations degree course, has for example, appointed a visiting professor of Corporate Reputation at its Centre for Corporate Reputation, established in January 2008.

The authors proceed from their institutional case history to ask some questions about the possible development of public relations in higher education in Britain and to present some future scenarios for discussion.

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The rise and scope of litigation public relations in England

Thomas Beke, PhD Candidate, Department of Film, Media and Journalism
University of Stirling, Scotland
thomas.beke@stir.ac.uk

Acknowledgment: This paper is a small proportion of an extended empirical research, a PhD thesis on the historical evolution of Litigation PR in England between 1992 and 2010.

Abstract

Purpose – This paper takes a closer look at the field of Litigation PR, focusing on the circumstances of the rise and the main attributes of this new branch of public relations in London, in the English common law jurisdiction. The purpose of this paper is concerned with describing what this branch of PR is about and why the new institution of Litigation public relations evolved in England.

Design/methodology/approach – Personal correspondence, legal regulations and transcripts of oral interviews were reviewed in order to achieve the main purpose of this paper.

Findings - This specialised PR practice has been growing in the U.S. since the 1980s. This paper argues that the development and the main attributes of Litigation PR in England were different to that of the US as it reflected very different legal, political, economic and historical traditions of the English common law jurisdiction.

Originality/value – The paper reflects on the academic writings of different scholars who argue that public relations history need more detailed academic works to add value to the discipline. The original research enriches our understanding about a new field of knowledge has been considered one of the most highly specialized and lucrative areas of PR in England and was not formally defined and documented until now.

Keywords: public relations history, legal and litigation public relations, crisis, issue and corporate communications, Thatcherism, legal reforms

Introduction

This paper is based on an extended empirical research that examines the field of Litigation PR, focusing on the circumstances of the rise and the main attributes of this new branch of public relations in London, in the English common law jurisdiction. This paper discusses the evolution of this new and, arguably, under-researched branch of public relations and reflects on the academic writings of different scholars who argue that public relations history need more detailed academic works to add value to the discipline (L'Etang, 2008; Pearson, 1990; Lamme, 2008; Hoy et al., 2007; Olasky, 1987; Miller and Dinan, 2000). The evolution of Litigation Public Relations is an interesting example for the occupation, “establishing itself as a distinct and commercially viable service” (L'Etang 2006, p. 278)

The growth and complexity of lawsuits and the more litigious cultural and media environment opened up the potential for a new and distinct institution within PR. By definition, Litigation Public Relations, in general, "[is about] managing the communications process during the course of any legal dispute or adjudicatory proceedings so as to affect the outcome or its impact on the client's overall reputation" (Haggerty 2003, p. 2).

Litigation PR is a growing field in England, however it has not developed beyond its infancy. It is a young industry with very few specialists who really have to understand the main rules of this new branch and some inevitable points and bans of law. Therefore, the development is determined by legal rules, procedural reforms and outstanding cases in the English common law jurisdiction. Understanding the process of litigation is inevitable due to the fact that PR experts have to guide the journalists through the legal process, procedural rules and how documents are handled before the court. Litigation PR is not about influencing the outcome from a judge's perspective. It does not want the judge think that it is being litigated through the media.

Based on my primary evidences (e.g. documentaries, interviews and biographies), litigation communication originally was mostly about managing publicity. Lawyers and press agents provided information for journalists about the case and generated publicity for their clients. In those days, litigation communication was dominated by media relations and coverage of cases. Unlike predecessors, contemporary PR specialists provide more than simply publicity and media coverage. They apply a new, complex and distinct communication method called Litigation PR.

Origins of Litigation PR in England

The rise of 'spin culture' in England

From the 1950s British politicians used press and broadcast media increasingly. Prime Minister Clement Attlee was probably the last one, between 1945 and 1951, who "took little trouble with the media" (Pugh 2002, p. 294). By the beginning of the 1970s, the increased role of marketing, media and publicity reshaped the face of business and politics. At the same time it reshaped the branches of PR too. British society as well as the communications market became extremely media centralised. Since then the media and communications culture of England have become menacingly focused on institutional reputations. This trend seems to be hardly controllable, "[...] presentation had become all. Across society [...] style was not just

important than substance, it overcame it. We no longer seemed to discuss what something was but what we thought of it” (Pitcher 2002, p. 8).

Thatcherism, the consequence of the new economic thoughts such as deregulation and privatization, had offered impulsive economic and political environment for British business and industry from 1979. Policies were designed to produce a strong state and a government strong enough to resist the interest of pressure groups. The government wanted to reach this “via law and order, traditional moral values, a stable currency, and a free economy (via cuts in state spending and taxes, reducing state intervention, and privatization)” (Kavanagh 1990, p. 9). Last but not least, it wanted to reach this goal via Mrs. Thatcher’s popularized messages. From that time onwards, to Prime Ministers Media Relations and communication became crucial elements to strengthen political power. They did this with the help of the media that underwent a transformation.

As far as the consequences of the changes in the news industry are concerned, newspaper advertising and incomes became extremely important. Newspapers wanted to reach more and more readers offering reports and sections with business and financial coverage in exchange for bigger advertising budgets. At the same time journalists were not able to find enough information sources on their own anymore. Trading with news and providing information by outside sources, such as PR practitioners representing clients, were treasured by journalists at the main editorial offices in the City of London. Needs of the news industry and the goals of the PR industry met at a focal point. Understanding the mutual interests were crucial and made this relationship interdependent and very dynamic. In the course of time, this cooperation made journalism more spinnable than ever before.

This so called ‘spin culture’ migrated to the UK from the U.S. in the 1980s. In the U.K. it was established and practised mainly in politics.

Highly politicised advisers [...] decoded the coded language of politics with different techniques, which included [...] aggressive complaints about the interpretation of stories by journalists, briefings which make highly personal attacks [...] in order to gain tactical advantage over a rival, trading information with selected journalists on the tacit understanding that it will be reported in a friendly manner so ‘put the best spin of the story’ (Pitcher 2002, pp. 9-10).

The efforts of the Conservative government increased the promotional culture. Accordingly, media, journalism, communication and PR industries increasingly expanded in England. In

general, it was beneficial for the advertising and PR industries (Interview with Joshua Rozenberg, London, 03/12/2009).

The establishment and the diversification of the legal communications market in England

The new situation was fruitful for professionally well-confined markets such as the legal market, in particular. As an ultimate result, the legal market was ready to serve the clients and followed the investors of the financial market to the City. Journalists, main newspaper editorial offices and most of the communications service providers did the same. From the very beginning, communications occupations (e.g. PR and advertising) wanted to be adjusted to the new challenges and demands of the legal business where the main objectives became competition and opening the traditionally reserved legal services.

After Mrs. Thatcher came to power the self-regulated legal professions had to face some serious problems. As the result of the liberalization the legal business would have become very competitive. The changes at the market were accepted by Prime Minister Thatcher through the Benson Report in 1983. The Bill opened up the market, suggested to abolish solicitors' conveyancing monopoly and allowed them to advertise and promote themselves for conveyancing work. The "dramatic expansion of conveyancing and legal aid works fuelled the growth of the [legal] profession" (Abel 1989, p. 301).

The decade from the 1980s was of considerable professional significance for PR in seeing the establishment of the legal communications market. Legal advertising and public relations as business services for the legal profession, started to grow suddenly with the abolishment of the individual legal advertising ban for solicitors in 1984. From that year onwards, according to the diverse demand of the British legal market fairly well confined legal communications services started to operate. Public relations practitioners found themselves in a completely new sector which became a form of corporate profile PR, called Legal public relations.

Important distinctions have to be made when discussing the extent of communications deregulations and the evolution of the legal communications market in England over the decades. Due to the split legal profession, there are different business and communications traditions for the distinct branches in England. Besides the judiciary that is communicating with the purpose of providing information about legal system, procedural reforms or

landmark decisions, and promoting itself as an institute there are major consequences in point of communications occurred by the division of the branches of solicitors and barristers. The changing legal business landscape quite quickly increased the demand for effective communications and new fields such as legal public relations in the more conservative barrister profession too. Barristers were essentially litigators in court and used their professional and rhetorical talents. They generally worked as specialists and consultants and had a kind of monopoly over right of audience in higher courts. Barristers were and currently are naturally reluctant to get involved in communicating about pending cases. They are professionally prevented from talking about cases in which they are involved. In these circumstances it's difficult for them to have a media strategy. They can be part of it in terms of the case but because of the Rule 709.1 of the Code of Conduct of the Bar they are not allowed to speak about cases. Correspondingly to barristers, the judicature (former barristers) has been also very opposed to litigation communications. As my interviewee Eady Justice commented on the possibility to influence court,

I think the court in this country probably as little influenced by the media as any courts anywhere in the world. They are impervious to it. We just simply ignore it (Interview with The Hon. Mr Justice Eady, London, 14/01/2010).

The task of judicial communications around cases is very limited. It has been an age-along tradition to give an accurate picture for the public about cases and judicial decision making. As my interviewee, Lord Phillips, President of The Supreme Court has confirmed "[...] on the whole, a judge gives a judgment in England and the judgment should speak to itself." (Interview with Lord Chief Justice, Lord Phillips of Worth Matravers, London, 12/01/2010)

On the other hand, solicitors have no professional restriction on communications. Their communication is ruled less strictly in the Solicitors' Publicity Code. They are famous for their successful cases, 'no win no fee' agreements and argumentative mentalities. They are conducting active publicity campaigns with the help of media specialists. Solicitor has to be a media frenzy person and "[...] combination of a showman, psychologist, nursemaid and poker player". (The Times 22 Dec., 2003) According to one of my interviewees, solicitor's litigation communication is basically about "providing a support for the firm or person who is in the litigation. It's to create a certain view, an opinion of a case." (Interview with Mark Stephens, London, 09/12/2009) With effective communications solicitors can give a greater depth of

understanding of a client's position, however, they do not consider possible to change the result of a case through litigation communication.

Restrictions have been removed on advertising and marketing in the legal field since 1984. However, Litigation PR emerged only later, as an obvious response for the demand of the legal market for a highly specialized legal service, a knowledge focusing on litigation communications support. The age of diversification started with the deregulation at the financial markets. It was called The Big Bang and started in 1986. (Kavanagh 1990, p. 223) As the obvious consequence of the Thatcherite economic policy international firms and financial investors were able to trade in London unrestrictedly. It was the age of "dramatic increase in the volume of mergers and acquisitions" at the British financial markets (Miller and Dinan 2000, p. 26). Concentration of the legal market also increased. Legal firms mergers resulted mega legal practices with one hundred or more partners at Eversheds, Freshfields or Clifford Chance with offices all over the UK. (Abel, 1989) As Abel described the challenges were waiting for the PR industry, "size enhances name recognition and permits investment in advertising and public relations" (Abel 1989, p. 295). At the same time the changes required more effective internal structures, professionalized management and internal communications too. From 1986, City law firms and City PR firms were ready to follow their clients and supply their best legal and communications services for the financial market in London. In these circumstances the demand for effective communication and PR for lawfirms in general increased a lot. On the other hand, promotion and Legal PR, in certain cases, were not enough anymore.

The rise of a new PR branch in London

After the deregulation and mega-privatizations which were put into shape in the Financial Services Act 1986, the City of London became the financial and then legal centre of England. Within some years "the City of London was home to nineteen of the twenty largest law firms in the United Kingdom" (Lee 1992, p. 32). London's attraction to legal service providers are the same as "for other professional business service providers such as finance, media, PR and corporate headquarters" (Davies and Mainwaring 2007, p. 244). As a result of the Thatcherite economic policy the legal service sector, such as legal communication, followed the financial and legal market to the City. The development of the financial markets resulted greater specialisation and diversification within the PR occupation.

As the result of the realignment of the financial and legal markets, the rise of various forms of legal communications services has occurred in London. New branches of PR were

created by the fruitful business climate. Firstly, new institutions such as Financial PR and Investor Relations had to manage the increased numbers of companies who wanted to communicate more effectively with their corporate as well as private clients, members of the public. Secondly, after the year of the Big Bang lawyers very early recognised the limits of clients. They stimulated the demand for legal services with different methods, such as “self-financing litigation, advertising for individual paying clients and new services for commercial clients” (Abel 1989, p. 303). In 1987 The Law Society also believed that there was a high need for legal services, especially after accidents, health problems followed by personal injury cases. (Abel, 1989) These new business possibilities required very diverse legal and communications knowledge.

The demand for diverse communications institutions was created by the special mixture of market pressures due to increased competition at the legal market and cultural changes such as consumerism and the need for the spin culture. The introduction of the age of distinctions in general legal communications to legal promotion, legal PR and Litigation PR started around 1988. In the increased demand there were several opportunities for PR specialists to become determining practitioners of various legal communication institutions. Being familiar with law firm promotion or Legal PR were not enough anymore. Companies of mega-privatisations had to take care of their reputations. In the middle of a legal crisis such as a litigation procedure they had to manage their legally driven issues effectively. “Those issues which could enhance or undermine corporate or political reputation” had radically increased in England (Pitcher 2002, p. 54). The need to manage the audiences of the mega-privatisations of the 1980s extended. Conflicts and crisis situations emerged and needed more effective ways of management. Business conflicts and financial disputes resulted law cases when parties sued each other. From the end of 1987, Trade Union law firms pioneered the market of class action lawsuits and personal injury cases followed post-traumatic stress disorders caused by devastating accidents, health injuries. Legal crisis management as a particular form of crises and issue management needed highly sophisticated communications experts. This demand generated a brand new communications discipline in England. From 1991 onwards, PR experts provided the necessary communications knowledge to these cases with the supply of an interdisciplinary field. (Telephone interview with Sandra Hewett, London, 25/11/2009) This was the dawn of litigation support and law case promotion provided by PR practitioners in England, mainly in London.

Both legal communication institutions were spatially focusing mainly on the Southern region of England. However, Litigation PR, the new PR institution was geographically much

heavily determined by the location of legal institutions such as courts, lawyers' practices and chambers in the City then legal promotion, legal PR. What is more, the allocation of legal services in England, particularly in the relevant categories for Litigation PR (e.g. libel, litigation) became extremely focused on the City. All the necessary London quotients exceeded the average in these points and affirmed this statement. Accordingly, considerably high results could be found in litigation, libel and defamation law as the main fields of interest for Litigation PR specialists. (Davies and Mainwaring 2007, pp. 242-243) The main income, topics and clients of Litigation PR derived from these legal specialisms. Therefore, central location of the new PR branch was heavily predetermined.

In that brand new setting public relations occupation took up the challenge. The main business and legal events, scandals of the late 1980s in London were not about promoting legal businesses or providing media publicity for celebrities' juicy trials anymore but about managing conflicts. These were devastating crisis situations such as the fall of the financial market, legal consequences of the fraudulent bankruptcies and managing the reputation of famous businessmen and CEOs. Since Legal PR was talking about wills, conveyancing of property, small claims lawyers and press agents were able to handle these issues. At the same time, they were mostly motivated only to improve their own image. Legal PR to everyday use and unlimited media coverage of cases were million miles away from staff what specialists became involved in Litigation PR. Lawyers and press agents provided unlimited publicity for cases almost irrespectively of the stake of risking the client's reputation. On the contrary, the new field of knowledge was something completely different. After the enactment of the legal reforms and new regulations of the 1990s we became witnesses to the genesis of a brand new institution of PR. The stake and cost of Litigation PR were very high. The most important things were legal accuracy, cost and privacy. British lawyers and press agents who were managing publicity along the cases of high profile celebs and companies had to face the danger and measure up to these expectations very early.

Litigation PR in London: a small field with a short history

As a new branch of PR, Litigation PR is an infant industry with very few specialists who know one another. It is a small field with a short history in England because of various reasons.

First, the practice is spatially focused on the City of London where most of the legal businesses and high courts are. Second, clientele of this branch of PR is very limited due to the high legal and communication costs. Therefore competitive service providers are up to

date on the circle of potential clients. Third, legal communication experts are members of the same service sector providing solutions for the legal market. They usually had similar schools, they are even from the same agency and have the same professional background: working for several years in the communication, marketing or journalism industries. Fourth, they have been dealing with a specialised market, the legal business for years. Due to the special expectations mentioned above they do not skip very often from legal subject to other business opportunities. Fifth, the size of the country and the number of jurisdictions limit the number of Litigation PR experts too. The UK has got a population of just about 60 million. There are separate jurisdictions in this country. There are the jurisdiction of England and Wales, the jurisdiction of Scotland and the Irish jurisdiction in which there are two also. Therefore England, the territory of this particular research, is not big enough to feed a huge number of people who are involved in Litigation PR. Sixth, we should notice the reserved attitude of the legal business dominated by lawyers and supported by Litigation PR experts. Companies are allowed to communicate but lawyers are often very unwilling to allow any form of presentation of a case outside the courtroom. Judges can not be influenced externally. They fear that litigation communication will influence the judge and will consider contempt of court. Based on these points, there aren't as many briefs for Litigation PR as perhaps somebody might imagine. In comparison, looking at the United States, which is a far bigger jurisdiction, there are also not very many people who are specialised in Litigation PR. However, that is a big country with only one jurisdiction.

Litigation PR is not strongly developed in England. It was quite unusual for parties to employ PR people in connection with a piece of litigation. Most parties was going into litigation did not want to talk to the general press and this is true even now. Parties usually try to avoid publicity. The legal culture in this country was and still is warn of confidentiality. Lawyers think their job is to do with law and if the client want to tell the press that's up to the client. Journalist had central position in this setting so clients informed the press directly. The problem then was that if the client talked to the press the client did not really understand the legal issues involved. Therefore the role of advocacy remained crucial. Clients were not able to communicate their interests without competent advocacy on law and on extrajudical matters such as media relations. In those days PR people provided only formal statements and simple information on cases for the press but were not ready to provide a complex professional service such as litigation communication. There was a lot of scope particularly for legal marketing and promotional PR. However, communication consultancies felt that

they had to raise their profile because their competitors did the same. After a while more and more publicity agents and PR people moved into litigation communication.

PR companies do everything if you ask them. Have you ever done Litigation PR? Yes, we have done, yes we have done. But it was not true (Interview with Jonathan Hawker, London, 01/12/2009).

Most of the communication practitioners in legal business did not understand litigation communication. They were doubling dangerously and they made the judge angry.

This need resulted an interesting situation due to the fact that the litigation communication service has joined the tasks of legal advocacy. On the other hand, lawfirms usually did not have people in house to do it, so extrajudicial services such as media relations had to be provided by lawyers, on their own. Therefore, in those days, the service of extrajudicial advocacy belonged mainly to lawyers. But they were not experienced enough to do it skilfully so they even focused on improving their own image. Legal business always found it hard to get the message over to the target groups such as the specialised media. Around cases there were a lot of trouble because they got injunctions to stop publicity. However, the more information journalists had, the more they could publish about a legal procedure. The more information that was publicly available on the case, the more likely it was to be accurate, the better the coverage would have been out there and the more people knew what was going on.

There was a lot of misinformation[...] if a journalist was covering a case, or if they heard about a case, then they wanted to find out about the case, they wanted to find out what the legal issues were, and was it going to court (Interview with Joshua Rozenberg, London, 03/12/2009).

After a while, there was a growing group of lawyers in both legal professions, who understood the importance of providing complex advocacy. They intended to do it in both courts, the court of law and the court of public opinion in the form of extrajudicial advocacy. Lawyers knew that clients might win in court but still lose. They early recognized the advantages of the new field of knowledge. However, they were not ready for the advocacy in both courts perfectly enough at the same time. Eventually, in the course of time the hegemony of lawyers being in touch with the representatives of the media has undergone a transformation. The role of journalists remained the same while the position of lawyers has changed a lot since then. Their competences could not fully cover the extrajudicial advocacy,

communication in the court of public opinion. That's why Litigation PR rapidly extended in London in the legal business. Understanding the process of litigation was inevitable due to the fact that journalists had to be guided through the legal process, procedural rules and how documents are handled before the court. Due to these reasons a handful group of PR practitioners were heavily involved in the litigation communications business particularly from the 1990s.

Some of the PR practitioners, after some challenging legal cases, changed their minds and felt easier to push its fortune in a less troubled field, such as legal business promotion or providing lawyers and cases with publicity as press agents. Again others had immediately chosen Litigation PR and managed disputes in litigation, a lot of activity does not reach court. They were dealing with tasks that required complex legal and communications skills because Litigation PR has not been not about influencing the outcome from a judge's perspective. Litigation PR practitioners support clients as they go through a dispute or litigation. They insure that their reputation was protected during a course of that legal battle. In that particular situation providing media coverage for them could simply be forbidden. This could happen because the practise of Litigation PR in England, unlike the vast majority of PR specialties, highly depends on the crucial restrictions on communication around different legal disputes. The rise of this PR branch in the English common law jurisdiction was always heavily influenced by the evolution of rules, legislative procedures, legal cases such as the Sub Judice Rule, the regulation of contempt or different personal injury cases As one of my interviewees, Mr. Richard Elsen, considerable Litigation PR expert presented his opinion in a business article concerning one of the most influential legal reviews,

[o]ne of the consequences of Lord Woolf's reforms of 1999 [on Civil Procedure Rules] has been a dramatic rise in the use of litigation public relations as a strategic tool in civil cases that go to trial. Never before has there been so much media interest in disputes that are brought before the court (Elsen, 2007).

Therefore, the main purpose of litigation communication provided by lawyers, media advisors and journalists was to manage press campaigns and generate publicity about the case within the ban of injunction the article would constitute a contempt of court. The history of Litigation PR was dominated by these events, reviews and rules. As Hollander states, "The study of history is the study of both continuity and change" (Hollander et al. 2005, p. 35). Therefore, the history of Litigation public relations in England is, particularly, the history of

continuity and change of laws, regulations of the English common law jurisdiction and the legal market in London, England.

The main features of Litigation PR in England

Litigation PR can influence employees, customers, investors irrespective of the court and judgment. The client may win in court with the help of a lawyer but still lose. There were many cases where the client lost the case but won the battle. For Litigation PR that's the only think that matters.

Litigation PR is a growing field in England with very few specialists who really have to understand some rules of this new branch. Firstly, as far as media relations in a litigation are concerned, Litigation PR experts has to understand the media. How it works, what they get excited by, what they are afraid of, what they are going to do with legal documents, or even what they think of lawyers. Important to know how much time they are going to give to a court case, and if they are not going to come how will they take info and the confidence to use it. Secondly, it is important to understand clients. How people are on an emotional roller-coaster when they are in litigation and they go to court.

They are outraged initially, they are so angry. It's very emotional the reaction initially when they enter into dispute and the other side will not accept their position. They are angry. Even more angry when the other side goes onto attack and places stories and allegations against them [...] And they get fed up. And it escalates, escalates. They are nervous. Then they go to court. (Interview with Jonathan Hawker, London, 01/12/2009)

Finally, it is a must to understand the law, different rules, litigation, civil and criminal proceedings. Ordinary Corporate PR such as Legal PR is a pretty much unregulated thing. Whilst, Litigation PR is regulated by the rules of the court in which PR practitioners are working. What makes it different is working in a very specific environment, that of a legal process where there are specific sanctions and potential dangers. Litigation PR is constrained by the law. Understanding the law is inevitable. The key laws you need to understand to do Litigation PR are media law, defamation, privacy, and the law of contempt.

Litigation or Dispute PR is a specialty within PR and a nice niche in England. Originally, Litigation PR began in the United States. It's a different jurisdiction that is far more informal in terms of the approach to media. In the U.S. Litigation PR business remains and always will be much bigger than in the UK. It is a more litigious society and there are more jury cases there. How the case is presented in the American civil court is very important

because those are mostly decided by juries. The combination of a litigious society plus the cases being set by juries makes a big difference in the United States. Conversely, in the UK cases are mostly decided by judges. They do this by not the presentation and coverage of the case but just by the law. Jury trial in England is only for criminal cases. Predominantly, Litigation PR in England works in civil actions. There are jury trials in defamation actions and one has to be very careful about those cases. Newspapers have a responsibility before any jury trial whether it will be criminal or for defamation not to write that could be prejudicial. Influence the members of the jury is illegal in the UK. For example, in the course of trial jury members are told not to read newspapers.

Litigation PR is a specific kind of quite detailed knowledge and best done by people who are conversant with the legal process, and the creation of legal communications strategy. It's a specific form, a subset of Issues and Crisis Communications and the subset of PR.

There is a big difference between Litigation PR, or Dispute Communication and Legal PR. Legal PR, as a form of ordinary PR is just Corporate PR for a law firm. Corporations and companies do have PR teams in-house but those practitioners are more keen towards things like Investor, Financial Relations or Corporate Communications. Legal PR, in general, is very similar to corporate, profile raising PR. It would be PR to promote legal businesses that many number of PR agencies in England do. It is for law firms and barrister sets promoting their expertise. It's essentially about demonstrating skills of a law firm or barrister set around certain topic areas. Therefore, Legal and Corporate PR are very inconsequential. Litigation PR, on the contrary, is a more thoughtful process. It concerns the anxieties and the realities of what the consequences are of any prospective litigation appearances in the court. All subsequent publicity could be for both parties concerned. The awareness of what the publicity and reputational ramifications are is crucial because inappropriate publicity can actually be quite harmful for one or both parties. Litigation PR is very much case specific. It's much more fast moving than ordinary PR. It's a law for a stake and it's all about getting it right everytime. In Litigation PR everything has to work the right way because extra communication is potentially effecting an outcome in terms of if the adviser gets it wrong. So if PR acts in contempt of court then the judge can give a bit problem to the Litigation PR expert, the client will be extremely upset, the law firm who brings the PR in will not work with the advisor again. It's all about discipline and understanding the primacies.

There is a slight difference between the role of a lawyer and the role of the PR during the litigation procedure. The role of lawyer is to win the argument in court. Lawyer builds up the body of evidence, precedents and try to cover legally everything. Litigation PR or Dispute

PR in litigation, because most of the cases does not reach court, is the communications function that supports clients as they go through a litigation or a dispute. It is to insure that their reputation is protected before, during and after the course of the legal battle.

Litigation PR has to know that media could be a useful, but not the only tool in achieving one of the target groups. It is part of strategic communications around litigation. PR expert has to be sure of his position in legal case. He has to recognise the interests of the defendant or the claimant. It is a highly polarised situation and definitely one where PR becomes extremely important whichever side is on. Usually litigation is a matter of arguing why the case was brought to trial. To the claimant it's about pressure, for the defendant it's about flapping away allegations. Interestingly, that's why it's various akin to Politics. When Litigation PR is working with a claimant side, it's usually about pressure leverage. The way LPR achieve this is going near to but not crossing line where contempt starts. Through that Litigation PR can get quite aggressive media coverage. Litigation PR wants to put pressure on the other side to feel that the case would be harder to defend because the press would write favourably about these claimants' stories and what happened to them. And ultimately, they would either concede the case more readily by way of settlement before trial. Whilst LPR is on the defendant side, then it's really about defending opposition and saying why the defendant feels that he can fight the case. It maybe about why the claim being brought is invalid or baseless. But generally, it's much more about deafening down the situation.

Conclusion

Lawyers do think that Litigation PR is trying to promote their legal practices. Unlike this approach, it is part of the team protecting client's reputation. Generally, the overall strategy is governed by the lawyer. Solicitors has to manage the litigation and then they will have regard to different areas of activity which will include legal communications services such as Litigation PR. Lawyers are always very surprised that there are other options then mere advertising and promotion. Descriptive problems are exacerbated by the fact that very few people is doing Litigation PR work. Litigation PR practitioners might have only been unofficial members of the legal team due to the fact that this extrajudicial service has not been providing legal advocacy, a piece of legal advice, and they have not been members of a strong profession like lawyers.

Nowadays, lawyers disseminate information not only about the service of their practice or fees (in the form of legal PR) but about the legal procedure, cases and clients.

They do this with the help of different communications experts. Designed to serve the needs of lawyers journalists provide volumes of legal coverage every day, including more access to specialized information than ever before. Newspapers and the broadcasting media in England provide extended court coverage, exposing corruption trials, high-profile legal disputes. By now, as the mutual interest of lawyers, journalists and PR practitioners, Litigation PR, a new legal communications service has evolved. It is a distinct branch of PR which provides specialised communication support for lawyers and litigations.

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Trains, chains, blame, and elephant appeal: A case study of the public relations significance of Mary the Elephant

John Brummette
Assistant Professor
School of Communication
Radford University
Radford, Virginia, USA
jbrummett@radford.edu

In 1916, the Carolina, Clinchfield and Ohio Railroad Company performed its civic duty by assisting an angry public in hanging a murderer in Erwin, Tennessee. The murderer, a two-ton circus elephant named Mary, was convicted, sentenced and publically hanged from a railroad derrick for causing the death of her trainer in a horrific public spectacle. The death of the trainer and resulting hanging of Mary created a public relations crisis for Charlie Sparks, the owner of Mary and the Sparks World Famous Shows. Using primary sources from Erwin, Tennessee's archives and county newspaper, it is clear that public pressure, intense police attention, and the counsel of master press agent, John Heron led Sparks to make a decision that brought negative attention to his circus and the entire town of Erwin. This article examines this incident that is a relevant, yet little known piece of public relations history that not only deals with the major implications of the press agency model of public relations, but also illustrates the impact a decision can make on the reputation of an organization and community.

The Press Agency Model

The history of press agency and circuses are inextricably linked. Grunig and Hunt (1984) defined press agency as a one-way, asymmetrical model of public relations that often utilizes erroneous or misleading tactics to persuade and manipulate its targets. Press agency has been labeled as the "public be damned model" due to its use of publicity stunts and sensationalized marketing to influence the public in the direction that benefits the organization (Goldman, 1948). Grunig and Dozier (2002) claimed that press agency attempts to gain attention for the organization using any means necessary, regardless of ethical standards or accuracy (Grunig, Grunig and Dozier, 2002).

The roots of press agency date back to the early 20th century when it was used by promoters such as circus icon, Phineas Taylor (P.T.) Barnum, to increase attendance to circus venues. Cutlip (1995) argued that "patterns of promotion and press agency in the world of

show business were drawn, cut, and stitched...” by Barnum, whom he labeled as “the greatest showman and press agent of all time” (p.171). Culhane (1990) captured the allure and essence of both Barnum and press agency when he argued “not knowing whether Barnum was going to astonish you or humbug you was part of his attraction” (p. 28).

Despite the concerns of critics, the ability of press agency to influence the public was unmistakable. Goldman (1965) contended that “the conscious and controlled use of publicity” was an instrument that was going to affect the national life almost as much as any other single factor in the 1900s (p.1). Community members in the Eastern Tennessee area witnessed the marvels of press agency as John Heron, publicist for Sparks World Famous Shows, sent out multiple posters to the local media outlets that described his second-rate circus company with dramatic graphics and hyperbole such as “a *tremendous* exhibition of *wealth* and *splendor*, two trains of *monster* railway cars, and *the show that never broke a promise*” (“Poster of Sparks Shows,” 1916). Like most examples of press agency, the poster and its messages contained exaggerated emotional appeals.

Another example of press agency marked the arrival of the Spark’s World Famous Shows by romanticizing the smaller circus company as “bright and new, clean and well polished, and full of first-class acts” (“Sparks Circus is here,” 1916). The biased and exaggerated advertisement was publicized in the local papers in the guise of a real news story. Circuses were also branded as profitable organizations or self-proclaimed “amusement institutions” (Poster of Sparks Shows,” 1916). The article, “Sidelights of a Big Circus” (1916) provided “insight into the inner workings of a travelling tented organization” by informing readers of the sophistication of a circus company and how it was “equipped with its own tonsorial parlor with two skilled barbers, and a manicurist...” which were all led by “department heads or ‘bosses’ that supervised approximately 600 employees” (pg. 3). These claims were disputable when compared to the reality of most second-rate circus shows.

This use of press agency was often a response to public scrutiny of circuses during the early 20th century. Davis (2002) discussed how even though circuses served as outlets for community members to get together and socialize, the threat of young adults running off to join the circuses often caused division among communities and families. Many families disliked circuses because of the possibility of their children leaving to become a travelling carnny.

While one goal of circus press agency was to legitimize the travelling circus as an admirable and socially friendly organization, it was also utilized to provide competitive advantage in an environment marked by competing circus organizations striving to obtain

paying spectators. The ability of press agency to highlight an organization in a manner that glamorizes it over its competitors was most likely what made it appealing to big businesses. This theme remains evident in modern examples of press agency and product advertising where each organization claims to have the best product or service in comparison to its inferior competitors.

The article “Ten Big Shows Small Boys Delight” (1916) described the Robinson Circus Show, which was a larger competitor of Sparks World Famous Shows, as equaling, if not “eclipsing all other canvas covered amusement organizations in terms of the quality and quantity of their multitudinal attractions” (pg. 5). This same article minimized the exaggeration of its previous claims by labeling itself as being at least “at the top of the first division of the world’s largest and greatest tented combinations.” Deception, exaggeration, and persuasion, all of which are fundamental components of the press agency model, were utilized by the circuses in an attempt to argue that they were the biggest, greatest, and grandest show around. Achieving this objective was crucial to the survival of each company.

During the Progressive Era, the persuasive ability and effectiveness of press agency was observed by many businesses that adopted the model somewhat carelessly for their own short-term profit ventures, despite heavy opposition from critics (Stoker & Rawlins, 2005). For example, Brown’s (1921) essay labeled press agency as a “parasite,...” “menace,...” and “instrument of infection” (pg. 610). He contended that the appropriate position of press agency was within the entertainment industry, or more specifically, in the circus industry, as it should be viewed as nothing more than “the genial distributor of circus tickets, and as the facile chronicler of the wonders of the jungle and the romances of the fat woman” (pg.610).

The issue involved with businesses using press agency was that it often conflicted with existing standards that regulated how business was conducted outside of the entertainment industry. Marchand (1998) claimed that “a good businessman, by the accepted standards of peer judgment in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was serious, rational, self-controlled,... and direct” (p. 14). Since these qualities are not of characteristics of the press agency model, it was often incompatible for use in a real business context. Marchand stated that businesses utilizing publicity methods that were “reminiscent of the promotions of P.T. Barnum seemed more like show business than ‘serious business’” (p. 14).

The death of Red Eldridge: An organizational crisis

It was Tuesday, September 12, 1916, and hundreds of paying spectators of Erwin, Tennessee were gathered in Kingsport, Tennessee to see the circus acts of the Sparks’s World Famous

Shows. The show was marred in a brief moment when Mary, a two-ton pachyderm and celebrity employee of the circus, received a swift blow to the head from Red Eldridge, her young and untested trainer (“Virginia is victim,” 1916). Mary responded by grabbing her aggressor by his waist with her trunk, throwing him to the ground, and “with the full force of her beastly fury, sunk her giant tusks entirely through his entire body” (pg.1). As the young and inexperienced trainer lay on the ground fighting for his life, Mary “tramped the dying form of Eldridge, as if seeking a murderous triumph, then with a sudden swing of her massive foot, buried his body into the ground” (pg.1).

The incident resulted in utter chaos and panic for the onlookers, all of whom were in fear of being another victim of Mary’s wrath. Hench Cox, a nearby spectator and local blacksmith, took out his pistol and fired at Mary with five shots while a group of angry spectators were chanting for someone to kill the elephant (Price, 1992). Charlie Sparks, the owner of the Sparks World Famous Shows, was faced with some decisions that could ultimately destroy his profitable circus company. Officials from the nearby cities of Rogersville and Johnson City, Tennessee, were now unwilling to allow the Sparks Circus Shows to perform in their communities in the upcoming days and they were demanding that Mary be punished for her actions (Price, 1992) Sparks had to decide if Mary, an organizational asset with an estimated worth of \$8,000, should be punished to appease the public’s desire for justice, and if so, how he could make up for this loss financially?

Trains, chains and public relations counsel

Sparks was overwhelmed by the magnitude of his impending decision. Mary’s lead trainer argued that he was confident in her ability to be controlled despite what had occurred that night (“Virginia is victim,” 1916). It seemed as though only the trainer knew that Eldridge’s level of inexperience had caused his own demise. Conversely, John Heron, the publicist for the Sparks World Famous Shows, provided counsel that ultimately led to Sparks’s decision to have Mary executed (Price, 1992). According to Price, it was Wednesday, September 13th, a day after Eldridge was killed by Mary, when Heron informed Sparks that his circus show had been banned from performing in Rogersville and Johnson City and the newspaper coverage of this incident was going to increase public demand to have Mary executed. Heron continued to provide details of a conversation he had earlier that day with local railroad engineers in which it was suggested that Mary be hanged from a derrick car in public. Being a publicist, press agent and promoter of sensationalism, Heron indicated his approval of the notion as he explained:

‘Personally, I fancy the idea.’ Heron continued, nonplussed. ‘Newspapers will cover the story and there will be a lot of free publicity. I mean if we have to kill her, let’s do it with style. That way our dissenting friends in Johnson City and Rogersville will have not the slightest doubt in their vengeful heads that Mary is *really* dead. Surely there will be plenty of eyewitnesses to attest to the fact. And I think hanging will be more humane than any of the other suggestions that I have heard this morning. (p. 24).

Sparks took the advice of Heron and ignored the expertise of his trainer as he decided to have Mary executed. His response to Heron’s suggestion was that the hanging “would make one hell of an encore for Mary” (Price, 1992, p.24). His decision was published in an article in the local paper that stated “Not wishing to take any more risks as to the loss of life, Sparks decided to have Mary hung and killed in Erwin, Tennessee” (“Sparks Show Co. Kills,” 1916). In an apparent attempt to evade blame placed on his company for rumors that Mary had previously killed 3 other men, Sparks was quoted as saying, “when an elephant kills one or more people, they are liable to do the same thing again and at a time when the trainer least expects it” (pg. 2).

Heron’s advice was accurate in terms of the amount of publicity the execution would receive in the media however the claim that the hanging was the most humane method of execution was absurd. Part of the reasoning behind the idea was based on the willingness of the Clinchfield, Cincinnati and Ohio (C, C & O) Railroad Company to provide its equipment, services, and collective expertise to complete the task. The C, C & O Railroad Company, which had laid its first tracks in Erwin, Tennessee, in 1886, was one of the larger and most successful businesses in the region (Padgett, 1993). C, C & O had the absolute respect of the Erwin community as a result of helping the entire region experience rapid growth and economic vitality.

In an attempt to appear socially responsible, the railroad company offered to pay for Red’s burial expenses and ship his body back to St. Paul, Virginia via one of its railcars (“Virginia is victim,” 1916). The company executives and engineers also offered to assist in the execution of Mary and the disposal of her body since they owned the only piece of equipment that could be used perform the hanging. This article revealed that the people of Erwin were innocent bystanders that became involved with this situation only because the C, C & O railroad derrick car happened to be located in the middle of their town.

It can be argued that the decision to hang Mary was made to both appease an angry mob of townspeople from the Kingsport, Rogersville, and Johnson City areas, and more importantly, to create a grand publicity stunt for Sparks World Famous Shows. The final

decision was made and set into action as Mary was to be executed by hanging at six o'clock on the following Wednesday afternoon. One article captured the scope of the publicity stunt by stating "No gun could be found which could penetrate the hide of such an elephant" and "Erwin's three thousand population and surrounding country were on the scene" (Sparks Show Co. Kills," 1916). Just as John Heron had suggested, the hanging was viewed as a grand finale to Red Eldridge's death and the show of all shows for Sparks's circus company. Community members and the media traveled for miles to the town of Erwin to watch the gruesome, yet compelling demonstration of circus pageantry, animal cruelty, and press agency.

The unforgettable publicity stunt: Hanging Mary the Elephant

In his 1971 essay, Thomas Burton, a professor from East Tennessee State University, utilized several participant interviews to construct a detailed account of Wednesday, September 13, the day of Mary's death. Burton (1971) explained how the herd of circus elephants was directed to the Clinchfield railroad yard in the same ceremonial format in which they were directed into the towns before the circus. One interviewee carefully described how Mary stood anxiously, appearing as though she was somehow aware of her impending fate and the showmen "went and put a chain, a small chain around her foot, and chained her to the rail. Then they backed the wrecker up to her and threwed the big 7/8' chain around her neck and hoisted her, and she got up about, oh, I'll say, five or six feet off the ground and the chain around her neck broke" (p. 4).

After the chains snapped during the first attempt of the hanging and she hit the ground startled and injured, the onlookers scurried wildly in fear of being trampled by Mary. After several attempts, Mary was finally pulled up by a C, C & O railway derrick and her neck was broken by the weight of her body (Toney, 1916) The scene at the hanging was "deathly silent," and all that could be heard is "a few heart throbs and heart sobs out of sympathy...." for Mary and "the apparent intelligence of the animal made her executor all the more solemn..." as she attempted to use her trunk "to free herself as if to prevent the work of her execution being performed" (Toney, 1916, p. 2). Mary's body was buried "on the east bank of the Nolichucky River, just west of the Clinchfield Railroad yards" (pg. 2).

Media coverage of Mary's hanging

John Heron, publicist for the Sparks World Famous Shows, assured Charlie Sparks that the hanging of Mary would result in free publicity in the media. After almost 100 years of

coverage, research demonstrates that Mr. Heron delivered on his promise. The event is frequently revisited by the media in anniversarial articles that recount the tragic tale for the public. Two important themes are revealed through an examination of these articles. One theme is that focus of publicity stunts cannot be controlled by organization. This paper demonstrates that publicity and blame for the hanging shifted from Sparks World Famous Shows, to the residents of Johnson City, Kingsport, and Rogersville, to the C, C & O Railroad Company, and ultimately to the people of Erwin, Tennessee.

The second theme that is revealed is the latter coverage of the incident uses less sensationalized publicity and demonstrates more compassion and understanding for Mary in comparison to the earlier coverage of the incident, which personifies Mary in a way in which her hanging was justified as a fair punishment for murder. It can be argued that the media coverage of the unforgettable publicity stunt changed with the values of society, especially those related to the journalism profession and the treatment of animals. The hanging of Mary, which was once viewed as a peculiar, yet necessary occurrence by the public, is now considered a publicity stunt, a terrible example of press agency, and one of the most horrific incidents in the history of animal cruelty according to the current values and standards of society.

The article *Elephant who killed three men hanged in Erwin in '16* (1916), which was published in a Chicago, Illinois newspaper, memorialized the 20-year anniversary of Mary's hanging with the use of the same hyperbole and sensational descriptors found in typical circus press agency. Published briefly after the hanging, the article used labels that held an inherent negative connotation such as "*Murderous Mary*, the huge *man-killing* elephant, came to a *fitting end* here when a railroad derrick was used for a gallows and she was swung by the neck until pronounced dead" (pg. 6). The imagery and choice of words seemed reminiscent of those used in typical examples of press agency and they appeared to be an attempt to legitimize the actions of the circus and railroad officials. The invalid statement, "ever since Mary killed her first victim, it had been decreed that she must pay with her own life, but the necessary equipment had been unavailable," expressed further justification of the circus company's actions

Weals (1960) provided a detailed recount of the hanging that was framed differently than articles written in the previous years. He claimed that "some of the circus folk, especially Big Mary's trainer, tried to defend her on the grounds that she was only an unreasoning animal acting on impulse. But it somehow became known that this isn't the first time she'd committed murder. Eldridge was her third victim" (pg. 1). For the first time since

1916, Weals revealed another perspective of Mary's execution. Rather than presenting her as a heinous animal, the thought that Mary had behaved in a normal manner for a wild animal in captivity was finally pointed out to the public. This article was void of any of the sensationalism and exaggeration found in previous articles.

Many discrepancies developed over the years regarding specifics of the incident such as the true reason Mary had become enraged to the point of killing Red Eldridge, the accurate number of people that Mary had killed before the Red Eldridge incident, and the specific individuals responsible for Mary's execution (Chandler, 1968). For the first time in approximately 50 years, Chandler argued that the blame should be placed on "Charles Davis, superintendent for the C, C & O Railroad, and his accomplices, Bud Jones, Sam Bondurant, Jeff Shultz, Lon Shultz, Sam Harvey, Sam Mathes, and Mont Lily," all of whom were discussed as if the reader knew each individual (pg. 2). After decades of media coverage, the C, C & O Railroad Company was presented as the most significant culprit in Mary's hanging and the argument was made that the people of Erwin were only innocent bystanders.

Media coverage of the incident continued to portray Mary in a more compassionate manner. The blame for Red Eldridge's death was depicted as being caused by his own inexperience and mistreatment of Mary (Harris, 1969). After describing how Mary killed Eldridge, Harris claimed he "had been warned by the head animal trainer not to discipline 'Big Mary' until they were better acquainted" (pg. 4).

Smith's (1979) highly satirical article shifted the blame for the hanging back to the people of Erwin by claiming they lacked moral fortitude or regret for their actions. Smith quoted an Erwin resident and spectator of the hanging, as saying "'I don't believe any of those who saw the event felt it was inhumane. Mary paid for her crimes just as anyone else would'" (pg. 9). The Erwin resident's comments were publicized in the national media and they provided the town of Erwin with negative publicity that made it one of the focal points in the discussion of blame for the hanging of Mary. Since the late 1970s, the publicity stunt of hanging Mary has had drastic implications for the people of Erwin, Tennessee. Rather than mentioning the Sparks World Famous Shows or the C, C & O railroad company, articles written during the latter half of the 20th century have focused solely on the town of Erwin.

Brown (1999) argued that "many in this rural northeastern Tennessee town want the whole thing forgotten. They don't like how the townspeople have been portrayed in the published accounts." She continued by quoting one Erwin citizen that said the media's coverage of the event makes "people from Erwin look like a bunch of bloodthirsty rednecks" (pg. 1). For the first time in history, Brown's article implied the notion that an ulterior motive

for Mary's hanging was to create a publicity stunt. She argued that "circus officials were reluctant to take action because Mary was such a valuable part of their show....," yet "they knew they had to do something and apparently decided to kill her in spectacular fashion."

Schroeder's (2004) article posted on Blue Ridge Country.com, began with a caption that read:

It was 1916, and things were changing fast. World War I raged in Europe. Dadaism, ripe with comic derision and irrationality, took hold in artistic circles. Freedom jazz took hold of the American music scene. Margaret Sanger opened the first birth-control clinic. It was a good year for scapegoats. It was a good year to hang an elephant.

Schroeder (2004) contended that "the story of why and how Mary died is, of course, obscured by time and countless retelling: an example of the best and worst of oral history." She continued by labeling the event as "tragic, absurd, excessive: quintessential turn-of-the-century America." Retelling the story of Sparks Circus and the tragic tale, Schroeder described Sparks World Famous Shows without any sensationalism and exaggeration as a "two bit" circus with a "mere 10 railroad cars" that "travelled around the South, putting up advance posters and enticing folks with a noon circus parade prior to the day's two performances" (pg.2). The article concludes by pointing out the contradictory behaviors of the Erwin community that argues that it wants to let the event go, yet it "memorializes – or rather capitalizes on Mary's death" by selling T-shirts and memorabilia in a local antique shop (pg.2).

Conclusion

The documented story of the hanging of Mary the Elephant remains deep within historical archives. Variations of this incident that were once created and recreated through discussion on the streets and in coffee shops have been revived in the realm of social media. Her tale continues to spread throughout popular culture in various online articles, wikis, blogs, songs, and a fully adapted play. George Brant's Mark Cohen National Playwriting Award and Keene Prize for Literature award winning play titled "Elephant's Graveyard" is an example of the public's fascination of this event and proof that John Heron's advice that hanging Mary would receive publicity was quite an understatement.

The manipulative publicity that is inherent in modern advertising and product promotion has a direct connection to the circus industry. The press agency model often utilizes publicity stunts that adhere to the questionable adage *any publicity is good publicity*. John Heron's decision to hang Mary the Elephant was a publicity stunt that continued to get

media coverage for next 100 years however the public perception of Heron's actions changed along with the values of society.

What happened to Mary is now described as “an act of cruelty that seems almost impossible to imagine, much less to accomplish” and a moment in time when an innocent animal was “strung up like a human criminal and executed (Faires, 2007, p.1). Brodsky's (2007) song titled, “Mary the Elephant,” calls the Sparks World Famous Shows “a two bit circus” and the town of Erwin “a little mining town” that lacks any living people that can tell the story “like it happened, and just stick to the facts, not get mixed up with legends, or start filling in the cracks.” Brodsky's explanation of Mary's death is:

It was all done in the spirit of
Good clean family fun,
In the entertainment business
You give the people what they want

They shipped Mary in a railcar
To Erwin, Tennessee
They advertised a hanging
3000 people came to see

The ringleader announced
It would be in the railroad yard
When the matinee was over
And there'd be no extra charge

One Facebook page titled, “Yes, we hanged an elephant named Mary,” has a post that reads:

Instead of Erwin celebrating this eerie oddity like displaying it on apple festival t-shirts (circa 1994) and naming an antique store out of it, Mary should be seen as a reminder of the ignorance of a mob mentality. I can't make heads or tails out of the reasoning behind this act. I never have been able to do so. The... best thing one can take from this is an incredible cautionary tale against vast ignorance. Poor Mary, Rest in peace.

The significance of this tale of animal cruelty is that it represents a peculiar moment in public relations history. The intentions of Charlie Sparks and John Heron and the hanging of Mary are true representations of the claim that organizations using any means necessary to gain publicity often overstep ethical boundaries. While this incident is an excessive example, it still demonstrates the disreputable potential of publicity stunts and press agency.

The often forgotten involvement of the C, C, & O railroad company, which somehow seemed socially correct during the early 20th century, is now hidden by an irreversible blame that has been placed on the people of Erwin, Tennessee. This is an example of how the

reputations of organizations and the communities in which they are headquartered are entangled in the decisions and actions of the organization. Both Mary the Elephant and the town of Erwin, Tennessee, will be remembered as victims of the infancy of the public relations profession and John Heron will remain a reminder of a point from which public relations has ethically evolved.

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The influence of state and church on the growth of public relations in post-independence Ireland, 1921 to 1973

Dr Francis Xavier Carty
Dublin, Republic of Ireland
Email: fxcarty@indigo.ie

I speak here about Ireland, not the whole island, but the independent state which was created by the Anglo-Irish Treaty of 1921. It is otherwise referred to as the Republic of Ireland or Southern Ireland to distinguish it from Northern Ireland which chose to remain under British rule.

This paper looks at the practice of public relations in the Republic of Ireland to 1973, as well as aspects of public relations and influence exercised by the two dominant political and church figures – Eamon de Valera (1882-1975) and Archbishop John Charles McQuaid of Dublin (1895-1973).

The development of public relations in Ireland was different from Britain for many reasons. British rule in Ireland dated back to Norman times and there had been many periods of rebellion, oppression and religious persecution especially since the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. The lead-up to independence had seen the Easter Rising of 1916 when rebels proclaimed the Irish Republic, followed by executions and imprisonment, the emergence of Sinn Féin (We Ourselves) as the dominant political party, guerrilla warfare leading to a Truce and the Anglo-Irish Treaty. The country split over the Treaty, especially for its retention of partition between North and South, retention also of the Oath of Allegiance to the King and other unfavourable elements. The pro-treaty government, Cumann na nGaedheal (Society of the Gaels), led by William Cosgrave, won the Civil War, to be replaced in 1932 by Eamon de Valera's party, Fianna Fáil (Soldiers of Destiny), formed from the opponents of the Treaty. A recent film directed by Ken Loach, *The Wind that Shakes the Barley*, shows how terrible was the Irish War of Independence and the Civil War.

The new state was effectively bankrupt and major infrastructural repairs and development of services had to be the first priority of the government. Conditions were worsened by the Great Depression from 1929 and a trade war with the British which was not resolved until the eve of World War 2.

Ireland, led by de Valera, chose neutrality in World War 2. More unemployment and emigration, reaching 50,000 a year from a small population of less than three million, was the feature of the 1950s. The population is 4,581,269 as of the April census this year. The tide

was turned as Ireland began to look outward in the 1960s, developing new industries and encouraging foreign investment. This led to Irish entry to the European Economic Community on the same day as Britain in 1973.

Public relations practice in Ireland (1921-1973)

Independent Ireland had to assert its identity nationally and internationally. Visual culture played one part in this process, examples being the red post-boxes painted green and the harp logo and ancient celtic themes and imagery portrayed in the stamps and currency (King 2010). Also, from its establishment in 1936, Aer Lingus, the national airline, was used to promote the country and, with the shamrock on the tail fin of its planes, all of them named after ancient Irish saints, it symbolised Ireland overseas (Cronin 2011).

Major events were created to develop identity and ease the civil war tensions. These included the Tailteann Games – an Irish version of the Olympics which were held in 1924 with more than 5,000 competitors across 25 categories, not just sport, but also painting, poetry, literature and Irish dancing. The celebration in 1929 of the Centenary of Catholic Emancipation was a rehearsal for the International Eucharistic Congress of 1932 which also marked 1500 years of Christianity in Ireland. Throughout these years, Ireland played a very active role in the League of Nations, precursor of the United Nations.

With opposition Fianna Fáil party waiting in the wings, Cosgrave's Cumann na nGaedheal government rose to the challenge and, in the September 1927 general election campaign, posters and advertisements in both national and regional newspapers were on a scale never before witnessed. Nearly all of it was 'attack advertising' as it was very difficult to have real debate in those years. Cosgrave used aeroplanes to drop leaflets during a by-election in 1929 and, in 1933, after de Valera had won power, a 'talking film' of Cosgrave was shown around the country from cinema vans (Meehan 2010, pp.118-20). Cosgrave and his son Liam, who was Taoiseach (Prime Minister) in the 1970s, was a decent and capable man but he suffered from a serious charismatic deficit.

Professional public relations in Ireland emerged through the state bodies and it mainly involved public information and public awareness campaigns. Ned Lawler of the Electricity Supply Board (ESB), for instance, came from political journalism to the ESB in 1927 and was public relations manager for most of the next 33 years. His appointment was one of the first of its kind in Europe. He also established the news service of Radio Eireann in 1926.

Michael Colley (1993, pp.79-84) worked with Lawler in the later years. He tells how Lawler raised interest in and support for the Shannon scheme. This was the harnessing of

massive potential for electricity generation from that river in the hydroelectric station at Ardnacrusha in Co. Clare. Lawler disseminated national and worldwide stories and pictures of the construction as it developed and got front page coverage in the English tabloid newspapers. In addition he organised tours by boat, train and coach for the Irish in Britain. Also, through literature and dialogue, he persuaded those who doubted the viability of the scheme.

Colley also describes Lawler's role in the rural electrification project which revolutionised country living in Ireland. It was a grass roots operation and as each small area was targeted canvassers were sent to inform the people and win their acceptance. Local employment was created in construction of the network. There were celebrations in each parish as the work was completed and the street lighting was officially switched on by a local dignitary.

Lesley Luke was appointed in 1940 to the Dublin United Tramways Company. Colley (1993, p.10) claims Luke was the inventor of the bus and tram queue – that would surprise many and might be challenged. Up to then, people assembled at the regular halts for trams and buses and fought their way on board. Luke organised a successful press and poster campaign to persuade Dubliners that waiting in line was the best and fairest system for everybody. Luke was the first public relations consultant in Ireland when he set up freelance after World War 2. He later joined the public relations division of McConnells Advertising and finished his career with the Guinness drinks company.

Public relations professionals were appointed in other state bodies as the government took control of essential services which private industry of the time could not handle such as aviation, sugar, tourism, transport and industrial development.

The first course in public relations was run by night in 1951 at the Rathmines High School of Commerce in Dublin, now part of Dublin Institute of Technology (DIT). The lecturers were predominantly from the state sector. This pre-dated the founding in 1953 of the Public Relations Institute of Ireland (PRII) when Luke and Lawler summoned a meeting in Dublin. There were nine people present of whom seven were public relations officers in state companies. Lawler was elected chairman.

Through the 1950s and 1960s the public relations industry grew in both the state and private sector, in-house and consultancy, although consultancies were often associated with advertising agencies. Independent consultancies later emerged as well as specialists in financial, consumer, food, agricultural and other sectors. There was inevitably, as elsewhere, a fascination with media coverage but it is interesting to see that awareness of the corporate

strategic side of public relations went beyond publicity and press coverage. For example (Carty 2004, pp.204-7):

Tim Dennehy, public relations manager for the National Transport Authority (CIE), told an army training course (1967) that public relations had been “concisely described as ‘getting the reputation one deserves’. It was not, in the common jargon, concerned with image-building but with the creation of mutual understanding “... it is not so much an activity as an attitude of mind ...”

Michael Colley (1970) wrote that the demands of the new decade were “likely to place the accent on the development of the corporate rather than the product image, the implementation of more frank and aggressive PR information programmes and the creation of effective machinery to provide an accurate inflow of information which can contribute to the formulation of policy, in the light of probable public reaction” (p.48).

State and church in independent Ireland

There were historical reasons for the closeness of the Catholic Church to the Irish people, going back to times of religious persecution, with deprivations in education, land, employment and politics, which had only begun to lift with the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829. The Catholic Church had supplied the bulk of services in education, health and social welfare. It did not need to get involved in politics. It was there already and the incidences of church/state clash were few and far between, although there was a problem with the anti-treaty republicans in the Civil War when the bishops excommunicated them. One major clash was over the Mother and Child scheme in 1950 when the Government proposed to make all medical services for mothers and their children free, without means test, from pre-birth to age 16. This was condemned as “socialist medicine”. The row was perceived to be with the Church, but the medical profession were probably the major opponents. The legislation failed and the government collapsed over it in 1951.

All members of the early governments were Christians and almost all were Catholic. They agreed with the teachings of their Church and were happy to apply them. There was a strict censorship of books, newspapers, magazines and films which lasted to the 1960s. Any publication which even mentioned contraception or abortion or what was deemed to have immoral or “filthy” (i.e. sexual) content, was banned. The reasons were not just religious but also political, with fear that the colonial mindset would persist and corrupt the new state.

De Valera, before coming to power in 1932, and, anxious to show that his party were as respectful of the bishops, as Cosgrave was, went with a senior colleague, Sean T. O'Kelly, to meet and reassure the then Archbishop of Dublin, Dr Edward Byrne (Jordan 2010, p.174).

There was pressure on de Valera to have Ireland declared a Catholic State in the 1937 Constitution. The future Archbishop McQuaid, his close friend and neighbour, submitted numerous suggestions. De Valera settled for a phrase that the State recognised the “special position” of the “Holy Catholic Apostolic and Roman Church” as the “guardian of the Faith professed by the great majority of its citizens” and also “recognised” the “other religious denominations existing in Ireland...” (Jordan 2010, p.207). Pope Pius XI was unhappy about such recognition being given to the other religions, so de Valera manoeuvred and word came eventually from the Vatican that the response of the Pope was “I do not approve, neither do I not disapprove, we shall maintain silence” (Ferriter 2007, p.200).

Seán MacBride, who led the outlawed Irish Republican Army (IRA) even after de Valera came to power, later formed his own party, Clann na Poblachta (Family of the Republic) in opposition to de Valera. The night of his first election to the Dáil, in 1947, he wrote to Archbishop McQuaid: “I hasten, as my first act, to pay my humble respects to Your Grace and to place myself at Your Grace’s disposal. Both as a Catholic and as a public representative I shall always welcome any advice which Your Grace may be good enough to give me and shall be at Your Grace’s disposal should there be any matters upon which Your Grace feels that I could be of assistance” (Cooney 1999, p.216).

Bruce Biever, an American Jesuit, conducted a study of priests and laity in Dublin in 1964 and found that the people were convinced “more than anything else that the clergy are the authority figure in every aspect of their lives, not merely religious but social, political, economic as well. As for the power of Archbishop McQuaid, one political figure told him: “Put down somewhere in your book that there is not a political decision, not a piece of legislation proposed with hope of passage, that has not in some way been cleared at Drumcondra [location of Archbishop’s House] (Biever 1976, p.397).

Eamon de Valera

Eamon de Valera, born in the USA of an Irish mother, was the most senior rebel to avoid execution in 1916. He had Blackrock College in south Dublin, famous for the sport of rugby football, as a common link with John Charles McQuaid, both having been pupils there at different times. McQuaid became a priest and held the College presidency during the 1930s,

where he came to public prominence as a man of great energy and commitment. De Valera was influential in McQuaid's appointment as Archbishop of Dublin in 1940.

It is interesting to see how these two men, one the dominant politician of 20th century Ireland and the other the dominant churchman, conducted their strategic public relations, that is, how they handled issues relating to communication, relationships and reputation.

De Valera professed two aims – removal of partition and restoration of the Irish language – and he failed in both. One reason was that he could not appreciate the viewpoint of the unionist majority in Northern Ireland and believed that propaganda was the solution.

His response to hostile press coverage he received in the 1920s was to set up his own newspaper, *The Irish Press*. This expressed his views, was read by his followers and portrayed him in a favourable light. It remained extremely partisan but was a very good paper, especially for sport and hard news.

De Valera was strong in negotiations, stubborn and inflexible, just the sort of leader needed in the new state. His piecemeal unravelling of the Treaty was brilliant, leading to the 1937 Constitution which changed Ireland from being a British dominion to being a republic in all but name.

He was conservative in social matters, believing in simple, non-materialistic contentment. He gave his vision for the ideal Ireland in a St. Patrick's Day broadcast in 1943: "The Ireland which we dreamed of would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as a basis of right living, of a people who were satisfied with frugal comfort and devoted their lives to things of the spirit – a land whose countryside would be bright with cosy homesteads, whose fields and villages would be joyous with the sounds of industry, with the romping of sturdy children, the contests of athletic youths and the laughter of comely maidens, whose fireside would be forums for the wisdom of serene old age".

Many have ridiculed him over this "comely maidens" speech, Jordan saying it portrayed Ireland as a land of milk and honey where Irish Catholics could live en route to heaven but, which de Valera himself knew, was pie in the sky (2010, p.242). Others say it expressed the view of many people at the time.

De Valera deserved credit for maintaining Irish neutrality in World War 2 despite pressure from Winston Churchill and the Americans. It was, however, a neutrality on the side of the Allies, giving them all the help they wanted and quietly sending captured airmen back across the border to Northern Ireland while interning Germans alongside IRA mavericks who supported Germany. De Valera, in what many saw as typical contrariness and stubbornness, marked Hitler's death by calling on the German Ambassador to express his condolences.

Two great issues for a politician are achieving power and keeping it. In this, de Valera was the expert, with the rumour that he kept a copy of Machiavelli's *The Prince* in his back pocket. Once he had come through the turmoils of independence and civil war, he won eight general elections and lost only two, going at his own choosing in 1959 to be elected President of Ireland and serving for 14 years. He never wrote his autobiography, and rarely gave interviews, but he facilitated a major biography which stated: "He has had a stormy life and was of course regarded as a wild revolutionary by the British; yet he regards himself as a conservative statesman and a man of peace" (Longford and O'Neill 1970). It is likely that de Valera in his youth wanted to be a priest, as seen from the account of his relationship with Blackrock College (Farragher 1984).

Many books have been written about de Valera, ranging from hagiography to vicious diatribes, but a recent verdict seems fair: "The caricature of him as stern, remote, and technocratic is a myth, as revealed by his personal correspondence and the affection and loyalty that he inspired in so many. He also displayed exceptional physical and mental stamina and endurance" (Ferriter 2007, p.367).

John Charles McQuaid

McQuaid was a traditionalist in theological matters and found it very hard to move with the modernising Second Vatican Council (1962-65). However, he voted for and implemented its changes. He was strong on discipline among clergy and laity, a man of great energy but he always wanted to be in control. He stated that, as bishop, he was the only teacher of faith and morals in his diocese and that he alone could decide what was a matter of faith and morals. That view of bishop, one may add, is based in oldest Christian tradition going back to Bishop Ignatius of Antioch in the second century AD (MacCulloch 2009, p.133).

If you mention McQuaid to any Irish Catholic who remembers the 1960s you will most likely be told that he came back from the Vatican Council and said there would be no change. Not so. In his typical paternalistic style he said:

You may have been worried about changes to come. Allow me to reassure you. No change will worry the tranquillity of your Christian lives ... With complete loyalty, as children of the one, true church, we fully accept each and every decree of the Vatican Council (Carty 2007, pp.95-6).

A certain aura glowed from Archbishop's House. It was the aura of an all-seeing pastor whose prime concern was for the 'simple faithful' but at the same time a forbidding schoolmaster who seemed to be aware of everything that happened in his archdiocese.

However, behind the public mask he was most considerate and human. He would forgive weaknesses in his priests but never their disobedience. His kindness to the sick and the poor was legendary.

His concept of authority was stated clearly at the first meeting of his all-priest, all-secret public image committee in early 1964. The report noted that ‘the archbishop announced as a matter of principle that authority cannot give its reasoning’. When one priest replied that the tendency today was for people to be interested in the reason for events, the archbishop said:

“People must accept decisions because authority has spoken, and not the reasons behind the decision. This is, of course, because authority is from God, and the voice of authority is the voice of God” (Carty 2007, p.28).

McQuaid had an ambiguous relationship with the media, never appearing on television nor giving interviews. He told editors that they were not obliged to publish any of his statements or speeches but if they did publish it had to be in full. They obeyed. One exception was Professor John Whyte in 1969 who was researching his book, *Church & State in Modern Ireland*.

It was a surprise, in March 1965, when he established the Dublin Diocesan Press Office with a prominent journalist, Osmond Dowling, as director. McQuaid circulated freely among the journalists at its official opening and said he was sure they would be glad of the opportunity to “see the ogre in his den”. He was the first bishop in Ireland, and possibly in Europe, to set up such an office with a layman in charge.

McQuaid’s management style was farseeing and efficient. He was always looking ahead to solutions, co-ordinating and expanding services, anticipating and building churches and schools in the rapidly expanding suburbs of the city. He got a drugs unit established in a Dublin hospital in the late 1960s when most people, including the police, insisted that there was not, nor would there be, such a problem.

In summary, McQuaid was loved by some, hated by others, but ignored by no one. He was a man of contrasts, if not opposites, gentle and kind but authoritarian and strict, shy but forceful, exerting an influence that filtered into every area of public life. He was in many ways an ecclesiastical leader in the old style with a huge respect for the dignity of his office and the medieval pomp and ceremony that went with it. He was frequently attacked and criticised but insisted that it was his policy not to reply unless it was the office of bishop, rather than himself personally, that was being questioned.

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Privileging an activist vs. a corporate view of public relations history in the U.S.

W. Timothy Coombs, Professor (Timothy.Coombs@ucf.edu)

Sherry J. Holladay, Professor (Sherry.Holladay@ucf.edu)

Nicholson School of Communication, P.O. Box 161344

University of Central Florida

Orlando, FL, USA 32816-1344

Abstract

This paper argues that the history of U.S. public relations has been distorted by the emphasis on corporate functions of public relations. The dominant corporate-centric view of history ignores the practice of public relations in the First Reform Era and Progressive Era when activists sought societal change. Histories often claim that public relations developed as a response to activists who attempted to interfere with business operations. That myopic, corporate-centric view has perpetuated a negative view of public relations as merely a tool of “big business.” In the past as well as the present, corporations have been learning from and co-opting activists’ innovative public relations techniques. Current criticisms of public relations parallel early criticisms and images of corporations as well-funded and unethical bullies. By alternatively grounding U.S. public relations history in the works of activists, we open possibilities for re-imagining the field and legitimising activists’ works as a positive, central component in public relations theory and research.

Introduction

This essay argues for the value of expanding the corporate-centric history of U.S. public relations to include the public relations works of activists in the First Reform Era and Second Reform Era. Acknowledging the works of these activists demonstrates the history of public relations is not simply rooted in corporate reactions to activists and can be traced back to activist actions designed to seek societal change. In the past as well as the present, corporations have been learning from and co-opting activists’ public relations techniques.

Current criticisms of public relations often are rooted in this corporate-centric view of public relations as well as in the way in which public relations has been portrayed as

subverting journalistic and democratic processes through a lack of transparency and an abundance of resources. Interrogating the way the history of U.S. public relations has been depicted is not simply an academic exercise. Although we see it as central to broadening students' education, it also holds promise for re-imagining the field and legitimising the works of activists as an important component in public relations theory and research.

This paper begins with our definition of public relations and moves to shortcomings in the corporate-centric approaches to U.S. public relations history, including the neglect of activism in the First Reform Era, Progressive Era, and the environmental movement. The development of the Internet offers opportunities for activism that, like the activism of earlier eras, is mimicked and co-opted by corporate public relations. We end with a discussion of current criticisms to demonstrate how early criticisms of public relations have continued to plague public relations over the years.

Defining public relations

When discussing U.S. public relations history, it is important to define public relations because definitions reveal one's point of view and what qualifies as public relations. We define public relations as "the management of mutually influential relationships within a web of constituency relationships" (Coombs and Holladay, 2010, p. 4). This definition highlights the advocacy function of public relations. We can claim public relations is about providing information but ultimately those utilizing public relations are trying to alter the behaviours of others (Moloney, 2005). Moreover, the idea of management implies a strategic approach that unfolds over time. Public relations is used purposefully to shape relationships; it is not just the occasional use of tactics. Practitioners establish objectives they hope to achieve and manage their resources in pursuit of those objectives. To qualify as public relations, actions must involve sustained strategic attempts to influence relationships with constituents.

The corporate-centric history of U.S. public relations

A common view in discussions of U.S. public relations history is that public relations (corporate public relations) was a *reaction* to activist activities. Public relations' birth in the early 1900s has been depicted as a reaction to activists in the Progressive Era (the muckrakers) attempting to create social reform (Stoker and Rawlins, 2005). The 1970s saw intense activism surrounding environmental causes, Civil Rights, and the war in Vietnam. U.S. public relations had another growth spurt in reaction to the efforts to shape U.S.

environmental policies (Conley, 2006). More recently, activists have taken to the Internet to pressure for corporate reforms. Conservative and liberal activists have utilized various Internet channels, such as social media, to pressure corporations to change their behaviours. The result has been a burgeoning growth industry of online public relations services that focuses on identifying reputational threats to corporations that emerge online.

What is interesting is how writers have characterized corporate public relations as a reaction or defence against attacks. As Stoker and Rawlins (2005) noted, the Progressives were using public relations in the form of publicity to expose corrupt institutional practice as a way to reform them. Gower (2008) argued that publicity “was a tool for moral reform in the early 1900s but was co-opted by public relations practitioners by the beginning of the 1920s” (p. 315). Public awareness of suspect, unethical, and dangerous organizational practices created pressure for reform as public opinion turned against the corrupt institutions such as corporations. The Progressive activists were using public relations to create reform. But the success of publicity/public relations by progressives had a price. “Ultimately, the Progressives enlightened corporations about the value of publicity. These corporations had better and more abundant resources to use publicity” (Stoker and Rawlins, 2005, p. 186). The Progressives’ use of public relations triggered the “birth” of public relations in the U.S. However, histories report the public relations efforts of the corporations as reactions to activists was the starting point. This helps to account for the corporate-centric history of public relations in the U.S. that has dominated textbook accounts of the development of the practice. Early descriptions focused on public relations as a corporate function (e.g., Coombs and Holladay, 2007; 2010).

In discussing the writing of public relations histories, L’Etang (2008) confronts the issue of when to say public relations began. She notes how U.S. public relations historian Scott Cutlip wrestled with the problem of deciding when public relations developed by defining what constitutes public relations. Cutlip noted so many practices have elements of public relations that a history of public relations would be far too long. If everything is public relations than public relations itself is nothing. He, therefore, chose to focus on public relations agencies. As L’Etang (2008) observed, “This means that much of PR is based on organizational (usually corporate) developments, especially in the USA” (p. 327). Miller’s (1999) analysis of U.S. public relations history also recognized that it reflected a 20th century, corporate-centric bias.

Cutlip (1995) did write about earlier public relations efforts in his book *Public Relations History from the 17th to the 20th Century: The Antecedents*. Activist activities are viewed as related to public relations but only as antecedents and not necessarily part of its corpus. Activists are part of the preceding events that lead to the creation of U.S. public relations, but are not the originators of U.S. public relations. Similar ideas are echoed throughout the public relations histories documented in U.S. public relations textbooks (e.g. Cutlip, Center and Broom, 2006; Seitel, 2004). There are references to activists/reformers of the 1800s and other actions that might qualify as public relations but those remain at the fringes of its history. Miller (1999) argued for more attention to public relations in social movements (what we would call activism) because the social reform efforts were public relations. Heeding Miller's (1999) call, Lamme (2003) detailed how the Anti-Saloon League of America (1895-1910) relied heavily on public relations in its "public-sentiment building" efforts (p. 123). The Anti-Saloon League of America was influencing potential supporters and politicians in order to promote a temperance agenda. Still, the majority of U.S. public relations history is premised on corporate actions.

While not arbitrary, identifying the locus of U.S. public relations history with agencies and corporations in the early 1900s creates an incomplete and skewed view of U.S. public relations. The Progressives were using public relations by employing publicity to influence public opinion and to shape behaviours. Progressives were engaged in public relations because they were managing influence and affecting the relationships between stakeholders (Coombs and Holladay, 2007). There were planned and sustained efforts that employed what we today call public relations. Even if the 1900s was the starting point, public relations should be seen as more of an activist function than a corporate function. Before moving forward in time with activists and public relations, it is instructive to step a little further back in time to show the tradition of public relations usage by U.S. activist groups.

First reform era in the U.S. and public relations

The Progressive Era has its roots in the First Reform Era of the U.S. During the First Reform Era, social reform addressed a wide array of topics including slavery, temperance, women's rights, prison reform, and the treatment of the mentally ill. These early reforms used the media of the day including books, magazines, newspapers, public meetings, and sermons. These were planned efforts design to create public policy reform by changing

public opinion. The public relations efforts sought to create awareness and concern over social ills that would translate into reforms. The First Reform Era activists were using issues management even though the term was not yet created. Public relations was an essential part of their reform efforts. The activists were managing influence to change the dynamics between stakeholders and ferment social change.

Again, there is the dilemma of retrospectively viewing most of history as public relations. However, if we can accept that the Progressive activists were practicing public relations, it is a reasonable step to grant that same interpretation to the First Reform Era activists. Activism did not end simply because historians placed date parameters. Many of the social issues addressed during this time period remained a concern and groups continued to press for reform. The prime example is temperance. The temperance movement provides a clear link between the First Reform Era and the Progressive Era. The temperance movement began in 1820 and remained very active into the 1900s. Groups such as the American Temperance Society (founded in 1826) and the Women's Christian Temperance Union (founded in 1874) were engaging in the same behaviours during both reform eras. While the Progressive Era increased the visibility of temperance, activists had been promoting the social concern since the First Reform Era.

Our point is that if we accept the Progressive activists as utilizing public relations, we need to extend that perception to the First Reform Era activists as well. Some of the same activist groups were involved in both reform eras and implemented strategically planned communication efforts designed to influence public opinion and promote social reform. This places the roots of U.S. public relations clearly in activism with an emphasis on social reform. During the First Reform Era there were no corporations to react by co-opting public relations from the activists. Activists had been practicing what became known as public relations for some seventy to eighty years before corporations appropriated and refined the concept.

Environmental activists and issues management: 1960s and 1970s

The pattern of activists using public relations and corporations co-opting their practices occurs at other times in U.S. public relations history and continues to this day. U.S. views of public relations remain filtered through a corporate lens. In the 1960s and 1970s, activists were pressing for greater environmental protection in the U.S. There were a number of large environmental protests built around the messages of stopping pollution and stopping ecocide.

The activists developed the scenario where the corporations were cast as the villains in the environmental degradation story. The news media supported this story line and amplified the environmentalists' message. The news stories blamed a select group of large corporations for the environmental problems (Downs, 1972). Downs' (1972) analysis demonstrates the successful use of public relations because environmentalists were influencing how the environmental story was being reported in the news media. Further evidence of the effectiveness of the activist pressure was the steady erosion of U.S. public confidence in business. U.S. public confidence in business was at 55% in 1965 but only 15% in 1975 (Conley, 2006). The activists were utilizing planned communication efforts to influence stakeholders thereby shaping U.S. environmental legislation and regulation. Activists were utilizing public relations in an effort to reduce environmental degradation.

Laws and regulations were created to help protect and to improve the environment. The environmental policies did increase the operating costs for corporations because compliance and certification costs money. Activists were shaping public policy through public relations. The success of activists resulted in an increased use of corporate public relations. "Affected industries implemented a wide variety of environmental PR programs in response to the new environmentalism" (Conley, 2006, p. 26). Public opinion was the arena and U.S. corporations were using public relations to help them win the fight against activists. Again, public relations was conceptualised as something executed by corporations, not by the activist groups that created the need for a response.

The development of issues management illustrates the corporate bias in U.S. public relations history. Issues management was a systematic way for corporations to address public policy (Jones and Chase, 1979). Chase (1982) developed issues management because activists were so successful in influencing public policy. It would stand to reason that the activists were engaging in issues management before the corporations were if they were effectively shaping U.S. environmental policies. Corporations co-opted the public relations activities of activists just as publicity was co-opted in the 1920s. However, the discussion of issues management is largely devoid of activists as issues managers. Jacques (2006) is one researcher who does integrate both corporations and activists into his discussion of issues management.

Activists, the internet, and U.S. public relations

A number of scholars have called for the inclusion of activists in public relations research (e.g., Coombs and Holladay, 2010; Dozier and Lauzen, 2000; Holtzhausen, 2007; Karleberg, 1996; Smith and Ferguson, 2001) and there has been an increase in research that includes activists as practicing public relations (e.g., Coombs and Holladay, 2009; Reber and Kim, 2006; Taylor, Kent, and White, 2001). Still, from an historical perspective, the contributions of activists remain overlooked. The most recent example is the impact of the various Internet channels on public relations, the most recent chapter in its history. With a few exceptions (e.g., Taylor et al., 2001), those who write about the Internet-based public relations feature the corporate perspective. The focus is on reputation management and how corporations can monitor and react to what stakeholders are saying about them online.

Activists were pioneering the use of various Internet channels to create reputational threats to leverage changes in corporate practices (e.g. Coombs, 1998; Coombs and Holladay, 2007; Heath, 1998). Corporations are responding to the activist use of Internet-based public relations and co-opting it for their own. Activists were the first to use social media and email alert systems to advance public relations objectives. The low cost of Internet-based communication channels was attractive to activists with small budgets (Coombs, 2002). We now see corporations using a variety of social media and e-mail alerts systems as part of their public relations. However, the pioneering work of activists is lost among the discussions of how corporations can best use Internet-based public relations.

The Power of Naming

In the U.S., it was the agencies and corporations that gave the field the name “publicity” and eventually public relations. Because they named the field, it can be said that the agencies and corporations created public relations. The situation reflects the power of naming. One belief is that by naming something a group controls that something. Agencies and corporations named public relations in the U.S., therefore, they get to control the field by dominating its history. Is this fair to the longer tradition of U.S. activists practicing what is recognized legitimately as public relations? In a way the situation is akin to biopiracy. In biopiracy corporations learn medicinal uses of plants from indigenous peoples then patent the ideas as their own without sharing any revenues with the true originators of the ideas. Public relations strategies and tactics developed by activists are co-opted by corporate interests and

attributed to corporations. Activists become marginalized actors in the discussion of U.S. public relations history rather than driving forces.

Why the origins of U.S. public relations history matters

The origins of U.S. public relations are not just an academic debate; it has ramifications for the practice and education. U.S. public relations as a professional practice has had an ongoing reputation problem. Public relations frequently is vilified in the news media and popular culture (e.g., Dinan and Miller, 2007; Ewen, 1996; Miller and Dinan, 2008; Stauber and Rampton, 1995). A review of the central criticisms of U.S. public relations shows the negative impact of its corporate-centric history. This section focuses on two primary concerns lie at the centre of current critiques of public relations in the U.S. Both concerns reflect issues related to transparency and power and justify the vilification of public relations. The first concerns journalism's relationship to public relations and the second relates to corporate functions of public relations.

Journalists are heroes and public relations practitioners are heels

Public relations has always suffered unfavorably in comparison to journalism, even though scholars and textbooks may trace the roots of public relations to Ivy Lee, a journalist by training, who specialized in publicity and press releases. For instance, Penning (2008) commented that public relations "was inextricably tied to press agency" and reflects journalism roots (p. 355). Public relations frequently is portrayed as the "evil twin" to journalism. Whereas journalism often has been seen as shedding light on important issues of the day (e.g., exposing working conditions in meat processing factories, describing the use of child labor at the turn of the century in order the prompt reforms, and reporting the work of governmental and judicial systems), public relations more typically has been depicted as lurking in the shadows, preferring to remain hidden from view, presumably because that is when it does its best work. Public relations is presumed to be less ethical, less credible, and less transparent than journalism. It is interesting that in discussions of their close cousin, advertising, writers do not seem as troubled by its function in society. Perhaps this is because advertising is associated with overtly selling a product and we assume overt persuasion can be more easily identified and resisted (Stauber and Rampton, 1995). Even though the advertised products may be "bad" or even dangerous for consumers (e.g., fat intensive processed foods, high fructose drinks for children, and disease mongering by pharmaceutical companies), we seem to accept the ubiquity of advertising in society. However, perhaps

public relations is a different story because of its more ambiguous role and association with corporate interests. Stauber and Rampton (1995) argue, "...we consider it an illusion to imagine that PR is a 'neutral' technology that can simply be adopted uncritically to achieve socially responsible ends" (p. 206).

The presumption of public relations' nefarious intentions is interesting, especially because both journalism and public relations rely on similar skills and perform similar tasks (e.g., audience analysis, writing competence, development of a compelling angle, etc.) (Evans, 2010). Some writers argue the similar skill sets permit freedom of movement between the two professions (Evans, 2010). In spite of their similarities, an important differentiating factor may be the assumption that their respective "intentions" differ. Traditionally, treatments of public relations assume practitioners require an extra tool for their toolbox, the mysterious and maligned tool of effective persuasion, while journalists do not. However, it seems unreasonable to argue that journalism is not tinged with persuasion, whether it concerns writing a story in a particular way, selecting particular facts, quotations, and statistics to support a particular frame ("angle" on the story), or writing to evoke emotional reactions designed to generate public outrage and demand for change (as was the case with the muckrakers). Somehow the journalism profession has been relatively immune from the type of intense scrutiny focused on public relations. Some critics have argued that public relations distinguishes itself by relying on "truthiness." In interviews with critics of public relations, Sullivan (2011) notes that public relations plays in the "gray zone between the truth and a lie" (p. 2). He quotes Eric Alterman, a professor and *Nation* columnist, who claims that public relations practitioners can exploit this gray zone. "They are able to provide data that for journalistic purposes is entirely credible. The information is true enough. It is slanted. It is propagandistic. But it is not false" (p. 2).

Media editors traditionally were seen as playing a significant gate-keeping or filtering role by determining what news stories were publishable and presumably shielded us from the gray zone. As the protectors of the gateway to the sacred realm of the public sphere, and hence to democracy itself, the gatekeepers were charged with interrogating content to assess its contribution to the public good and whether it was "fit to print." After all, a hallmark of democracy is the "free press" where government censorship cannot occur but where more enlightened media gatekeepers determine the public interest. The public interest was not assumed to be isomorphic with corporate interests.

The findings of early agenda setting research showed that media directs people to pay attention to particular issues people (McCombs and Shaw, 1972). Subsequent research in

second level agenda setting demonstrated that through framing, presenting a story in a way that highlighted certain elements, media also could influence people's interpretations of the issues (Reese, Gandy, and Grant, 2001). The agenda setting research and especially the framing research demonstrated that media are not without influence. Media do not only set the public's agenda, they also could influence the public's reactions and evaluations of the issues.

It is no wonder that journalists want to preserve the myth of the objective journalist and its watchdog function in a democratic society. Journalism has been valorized even though it may simply be masquerading as objective. Journalists write for their audiences. Some newspapers and media outlets are more conservative and some are more liberal because this is how they have chosen to define their audiences. This audience analysis is important for retaining readership, which is even more significant now that consumers have many more online media options and can actively select media outlets that mirror their personal views. Objectivity alone may not retain readers.

U.S. media industries have experienced massive cuts and, like the corporate sector, have had to "do more with less." In the age of the 24-hour news day, pressure to produce the latest stories is intensified and competition is great. In contrast to the rapidly declining employment figures for journalists, the public relations profession has experienced dramatic growth such that the ratio of public relations practitioners to journalists is now 3:1 (McChesney and Nichols, 2010).

The argument is that the reduction in the ranks of journalists has made them extremely vulnerable to the influence of public relations practitioners. Practitioners continue to pitch stories to journalists and those pitches often include video news releases. Video news releases (VNRs) include high quality video footage produced by corporations. VNRs have lessened the economic load of media organizations by providing corporate-produced B-roll footage that can be edited for stories. VNRs are controversial because of the transparency and power issues. Corporations have invested resources to create these materials. However, often reporters do not identify the VNR footage as coming from the corporations themselves. Critics argue that journalists are functioning as mouthpieces for the corporations rather than performing a watchdog role by evaluating corporate actions.

Journalists' use of press releases also has aroused outcries of "foul." Davies (2008), a British journalist, used the term "churnalism" to describe the journalistic practice of making minimal or no modifications and turning corporate press releases into news. Press releases describing a range of corporate activities from descriptions of new products to manufacturing

facility modifications to and philanthropic activities may be provided to journalists who then elect whether to use and how to use these press releases. Journalism's "dirty little secret" of reliance on corporate-produced materials is not so secret and may seem less dirty in times of slashed news budgets. However, the growing interdependence of journalists and corporations is discomfoting to many. Curiously, it is the public relations profession that has garnered criticism for the journalistic practice of using intact press releases as news stories. Public relations is portrayed as "preying" on journalists. To public relations practitioners, criticism stemming from journalistic choices to use VNRs and traditional press releases seems unjustified because the practitioners are not actively discouraging transparency. Why do journalists escape blame for their role in churnalism?

Corporate uses of public relations

Descriptions of the genesis of public relations often focus on corporations using public relations to prevent interference with their business practices. Public relations was seen as necessary for doing business. The criticisms voiced in historical views of corporate public relations functions closely parallel contemporary critiques of public relations. In this way contemporary public relations is seen as haunted by its dark and seedy past corporate past.

Criticisms of corporate public relations often centre on the way corporations benefit economically when they dominate in the "marketplace of ideas." The assumption underlying the marketplace of ideas is that "truth" will emerge from diverse voices participating in the marketplace (Fitzpatrick, 2006). In the U.S., the marketplace of ideas is linked to the Constitution's First Amendment that protects political speech (but not commercial speech). Corporations have been granted First Amendment protection by the U.S. Supreme Court which ruled that they should not be denied their use of political speech. However, corporations have greater access to and influence in the marketplace of ideas. The resources available to large corporations guarantees their voices will be heard. They can buy their place at the table rather than earning it through the strength of their arguments.

The idea is that corporations can gain access unfairly and have a louder voice because of their financial resources and because of their savvy public relations maneuvers. The disproportionate amount of financial resources available to corporations compared to the average citizen is overwhelming. And those financial resources can buy the public relations needed to smooth the way for their actions. In their discussion of common critiques of public

relations, Coombs and Holladay (2007) note that critics claim, “PR is to blame for the inordinate amount of power that corporations (and other groups, governments, lobbying groups, etc.) can exercise” (p. 15).

Not only can corporations secure space in the marketplace of ideas through their use of controlled (paid) media, they also can use social media and the Internet to influence others. In spite of the fact the Internet and social media were originally envisioned as a great equalizer of power because of their ability to allow anyone to post nearly anything what they wanted, including criticisms of corporations, the power imbalance extends into cyberspace. Research suggests that very few social media postings gain attention (Watts, 2007).

We generally think about social media (e.g., Facebook sites, blogs, etc.) as uncontrolled forms of media where corporation cannot control their contents. But corporations also participate in social media in ways that more closely resemble controlled media. The nature of social media is such that the source of a message can be obscured. Thus, a corporation may have a transparent official blog where the CEO writes about company happenings. But corporations may also hire staff who use social media to express opinions, criticize competitors, and advocate for legislative actions that help the corporation, all without revealing their ties to the corporation. Thus, we believe the transparency of social media is a myth, much like the myth of the objective traditional media.

Along the same lines as the hired guns of social media, corporations and industries may gain influence by funding front groups that represent the economic interests of corporations without revealing the financial resources supporting the front group. The use of a front group to create the opinion that there is grass roots support for or against pending legislation or industry regulation has been called astroturfing. The U.S. Supreme Court has ruled that the use of front groups is legal, but ethically questionable, due to the lack of transparency. The financial resources available to corporations enable the creation of these front groups.

Review of critiques and history

We have documented how the criticisms of public relations are tied strongly to the belief that public relations is primarily a corporate function that grew out of the utilization of publicity. Critics of U.S. public relations often accept and express admiration for the use of public relations by activists and non-profits (Stauber and Rampton, 1995). As a field, U.S.

public relations is extremely stigmatized. Public relations is viewed as utilizing a corrupt form of journalism to advance corporate interest. By dominating the web of mutually influential relationships, corporations actually can hurt the interests of all but the privileged stakeholders.

Conclusion

We have no delusions that U.S. textbooks will suddenly re-write public relations history from an activist perspective or that this new history will change the reputation of public relations as people realize its roots in creating social change. U.S. public relations will continue to suffer from shrouding itself in a corporate cloak. What we are urging is for educators to provide a more well-rounded history of U.S. public relations for their students (see also Duffy, 2000). Students will have a better appreciation of the role public relations can play in society and appreciate the contributions activists have made to the field. Moreover, students will understand that there are more job options than just working at agencies, corporations, government, and established non-profit organizations. At the end of this paper we list some resources for educators seeking to integrate activism into their discussions of U.S. public relations history.

Over the past two decades there have been a number of voices calling for more attention to the role of activists in public relations. The call includes research that examines activist public relations and explains activists' role in the history of U.S. public relations. Still, activism remains on the periphery of public relations research and history. Activists are still treated as obstacles to corporate objectives that trigger the need for public relations. Greater recognition should be given to the contributions activists have and continue to make to the development of U.S. public relations. As Lamme (2003) observed, activists had communication plans "largely in place long before oft-cited public relations pioneers such as Edward Bernays and John Hill began practicing" (p. 123). U.S. public relations has recognized the value of activists but have yet to fully embrace their contributions to field. That remains a glaring omission to those who seriously examine the history of U.S. public relations.

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Resources for teaching U.S. public relations history

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An ‘Outside-In’ PR history: Identifying the role of PR as history, culture and sociology

Dr Robert Crawford and Professor Jim Macnamara
Public Communication, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
University of Technology, Sydney
Email: Robert.Crawford@uts.edu.au

Falling on 26 January, Australia Day is Australia’s national day. It marks the anniversary of the landing of the First Fleet at Sydney’s Port Jackson in 1788 and the first unfurling of the British flag on Australian soil. The public holiday provides an opportunity for many Australians to celebrate their nation and to participate in a range of celebrations. For others, it is an uncomfortable reminder of European colonisation and the suffering experienced by the nation’s indigenous inhabitants. And for a significantly smaller number of Australians, Australia Day marks the culmination of a protracted public relations campaign. Noting that ‘Australia is not a nation of spontaneous flag wavers – it is a nation of organised flag wavers’, Warren Pearson and Grant O’Neil contend that organisations such as the National Australia Day Council and its state branches provide ‘event and communication opportunities through which Australians can demonstrate their national identity and spirit’ (2009, p. 86). Devoting months of work to each year’s official Australia Day programme, these councils’ PR teams and PR practices are integral to the day’s celebrations and the ongoing promotion of national identity. However, it would be inaccurate to see this PR only as a recent practice. As this paper demonstrates, PR has been integral to establishing 26 January as Australia’s national day and in the construction of Australian nationhood and identity over almost two centuries.

The creation and promotion of Australia Day has attracted relatively little historical attention. To date, Ken Inglis’ (1967) historical account remains the most authoritative study. With the overall story mapped out, subsequent accounts have adopted a narrower focus. The Bicentenary celebrations in 1988, for example, attracted significant though fleeting attention with little being written on it since. The changing meanings ascribed to Australia Day and the public’s apparent apathy towards it have also emerged as a common trope (White 1981; Elder 2007; Ward and Curran 2010). While these critical accounts certainly undermine Australia Day’s credentials as the ‘true’ national day, their focus on such fissures has obfuscated the fundamental success of Australia Day – namely its very existence. Inglis’ account consequently stands out for recognising the role performed by communicators in promoting Australia Day. His references to “‘public relations’ men’ and their impact on Australia Day

may be brief and dismissive (1967, pp. 31-5, 38), but they reflect Taylor and Kent's claim that 'all nation building campaigns include large communication components that are essentially public relations campaigns' (2006, p. 347). As such, this study's re-consideration of the history of Australia Day is implicitly linked to the broader history of PR.

The need for a more considered approach to PR history is reflected in the shortcomings of existing historiography. Accounts of the growth and influence of PR practices have been limited or undermined by four key shortcomings. Firstly, many have an Americentric focus (Cutlip 1994; Ewen 1996; Marchand 1998), prompting L'Etang (2008) to lament that 'US scholars ... assume the activities referred to as PR have been invented by Americans and then exported elsewhere' (p. 328). While questions about this American focus on 20th century public relations have been raised in recent Australian scholarship (Heath, 2005; Macnamara and Crawford 2010), the majority of Australian historical accounts uncritically conform to this US-derivative paradigm (Tymson and Sherman 1987; Stanton and Phillips 1998; Tymson, Lazar and Lazar 2008). To this end, they commonly date the origins of PR in Australia to the activities of interwar Hollywood press agents and the General MacArthur's wartime public relations department (Zawawi 2009, p. 44). Secondly, PR histories have narrowly focused on activities explicitly defined as 'public relations' rather than the diverse public communication practices that characterise the field. As such, they omit significant events and activities (Holtzhausen 2007). Thirdly, the focus on pioneering individual practitioners, particularly the work of consultants (Sheehan 2007), and, to a lesser degree, private consultancies has overshadowed institutional and governmental communication initiatives. Such initiatives fundamentally informed ideas of nation, culture, and society, prompting L'Etang's call for a 'much broader view' of PR history and PR in history (2008, p. 327). Jelen (2008) and Karlberg (1996) similarly advocate a broader perspective, noting that scholarship has long failed to identify and examine PR's wider social, political, and cultural implications. And fourthly, attempts to construct histories of public relations are characterised by their propensity to be *about* public relations *for* public relations. Consequently, there is a need for a broader, more inclusive understanding of public relations that recognises temporal, geographic, and cultural variations in terminology and practice. Moreover, it needs to note that the practice is also referred to as publicity, public information, public education, and other terms and euphemisms.

The outlined limitations of public relations scholarship reflect the degree to which it has been informed by researchers' disciplinary backgrounds. Outside the PR field, PR is often trivialised and marginalised. This has typically occurred in journalism and media

studies, where PR is derogatively labelled ‘spin’ (Ewen 1996; Louw 2005) and its impact is underplayed or even denied. Paradoxically, while journalists complain about PR as an ‘obfuscation’ of truth that they need to overcome (Jeffers 1977), they consistently downplay or deny that PR influences media and shapes public discourse (Cunningham and Turner 2010, p. 212; DeLorme and Fedler 2003). Such dismissive accounts venture little beyond the ‘spin’ critique. Of course, some PR activities are indeed mere ‘spin’. However, the excessive focus on dubious ‘spin’ has skewed broader understandings of the PR industry and its practices. The outputs and effects of public relations have therefore gone unrecognised by researchers. Within the humanities and social sciences, references to Australian public relations practices or individuals are sporadic (Griffen-Foley 2002, 2004; Hancock 1999; Young 2006). They fail to identify the outputs and effects of public relations in the broader social, political, and cultural context. White (1981) and Turner (1994), for example, highlight the impact of ‘creative industries’ such as advertising, film, and television, yet fail to mention the use of PR in the construction of discourses of national identity. Current scholarly accounts ranging across media and cultural studies, journalism studies and communication studies, have also failed to bridge this gap. A significant blind spot consequently exists in Australian history, politics, media, and cultural studies.

In his survey of historical accounts of PR’s origins, Vos (2011) contends that ‘the difficulty in defining public relations has led to differences among historians in identifying the historical arrival of public relations as a social institution’ (p. 121). Zawawi’s contention that public relations only arrived in Australia in the interwar years thus reflects her focus on self-identified publicity agents working in the commercial field. By focusing on public relations practices – namely publicity, events, media relations, lobbying, government relations, issues management – this paper seeks to deliver a less functionalist interpretation of PR’s origins in Australia. While the PR activities surrounding Australia Day, particularly jubilee anniversaries, reiterate the view that PR has consistently borrowed from and built on past practices (Vos 2011, p. 121), this process nevertheless provides a unique opportunity to chart the growth and development of PR practice. Moreover, this exploration of the relationship between Australia Day and public relations seeks to cast light on the blind spot in Australian history, politics, media, and cultural studies by demonstrating the ways in which public relations has been deeply embedded in the social and cultural construction of ideas of nationhood. In the process, it will demonstrate that public relations has performed an integral role in the way that Australia Day was established, popularised, and commemorated, and indeed in the way that Australian identity is conceptualised and celebrated today.

1818

Formal and informal celebrations of Anniversary Day or First Landing Day had been organised in New South Wales since the colony's earliest years – often to excess (Inglis 1967, pp. 25-6; Inglis 1974, p. 139). However, such celebrations only gained media attention in 1817, when the *Sydney Gazette and New South Wales Advertiser* (*SGNSWA*) reported on Isaac Nichols' party for some 40 'select' guests (*SGNSWA*, 1 February 1817, p. 2). This focus on the colonial elite's celebrations reflects the highly stratified nature of colonial society, not to mention the newspaper's status as an authorised government publication. The report recorded that dinner was followed 'a number of loyal toasts ... and a number of festive songs' including Robert Jenkins' 'appropriate verses ... sung ... to the tune of Rule Britannia'. It concluded that 'Hearing it highly spoken of, we have applied for and been complimented with a copy of the verses, which appear at the head of the next column'. This decision to locate and then reproduce Jenkins' verses for broader consumption reflects a growing interest in the colony's foundation date. Moreover, it also marks the first time that the media had become actively involved in generating publicity for the anniversary.

Being the thirtieth anniversary of the First Fleet's landing, the celebrations planned for 1818 attracted additional attention. Governor Lachlan Macquarie used the *SGNSWA* to announce that 'a Salute of 30 Guns ... be fired from the Battery on Dawes' Point' (*SGNSWA*, 24 January 1818, p. 1). More importantly, readers were informed that 'Artificers and Labourers in the immediate Service of Government be exempted from Work ... and that each of them receive an extra Allowance of One Pound of Fresh Meat as a Donation from Government'. Macquarie's words and actions went beyond publicity. The public holiday for the colony's lower classes signalled a desire for more inclusive celebrations, demonstrating an attempt to cultivate community relations. It also indicated that Macquarie was aware of the fact that the event would only receive public support if the public was given an opportunity to participate.

The democracy of Macquarie's edict was not reflected in the *SGNSWA*; its focus remained squarely on the Governor's celebrations (*SGNSWA*, 31 January 1818, p. 2). Its reports of subsequent years' festivities would follow the same pattern (*SGNSWA*, 3 February 1825, p. 3; *SGNSWA*, 27 January 1827, p. 2; *SGNSWA*, 27 January 1829, p. 2). Such coverage also reflected the scaled-back nature of official celebrations. While the firing of a salute from Dawes' Point would remain an ongoing feature, the public holiday (and additional government hand outs) disappeared. Having scaled back its investment in the

event, the authorities evidently felt little need to deploy public relations initiatives to stimulate public interest in such activities.

1838

The approaching 50th anniversary rekindled interest in Anniversary Day. The *SGNSWA* threw its weight behind the cause, calling for a public meeting to consider ‘the measures necessary ... for the celebration of the 50th Anniversary ... as a public festival’ (*SGNSWA*, 6 January 1838, p. 2). However, only a dozen people attended. Undeterred, the *SGNSWA* continued to champion the cause. It called for a public holiday to be declared and for the appointment of ‘some half-dozen of the most leading men’ as ‘the stewards to make the necessary arrangements’ for the celebrations (*SGNSW*, 13 January 1838, p. 2). Although a public holiday was eventually proclaimed, the colony’s ‘most leading men’ did not take up the cause. A ball would be staged, but the newspaper was resigned to the fact there would be ‘nothing in the shape of public rejoicing’ (*SGNSWA*, 15 January 1838 p. 2).

The *Colonist* noted that this lacklustre build up was not necessarily a comment on the event itself but rather a reflection of the colony’s depressed economy. ‘All thoughts are now given up of having anything like a Public Jubilee’, it concluded (*Colonist*, 17 January 1838, p. 3). However, two days later, an advertisement appeared in the *Australian* announcing: ‘Persons disposed to promote the getting up of a Sailing Match ... to come off on ... the 50th Anniversary of the Foundation of the Colony, are requested to call at the Office of the Harbour Master’ (*Australian*, 19 January 1838, p.3). This public event elicited a positive, if somewhat relieved, response from newspapers, with the *SGNSWA* and the *Sydney Monitor* both noting that they were ‘glad’ to see the public actively moving to celebrate the jubilee (*SGNSWA*, 18 January 1838, p. 2; *Sydney Monitor*, 24 January 1838, p. 2.)

Apprehensions about the public’s failure to embrace the anniversary proved to be misplaced. The *SGNSWA* thus reported that ‘Much apathy had been shewn [sic.] on the subject of forming any plan for the day’s amusements, but with the arrival of ... the Jubilee, all appearance of apathy vanished’ (*SGNSWA*, 30 January 1838, p. 2). Official events seemed to be out of step with the public’s celebrations, prompting the *Colonist* to comment that the authorities could have made a better effort to reach out to the community (*Colonist*, 27 January 1838, p. 3). However, as ‘the only amusement for which provision had been made’ in 1839, the Regatta proved to be the Day’s centrepiece (*Colonist*, 30 January 1839, p.2).

Over the following decades, the day's programme was gradually extended. Cricket matches and horse races were staged whilst fetes and fairs offered less sporting alternatives. For the *Sydney Morning Herald*, this expanding programme symbolised the colony's progress:

The Anniversary Regatta was ... one of the principal features of the day ... old residents will remember, it used to be almost the only centre of attraction ... but in these days of trams, trains, and steamers ... there are so many inducements offered to holiday-makers that it is hard to choose. Still the regatta had ... an irresistible charm for an immense number of persons (*SMH*, 27 January 1881, p. 3).

Such celebrations notwithstanding, the press's advocacy for the celebrations remained subdued throughout these decades. Its coverage seldom ventured beyond a celebratory editorial on the day and the results of the day's races with a relatively positive comment on spectator numbers on the following day. Nevertheless, the staging of these sporting and entertainment events, the granting of a public holiday, and accompanying publicity helped ensure that Anniversary Day remained an important date on the colony's calendar.

1888

As with the previous jubilee celebrations, the approach of the centenary reinvigorated excitement. The Centennial Celebration Commission was established in November 1887. Of the 11 members, only three were not serving politicians: James Barnet, the Colonial Architect; Edmund Fosbery, Inspector General of the NSW Police; and James R. Fairfax, the proprietor of the *Sydney Morning Herald* (*SMH*, 25 November 1887, p.8). Fairfax's appointment indicated an implicit understanding of the importance of the media in generating publicity for the imminent celebrations, and the *Sydney Morning Herald* duly threw its weight behind the celebrations. Fairfax's position demonstrated an early understanding of the way that planned engagement of the media – i.e. a form of public relations – can help set the media agenda. Regular updates on commission meetings consequently found their way into the newspaper. However, political infighting soon emerged with commission members from the Opposition benches resigning on account of 'the proposed expenditure upon the centennial celebrations is not justifiable' (*SMH*, 3 December 1887, p.12). While the resignation letters were published, the newspaper made no comment on the issue or, indeed, the costs of the imminent celebrations. To this end, media relations, a specialist practice of public relations, was being successfully deployed.

Public events are yet another form of public relations activities that were organised and supported by the Centennial Celebration Commission. In size and scale they were an enormous increase on previous efforts. Headlined by the dedication of Centennial Park, the five-day events programme included the opening of Centennial Exhibition, a grand ball for the colonies' governors as well as numerous sporting events, musical performances, and religious services. An estimated 300,000 people converged on the city and its shoreline, whilst a further 50,000 made their way to Centennial Park (*SMH*, 27 January 1888, p. 3). The events staged on 26 January received extensive coverage in all of the Australian colonies. Hobart's *Mercury* typified the media's support for its national status: 'The proceedings ... will do more to cement the union of the Colonies than anything that has been done hitherto, because the very basis of the whole is the absolute oneness of the people' (*Mercury*, 26 January 1888, p. 2).

While media coverage of subsequent Anniversary Day celebrations waned, another key development that contributed to the eventual establishment of a single national Australia Day was the formation and campaigning of interest groups or lobby groups. One such group was the Australian Natives Association (ANA). Established in 1871, the ANA was a friendly society for Australian-born men. It was committed to federation of the Australian colonies, and as early as 1886 it had expressed 'the desirableness of celebrating a national holiday' and suggested 26 January as the most appropriate date (*SMH*, 20 February 1886, p. 14). During the 1890s the ANA actively campaigned for a federated Australia. Its centrepiece in Melbourne was its great fete, which featured entertainments and sporting competitions (*Argus*, 28 January 1895, p. 5). Other branches staged similar events, albeit on a smaller scale. While the dream of a united Australia would be finally realised in 1901, the ANA's push for 26 January to be proclaimed Commonwealth Day was less successful. The ANA consequently sought to increase its festivities in scope and size, incorporating exhibitions of Australian manufactured wares and processions of community groups into the programme. Its commitment to the date meant that Victorians popularly referred to 26 January as ANA Day. In the interwar years, the ANA's campaign to establish 26 January as Australia's national day intensified. In 1919 Queensland branches successfully convinced the government to proclaim 26 January as a public holiday (*Courier*, 27 December 1920, p. 6). Buoyed by their success, the Queenslanders now called for Australia Day to be the date's official title. Lobbying the Prime Minister directly, the ANA's campaign was finally rewarded in 1935 when it was announced that Australia Day would be celebrated in unison across all states. However, its

victory was not complete – the holiday would take place on the nearest Monday to 26 January.

In opposition to the ANA's campaign, various other stakeholders expressed concerns about commemoration of 26 January as a national day. Some were concerned about the proclamation of a public holiday per se; some contested the appropriateness of 26 January as a national day; and others opposed the celebration of Captain Phillip's landing in 1788. Such debates illustrate Australia Day's contested status.

For example, while the public enjoyed the day off work, the business sector felt aggrieved by the ensuing loss of trade. In 1892, the Victorian Employers' Union rejected the ANA's request that the union promote the holiday among its members. *The Argus* reported:

[I]t was acknowledged that there was more to justify the recognition of Foundation Day than of many of the other public holidays ... It was agreed, however, that it did not come within the province of the executive to ask the employers to observe the 26th inst. as a public holiday (*Argus*, 14 January 1892, p. 5).

The Brisbane Traders' Association similarly urged the Colonial Secretary to reconsider 26 January's status as it 'proved a great hindrance to business' (*Courier*, 21 December 1893, p. 5). While business groups continued to campaign against the holiday into the twentieth century, the self-centred nature of their appeals registered little support amongst public.

Where business objected to the holiday, others took aim at 26 January's national day status. For them, the establishment of a penal colony was an inauspicious event to commemorate. While some of these suggestions sought to displace 26 January altogether, others proved more complementary. Rather than celebrating Phillip's arrival, various groups identified Captain Cook as the 'true' national hero. In 1893 the *Brisbane Courier* reported an address by Queensland's Attorney-General to the ANA that put Cook's case forward:

The 26th January really celebrated nothing in the history of Australia of which they could be particularly proud ... it was generally unsuitable throughout Australia, owing chiefly to the heat ... He would suggest that the 1st of May be chosen as a more suitable date for the national celebration. That was the day on which Captain Cook really first landed on the shores of Australia (*Courier*, 27 January 1898, p. 6).

Cook's supporters briefly found an ally in the ANA. Despite its advocacy of 26 January, the ANA felt that Cook might evoke a more passionate response, and in 1911 it urged the NSW government to change dates (*SMH*, 24 March 1911, p. 7). However, the call found few supporters. The Australian Historical Society, the Pioneers Club, and a public meeting of women in Queanbeyan all protested on historical grounds, whilst the organisers of

the Anniversary Regatta feared for their long-running event (*SMH*, 23 March 1911, p. 9; *SMH*, 15 May 1911, p. 7; *SMH*, 15 July 1911, p. 13; *SMH*, 5 May 1911, p. 6; *SMH*, 13 April 1911, p. 9). Faced with such an outcry, the Cook campaign was quietly shelved.

The most important challenge to the status of 26 January as Australia's national day would emerge on 25 April 1916, when Australians first commemorated Anzac Day. This commemoration of the soldiers' supreme sacrifice prompted an immediate call for Australia to reconsider its national day (*Advertiser*, 31 January 1916, p. 6). Calls for Anzac Day to replace 26 January as the national holiday would be periodically raised in the post-war years (*Mercury*, 16 April 1924, p. 9; *West Australian*, 7 November 1924, p. 9). However, the Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League of Australia succeeded in securing a national public holiday for in 1927. While Anzac Day's rapid elevation to national day status stood in marked contrast to 26 January's shambolic progress, it also meant that it had ceased to compete against Australia Day – the two national dates could co-exist.

Indigenous Australians raised fundamental questions about 26 January. While they concurred that the date marked a significant national event, the meanings they ascribed to it were altogether different. However, their cause only found a greater audience when the issue was periodically recognised by non-Indigenous Australians. The *Sydney Morning Herald's* 1922 Foundation Day editorial thus mused: 'The claim of "Australia for the Australians" is a fine slogan, but if we believed in that cry we should all get out and leave Australia to the Australians – to wit, the aborigines, who are the true Australians' (*SMH*, 26 January 1922, p. 6). Rather than addressing this awkward issue, it was generally easier to overlook it for the time being.

However, the jubilee anniversaries made it more difficult to ignore the Aboriginal presence. Confronted with the act of dispossession, organisers of the Centenary jubilee hoped to offer some sort of amends. The *Sydney Morning Herald* therefore explained:

[T]he celebration ... of the first 100 years of Australian civilisation has ... a pathetic meaning to the dark-skinned natives. The Aborigines Protection Board ... has initiated arrangements ... to give the aborigines a share in the commemoration festival ... they will receive relief ... in the supply of clothing to helpless or sick people, and ... others will be provided with a good meal, and a still more valued gift of a quarter of a pound of tobacco (*SMH*, 6 January 1888, p. 5).

In identifying British colonisation as an inevitable though humane act of progress, this progressive narrative, as well as the initiative supporting it, served a distinct public relations function in supporting 26 January. The progress motif would be a central element of the sesquicentennial celebrations in 1938.

1938

Where preparations for the Centenary celebrations had begun some three months before 26 January, those for Sesquicentenary in 1938 would commence two years earlier with the formation of ‘Australia’s 150th Anniversary Celebrations Council’ (*SMH*, 26 March 1936, p. 10). Led by John Dunningham MLA, its members were largely politicians, bureaucrats, and eminent community figures. However, adman R. S. Maynard was one of the few media representatives on the Citizens’ Organising Committee, which supported the Council (*SMH*, 5 May 1936, p. 10). A more official presence would be established with creation of the Publicity Committee, chaired by newspaper editor and businessman Ernest Sommerlad. The public announcement that Asher Joel had been appointed to the position of ‘publicity officer’ in April 1937 similarly emphasised a commitment to cultivating cordial relations with the media and, indeed, the general public (*SMH*, 15 April 1937, p. 5).

From the very outset, the activities of the Publicity Committee extended beyond the generation of publicity in the press. Reporting to the Council in March 1937, the Publicity Committee outlined its changing communication strategies: ‘Local publicity has been ... confined to news items of interest and to broadcast talks through National Stations; but when the Coronation is over full attention will be paid to the press and other campaigns necessary to give effective publicity’ (p. 5). It therefore opposed the Australian Broadcasting Commission’s ban on broadcasting politicians during election time, claiming that it prevented various Council members from disseminating news pertaining to the Sesquicentenary celebrations (*SMH*, 25 August 1937, p. 20).

Of course, such efforts counted for little if Australia Day did not attract public participation. The community therefore needed to be engaged. However, such engagement meant more than mere attendance; it also sought to persuade the community that 26 January was their national holiday, *however* they celebrated it. Australia’s 150th Anniversary Celebrations Council and its Publicity Committee consequently set about staging a larger programme. The excitement surrounding the celebrations was palpable in the *Sydney Morning Herald* on the eve of the programme’s opening event:

The stage is almost set; the audience has begun to gather; a few days hence the curtain will rise ... This notable interlude in our history, of whose approach the average citizen probably has hitherto been only vaguely conscious ... now begins to appear in its true proportions. The least historically minded can hardly fail to understand the significance of the days which we are about to celebrate (*SMH*, 18 January 1938, p.10).

Organisers also sought to include Indigenous Australians. However, opposition from local Aborigines meant that organisers would have to source their Aboriginal performers from further afield. Direct opposition would be expressed through the 'Day of Mourning and Protest' to be staged around the corner from the key procession. Attracting almost a hundred people, the protest meeting passed a resolution condemning the mistreatment of Aborigines and calling for equal rights (Gammage and Spearritt 1987, pp. 14-21, 29-45). While brief reports were published the next day, the majority of Australia Day's stakeholders found it easier to ignore such issues and to enjoy the festivities. However, this would not be a viable option in the long-term.

In its final reports, the Council announced that 750,000 people had cheered the March of Nationhood procession, 300,000 had watched the Venetian Carnival, and 250,000 had attended the Empire Games. The multitude of other events staged during the three-month period attracted thousands more (Australia's 150th Anniversary Celebrations Council 1938, p.10). Such statistics clearly demonstrated that the organisers had succeeded in reaching out to the community, prompting the Council's to conclude that 'These figures indicate the appreciation of the Celebrations from the public point of view' (p.10).

Australia Day 1988

Preparations for the Bicentenary commenced in 1978 with decision to create an authority to take responsibility for guiding the celebrations. The question of who should chair the authority reveal PR's ambiguous place. Asher Joel had been active in Australia Day celebrations since the Sesquicentenary and had also staged other large-scale public spectacles (including the Captain Cook Bicentennial celebrations in 1970). However, Joel's advanced age meant that the front runner for the position was Harry M. Miller, 'a high flier with a good track record as a theatrical producer and celebrity manager' who had successfully staged the Queen's Silver Jubilee celebrations (O'Brien 1991, pp. 26-7). However, the collapse of one of Miller's ventures coupled with the allegations of fraudulent misappropriation meant the inaugural ABA chair would be John Reid, 'a highly regarded member of the nation's business establishment' with no experience in PR (O'Brien 1991, p. 27). Reid's replacements shared similar credentials.

The decade-long preparations demonstrated a desire to eclipse previous jubilee celebrations altogether. However, the extended lead up proved to be a hard slog. Government financial commitments generated intrigue and controversy whilst questions about the significance of the Bicentenary similarly ensured its newsworthiness for the media. Although

the Australian Bicentennial Authority (ABA) had appointed a national information coordinator in 1980 and kept a public relations firm on a retainer, its shortcomings continually found their way into the press (O'Brien 1991, pp. 288-90). Concerned that this negativity would undermine its increasing programme of events, the ABA established media relations as a central plank of its PR strategy.

The appointment of Wendy McCarthy as general manager of communications in 1985 marked a new phase in the ABA's public relations strategy. In order to rectify the ABA's tarnished reputation, McCarthy developed a more proactive relationship between the ABA and the media:

For a start, I insisted that the Communications view be an integral part of the planning of the Authority's affairs ... And I also insisted on a professional approach to the media. We spoke on the record or not at all. The Authority had to open its doors and be taught to be accountable to the media. ... I had to overcome entrenched attitudes toward media relations and I had to help cope with the public consequences of several years of things that had gone awry (O'Brien 1991, p. 293).

The states' Bicentennial councils had expressed similar concerns. The NSW Bicentennial Council consequently called for a 'cheerful, down to earth image ... with which common folk could comfortably associate', as this image would 'combat much media coverage which continued to cast the Bicentenary in a negative light' (Ashton 1989, p. 107).

As the date neared, the media relations strategy appeared to be paying off. While concerns about the event's significance were still voiced, media attention was less fixated on the organisers' failures. Coverage increasingly highlighted the program and events scheduled for 26 January 1988. More importantly, public awareness in the Bicentenary had increased – thanks to the \$10 million national advertising campaign launched in mid-1987 (O'Brien 1991, p. 125). The ABA's PR team also began to pay attention to other aspects of the imminent celebrations such as the licensing of Bicentennial logos and the production of memorabilia were key areas as was the (O'Brien 1991, pp. 295-9.).

Having achieved their principal aims, the Bicentenary organisations' tailored their media relations initiatives to meet the publics' needs. In its final months, the NSW Bicentennial Council's media relations campaign went from generating positive interest in the Bicentenary to providing specific details about the impending events and festivities (Ashton 1989, pp.115-17). An estimated 2.5 million people thronged Sydney Harbour on 26 January (Hawley 1988, p.1) with an equally impressive numbers attending the plethora of events – officially sanctioned by the ABA and otherwise – across the country.

While events were planned for the entire year, the PR campaign quickly wound down – its job of promoting the event that the programme had largely been done. Some four months after the main celebrations, the NSW Bicentennial Council informed its PR consultancy and advertising agency that their services were no longer needed (Ashton 1989, p.142.). Reflecting on the Bicentenary and the ABA's media relations, McCarthy commented that 'I think the campaign worked', although she was less sure about the broader 'ideas and issues' that had been conveyed (O'Brien 1991, p. 300).

McCarthy's ambivalence concerned the fundamental flaw with the Bicentenary. As the 'white Australia has a black history' slogan revealed, Aboriginal concerns could no longer be ignored. This issue had been flagged in a 1978 report for the ABA, which stated: 'The Aboriginal peoples in particular may feel alienated from any celebration which recognises 1788 as the birth of the Australian nation' (O'Brien 1991, p. 167). It would be the ABA's chiefs who assumed personal responsibility for steering a course between Aboriginal concerns and its own promotional role. Initiatives such as the National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Program (NATSIP) therefore encouraged Indigenous participation. NATSIP's head, Philip Morrissey understood that the organisation and activities were implicitly involved in public relations:

He was intensely aware that just as Aboriginal 'participation' in the 1938 sesquicentenary had become one of the most enduring images of that period, so NATSIP for the Bicentenary would provide a representative image of the 1980s. He knew that he was in a unique position to provide a snapshot of Aboriginal life that ... would both enhance black and white relations and provide enduring legacies (O'Brien 1991, p. 173).

While O'Brien notes that media coverage tended to marginalise NATSIP projects (1991, pp.179-180), McCarthy's comments, coupled with the more ardent criticisms levelled at the Bicentenary's 'vacuous' nature and its inability to deliver any legacy concerning Indigenous and non-Indigenous relations (Bennett 1992, p.xvii; Macintyre 2004, p. 285) nevertheless placed this issue squarely on the PR agenda for future Australia Day events.

Australia Day 2008

The lessons gleaned from the Bicentenary would have an ongoing impact on the way that PR practices presented Australia Day to the nation. Over the following decades, PR assumed an increasingly important position within the institutions responsible for co-ordinating Australia Day celebrations. John Trevillian, who had joined the NSW Australia Day Council in 1985 and is the current Chief Executive Officer, thus recalled that 'Since 1988, we have developed

a team of 35-50 marketing and communication people ... supporting Australia Day' (personal communication, 31 May 2009). The increase in PR practitioners coupled with the paucity of funding has meant that PR now plays a central role in the Australia Day committees' communication strategies.

The questions about Australia Day's relationship with the Indigenous population and, to a lesser degree, non-British communities did not subside in the post-Bicentenary year. Rather than ignore these claims, the Australia Day councils adopted an issues management approach. In 1997 the NSW Australia Day Council developed partnerships with the NSW Council for Reconciliation and the Department of Aboriginal Affairs in order to integrate their concerns into the official programme. Such interactions led to the establishment of new protocols (such as the Welcome to Country and Acknowledgement of Land) and the 'Woggan MA Gule' ceremony that officially launches NSW's Australia Day celebrations (Melrose, personal communication 19 April 2011). Similar inclusive efforts were also used to engage non-British communities. The concerted effort to reposition Australia Day as 'inclusive' and 'multicultural' was reflected in media reports. By 2003, the NSW Australia Day Council's review of media coverage revealed that such repositioning was proving successful: 'generally, this issue [Invasion Day] appeared in articles which viewed Australia Day celebrations favourably. Coverage focused on this year's celebrations as inclusive and the "most harmonious" ever, with much involvement of indigenous people' (CARMA 2003, p.11).

The NSW Australia Day Council's commissioning of in-depth analysis of the media's coverage of Australia Day events reveals an ongoing sensitivity about the ways that Australia Day and Australia Day events are perceived. Such reports seek to identify the volume of coverage attracted, the favourability of such coverage, and which events, sponsors and themes, and individual have generated the greatest media attention. From the Council's viewpoint, 2008 had been a successful year. The *Report's* key findings (CARMA Asia Pacific 2008) revealed that there had been 821 Australia Day-related items in the press and broadcast media, an enormous increase on previous year's figure of 429. (p. 4) Favourability of the Council's supported or endorsed events had also increased, from 44% positive and 55% neutral in 2007 to 74.6% positive and 25% neutral in 2008. Only two items had been negative (p. 6). In terms of exposure, the report found that 39% of press articles featured relevant photos and logos, another increase on the previous year (p. 4). References to sponsors were mixed. Although retailer Woolworth's had attracted coverage for its sponsorship of the Australia Day Ambassador programme, references to the supermarket

chain had decreased. In contrast, sponsors of particular events, such as the NRMA Motorfest, fared well (p. 4). Their importance is further underscored in the report's conclusions and recommendations, which sought to account for the coverage devoted to sponsors and, indeed, reflect on possible strategies to increase sponsor references across the different media outlets (p. 4). While the Council's public relations activities were displaying positive signs, the report nevertheless issued a reminder that it could ill-afford to rest on its laurels.

In addition to providing a snapshot of public perceptions of Australia Day, such reports also performed a vital role in the development of the Council's PR strategies. The reports function as a gauge for Australia Day councils to assess the success of their PR strategies in relation to previous efforts and desired goals. Moreover, they identify future opportunities. By using these insights to inform subsequent initiatives, practices, and strategies, such reports have given formal recognition to the relationship between PR and 26 January that has been cultivated since 1818.

Conclusion

The New South Wales Australia Day Council's annual reports underscore the importance ascribed to public relations in the early twenty-first century. PR is integral to promoting Australia Day and its messages and framing of national identity. While PR activities have varied in form and nomenclature over the years, it is clear that a range of PR activities have been consistently used to create and promote Australia Day on 26 January since the early 19th century. Public events with communication as well as entertainment objectives; public information literature such as posters, newsheets and flyers; lobbying and public affairs by interest groups; engagement of key stakeholders such as indigenous groups through communication; and community relations activities through networks, public meetings and regional tours – all recognised public relations practices – have been deployed in relation to Australia Day since the mid-nineteenth century.

Significantly, this analysis also highlights the shortcomings of attempts to trace the history of public relations in Australia. In addition to demonstrating Zawawi's erroneous dating of public relations' arrival in Australia to the interwar period, this study has also challenged assumptions that have underpinned what has become a common orthodoxy in Australian public relations research. Moreover, it illustrates the need for researchers to pay closer attention to the importance of context and to recognise that the history of the term public relations is not necessarily the same as the history of these practices.

This study has further problematised the assertion that public relations is mere 'spin' – its multifaceted engagement with Australia Day indicates that public relations has occupied a more central role in everyday life than critics and proponents suggest. Australia Day's emergence as the national day was neither guaranteed nor uncontested. Its status was therefore the result of an ongoing though variable public relations campaign that has spanned the 19th century through to the present. As a case study, Australia Day not only highlights public relations' extended presence and the degree to which public relations has been embedded in everyday Australian society and culture, it also points to the opportunities and insights to be gained by casting new light on the public relations blind spot.

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Historical narration in PR textbooks

Martin David-Blais
Associate Professor
Département de communications sociales
Université Saint-Paul, Ottawa
mblais@ustpaul.ca

Abstract

It is argued in this paper that most PR textbooks adopt a narrative mode while discussing PR history. This position implies that PR textbooks aim to reach a much larger audience than professional historians' circles. The discussion on the narrative nature of PR history in PR textbooks considers (1) the authors' communication context and (2) the main characteristics of the analyzed texts. The discussion proceeds from Nicole D'Almeida's theoretical approach to historical narration by organizations.

1. Introduction

Many PR textbooks contain entire chapters devoted to PR history. In this paper, I hold that most PR textbooks discussing its history tend to adopt a strong narrative mode.

A textbook is a pedagogical work aiming to reach a large public mostly made up of students. For instance, Cutlip's classical *Effective PR* (1962) can be seen as a textbook, whereas his celebrated *Unseen Power* (1994) appears to be a much more specialized work. PR history should never be considered as a main topic in this type of book; it is instead a topic addressed among several others (ethics for instance). Nevertheless, textbooks are of great importance within the profession (Hoy, Raaz and Wehmeier 2007). As they reach a huge readership (many of them are frequently reedited), textbooks can be considered as one of the main showcases for PR before the general public. They also fulfil a socialization function with new generations of practitioners. For this, I have selected several famous American PR textbooks, as well as some others from France, Canada and the UK. More precisely, I will argue that among the diverse ways of looking at history, most PR textbook authors have chosen the narrative way, which implies specific patterns of making social reality intelligible and presenting facts and events. For

the most part of this essay, the discussion will go like this: (1) I will present the three basic characteristics of a narrative approach to history; (2) I will discuss the relevance to PR textbooks.

Even though “narration” and “narrative” are popular concepts nowadays (Gabriel, 2000; Simmons 2002; Brunner 2005; Poletta 2006; Salmon 2007), Nicole D’Almeida (2001) will be my principal theoretical reference. Her main interest is in organizational communication, and not in the literary study of fictional texts (the field where the notions of “narration” and “narrative” were first developed). D’Almeida sees historical narration by organizations first and foremost as a communication endeavour in order to reach and move internal publics. The following discussion shares with D’Almeida the same key assumption: PR textbooks are “talking” about history on behalf of the profession and as a way of communicating meaning and expressing values to new practitioners.

2. History and narration

2.1 On motives to talk about history

I will start with a brief discussion on the question of motives. Developing a discourse on the history of an institution (or a profession) and its journey throughout time and space is a purposeful endeavour. One can postulate that any kind of historical discourse is a scholarly work that should be read as such. However, it is also possible to hold that there are several motives to “talk” about history besides the sake of science, which implies that the nature of the aims will have a direct influence on the nature of discourses. On that regard, I strongly differ with Hoy et al. (2007) who have published a substantial article on history in PR textbooks. The three German researchers have opted for the first position and considered this corpus as if it was altogether a production made by professional historians.

Let’s recall here that most professional historians work in very narrow fields and discuss matters within a restricted circle of fellow specialists. Every substantial utterance faces the possibility of being scrutinized and challenged on questions of methods, documentation or theoretical choices. Debates can be at times brutal when interpretations or explanations are at stake. Consequently, professional researchers are used to setting clear and narrow limits to their investigations and to carefully specifying what they intend to demonstrate, with regards to the methodologies they use and the data they can process. However, those who write and talk about history on behalf of a cause want to reach larger audiences than scientific circles and they have

other motivations rather than convincing colleagues. This does not imply at all that they are indifferent to factual veracity and could invent events or facts but, just as they are looking for immediate intelligibility, they may consider solid and proven what professional historians would treat as mere conjectures.

Most PR textbooks, I submit, are not written by and for professional historians. Most textbooks propose a succession of syntheses dedicated to students and all those who want to discover the basics of PR. Their aim is to construct pedagogical bridges between the profession and the academy and between generations. In other words, textbook authors outline PR history to future practitioners on behalf of the profession. This of course does not imply that PR textbooks should be seen as official discourse.

2.2 Enters D'Almeida

In this exploratory paper, I intend to ponder the relevance of D'Almeida's theoretical framework when applied to the narration of PR history, even though this framework has been developed in the context of organizational communication. Of course, D'Almeida did not develop all by herself the narrative approach devoted to social discourse which has been taking shape throughout social sciences over two decades. Narration and storytelling as a mode of expression were studied in the first part of the 20th century by a few Russian literary scholars, Bakhtyn and Propp for instance. Their work received attention in the 1960's, as semiotic suddenly became very influential (Roland Barthes). In the 1980's, narration and rhetoric became perceived as a possible way to analyse social discourse. This is first and foremost owed to the progressive realization in social sciences (mainly in social psychology) that the human mind, though capable of rationality and sophisticated information processing, has nevertheless maintained strong natural patterns of expressing and making the world intelligible.

According to D'Almeida, managers are ever more interested in recounting their organization's story because they believe that narration can be a powerful communication vector (D'Almeida 2001, p. 95).

Developing a clear and vibrant narrative of an organization's trajectory is seen by many managers as a useful tool for internal purposes. If it is well received by employees, such a narrative can induce identification and foster feelings of belonging and pride. An historical

narrative can also be used as a means of socialisation in order to transmit the ethos and the culture of the organization. Developing a narrative can be important for external use as well. As we know, it is quite common to discuss the respectability of a group (a nation for instance) or of an institution (the Belgian monarchy for instance) and to assess their moral quality through historical pictures. According to D'Almeida, great institutions are well aware of the impact of bad historical perceptions and realize they need to develop vivid and intelligible discourses that can both trigger identification, or trust, and counter opposition. Great institutions are also quite aware that their representatives will interact differently with clients, journalists, etc., whether they strongly believe – or not – in the value and the quality of the organization they represent and belong to.

D'Almeida holds that organizations that take interest in developing a representation of their history will opt for the narrative path instead of the current methodologies used in contemporary social sciences. The reason is simple and straightforward: professional historians cannot reach and move large audiences. If narration, as rhetoric, was scorned for years for being trivial and naive, it is nowadays seen as one of the most natural ways of connecting with a public and communicating a message.

Historical narration comes with a specific way of making social reality intelligible. Here are its main characteristics according to D'Almeida.

First characteristic: holism and chronology. The discourse presents a global trajectory which is structured chronologically (D'Almeida 2001, p. 94). Organizational narrative will present the life of a corporation from its very birth to its current state. The narrator may divide this journey into several periods as he may insist on events. In fact, these two options do not exclude one another.

Second characteristic: the narrative insists on great actors and gives them most of the credit for what has been institutionalized and accomplished (D'Almeida 2001, p. 97). A great deal of what is exposed and recounted concerns those significant actors, their values and state of mind and, of course, their deeds. Often, actors are high-profile individuals who possess extraordinary skills and qualities. Groups or institutions can also be seen as actors as long as they are credited with intentions, actions and decisions. In that case, collective entities are depicted as quasi persons instead of entities made of internal interactions.

This “great actors” strategy permits several possibilities: (1) staging one single actor (or one specific type of actors) who acts by himself and who is presented as the main vector of history; (2) staging cooperative interactions between some significant actors; (3) presenting conflicts and fights between significant actors, some who would be seen as heroes and others as villains.

Using such a strategy necessarily implies thinking according to the so-called “action scheme”, which is a classical way of making sense of social reality (Berthelot 1990, p. 76). Perhaps it is the most familiar scheme to all of us (Dennett 1987; Elster 2009). This means that all the significant deeds and actions that are taken into account must be seen as generated by intentions. The actor’s intentions are attributed by observers in the light of context (unless there are testimonies available from the actors themselves). Looking for an actor’s intentions in context leads the observer towards the actor’s dispositions (personality, values, and mindsets) and to his understanding of the situation.

Do I need to insist that this “great actors” strategy may not be well received by contemporary social scientists that are used to thinking in terms of aggregation and multilayer process? More precisely, if the action scheme (actors behaving and acting from intentions and on the basis of reasons) scenario is very common in social sciences (from Max Weber to the contemporary “rational choice” theories), the idea that actions and decisions of great actors are to be considered as the main source of what was created and instituted would appear to be much more problematic. I will discuss this question later on.

Third characteristic: the narrative brings a normative evaluation of the presented historical outcome. The trajectory can be qualified as a progress or as a decline or even as a tragedy. Actors too can be judged for the morality of their actions. Quite often, this normative valuation is matched with an emotional proposition. In organizations, the discourse can try to nurture identification, pride, a sense of accomplishment.

D’Almeida adds that organizational narratives are normally twofold (D’Almeida 2001, p. 98). They will recount what has been constructed (this is the “house story”) as they will tell the organization’s contribution to society (this is the common good story). The “house story” starts usually with dreams and goes on to success and celebrated accomplishments. It recounts the pioneers’ contribution as well as that of their followers, and shows how visionary they were.

Success is presented first and foremost as the result of the tenacity, vision and leadership of founders and great continuators. Adversity is often a narrative ingredient, but it is not a necessity. The house story also culminates in a celebration of the collective togetherness and of the organization's ethos. Along with the "house story", or mixed with it, there is the "common good story". D'Almeida insists: organizations are quite frequently portrayed as being established on moral intentions and core values. Pioneers and their followers are presented as if they were driven by strong moral desires, whether it was the urge to serve the public, the passion for quality, or the respect for a tradition. The "common good story" will present the organization's journey as being of huge benefit for both employees and society. Thus, the organization can be presented as an excellent corporate citizen or as a source of national pride.

3. Looking at PR textbooks

The following discussion intends to justify the proposition that the way most PR textbooks present PR history belongs to narration. It will also try to establish the relevance of D'Almeida's perspective in this case. In a first step, I will argue that opting for a narrative perspective makes sense for PR textbook authors as long as one accepts that, given their situation, they must talk about history with pedagogical and communication purposes in mind. In a second step, I will argue that the "house story" and the "common good story" can be both easily found within the canonical narrative of PR history. In a third step, I will argue that one can recognize, in PR textbook accounts of PR history, the three main characteristics of the narrative way of talking about history.

3.1 Communication endeavour

According to D'Almeida, historical narratives by organizations are deliberate communication endeavours. Can we say for sure that authors of PR textbooks are absolutely conscious of the choices they make as they write a broad synthesis of PR history? It is hard to say. They are probably strongly influenced by the way other textbooks are developed (in that market, very few would take the risk of appearing radically different). However, since textbooks are commercial products, they are intended to be relevant before the profession and, above all,

relevant to all those teachers who will take care of introductory courses. In this context, one can find some stakes to be similar to those identified by D'Almeida in organizational contexts.

Let's have a look first at the stakes concerning the profession. One can argue that every profession needs to make sure that future practitioners will share a deep feeling of belonging as well as they will assimilate a large body of common knowledge. In other words, every profession has to socialize the upcoming generation. Formal socialization happens in several instances, i.e. in schools, in admission exams, in professional associations, etc. It can be argued here that history lessons offer a classical pedagogical tool to represent "who we are", "what we do" and "in what we firmly believe". To be effective however, the course content must be truly meaningful from the receivers' perspective. Contrary to scientific history and its meticulousness, historical narration offers simplicity which provides immediate intelligibility and easy memorization. And since it stages actors and events, narration can also trigger identification and emotions.

There are also external stakes. Public relations, as all other types of organizational communication (advertising, branding), is the subject of constant criticism. Suffice here to look at the current news: there is always someone presenting a PR operation as pure manipulation of facts and truth. In fiction, PR is quite often depicted as a form of propaganda used by bright but unscrupulous and cynical individuals. There are numerous essays dedicated to the criticism of contemporary communication. These essays can be extremely popular among communication and journalism students. In a more general perspective, one must see that history is a common battlefield for ideologies. Collective endeavours (nationalism, feminism) will be justified or vilified with regards to the past, as it goes for institutions. PR is no exception. Many authors will take on PR history in order to show its deceptive nature (Olasky 1987; Ewen 1996; Moloney 2006; Stauber and Rampton 2004; Miller and Dinan 2008; Baillargeon, 2008). They will start with the Creel Commission (presented as a propaganda machine) and Edward Bernay's books and develop the thesis that PR is a method of playing with facts and truth through events staging and press manipulating. From the profession's point of view, the stake is twofold. First, it needs to come up with a narrative of PR history that is clear and vibrant enough in order to promote PR legitimacy before the general public. Second, and perhaps more importantly, it

needs to convince its future practitioners of its relevance and seriousness since they will have to face similar criticism and representations.

3.2 The corpus

It is time to look at the content of PR textbooks. I have made my selection of PR textbooks according to three basic criteria: (1) they are printed PR textbooks in English and French; (2) they were published since 1989; (3) they contain a specific section on PR history. As mentioned in the introduction, a textbook is a large pedagogical work aiming to reach a large public mostly made up of students, and to provide them with a large synthesis of a general matter. In the United States, a textbook is typically a thick and expensive book divided into several chapters dedicated to very distinct questions; it is also designed in order to be used in the classroom context. In France, this rather strict formula is not followed as faithfully as it is in the United States; nevertheless, the selected books in French are intended to reach undergraduate students first and foremost, and to offer them a substantial synthesis.

Analyzed textbooks

Textbooks in English

Wilcox, Ault and Agee (1989)
 Baskin and Aronof (1992)
 Theaker (2001)
 Newsom, Turk and Kruckeberg (2004)
 Seitel (2004)
 Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006)
 Heath and Coombs (2006)

Textbooks in French

Dagenais (1999)
 Maisonneuve, Lamarche and St-Armand
 (2000)
 Billiet (2009)
 Guily (2009)

3.3 PR canonical narrative

According to D'Almeida, narration creates meaning in organizational contexts through “the house story” and “the common good story”. Such things, I submit, exist in PR textbooks. I would add that in most textbooks, these two stories come through the same canonical narrative. Let me present here a synthetic version of this very familiar core story and its stable structure, that one can get almost right away by reading all these books: Wilcox et al. (1989); Baskin and Aronof (1992); Dagenais (1999); Maisonneuve et al. (2000); Theaker (2001); Cutlip et al. (2006); Seitel

(2004); Billiet (2009). That basic story appears very U.S. centred and is divided into three distinct periods (Duffy, 2000). It shows a trajectory in which the relationship with publics evolves from indifference and even contempt towards the public to a full-fledged two-way relationship. I suggest that this narrative permits the PR people and the future practitioners to envision themselves in space and time with a clear picture of their collective accomplishments and contribution.

The first period: *the public be damned!* It goes way before PR and starts in the second part of the 19th century in the United States. The period is conceived as being dominated by elitism and indifference towards the public. As we all know, in this time of industrial booming, many economic sectors are literally surging out of nothing and many huge corporations are developed within a decade or so. Often a sector is dominated by a monopoly. The period appears also to be quite turbulent as there is no serious public intervention, most economic mechanisms aren't clearly understood and economic competition is brutal. In this context, large corporations are commonly perceived by American people as being very aggressive, i.e. predatory towards competition, insensitive and brutal with their employees, and greedy in their dealings with their clienteles. The press too is booming, which stimulates the emerging public opinion. Newspapers and magazines can be used cunningly by some talented people to get publicity, and they can also be used as a way to promote some causes. Many press entrepreneurs are quite actively developing a denunciation type of journalism (muckraking press) that investigates and criticises economic misdemeanour, child exploitation, poor working conditions, etc.

Even though popular hostility towards corporations is growing, founders and owners of the first generations of great companies are said to be very distant, albeit aggressive, towards the multitude. So, this first period in PR history is characterized by a strong will to ignore criticism and to reject any kind of relationship with the press and public opinion. This desire seems to be supported by the conviction that the corporate future is by no means dependant of popular perceptions. The famous "*public be damned!*" (William H. Vanderbilt) is often mentioned in order to capture the main corporate attitude.

The second period begins at the very end of the 19th century, when the first PR operations appear. PR pioneers are reacting altogether (1) to the anti-capitalism mood that seems to grow all over America, (2) to the challenge set by the muckraking press, and (3) to the corporate world's

generally distant attitude. In this story, Ivy Lee is portrayed as the great visionary. PR pioneers are strongly advocating in favour of developing good reputation programs within the corporate world. They put forward three reasons. First, they see reputation as a major corporate asset, especially when public intervention in the economy is looming. Second, they are supporting a new attitude towards public opinion, whether it is driven by agitators or not. To them, public opinion is at the same time a huge latent political force and a large pool of potential customers. Finally, they assert the necessity to acknowledge the irresistible power of the press. PR pioneers were not only pleading for a change of attitude, they were also proposing methods to deal with the press and public opinion.

PR pioneers came up with a new attitude to keep in mind. In response to public opinion and public authorities, they proposed the following behaviour to corporations: to be open to public questions; to calmly receive public criticism and answer with composure; to share information with honesty, accuracy and diligence; to consider themselves accountable.

And with the press, corporations were asked to avoid any kind of scorn or disdain and to refrain from controlling journalists' work. They were counselled to see the press as a reality and an opportunity, and to treat journalists as professionals accomplishing their role efficiently and honestly. PR pioneers also came up with methods. For instance, they invented the press releases and the press conferences. They developed efficient ways to better manage crises and deal with difficult issues. They progressively developed patterns of communication planning.

So, the second period in PR history is said to be a long one, i.e. from 1900 to the 1970's. What had been proposed and defined by pioneers was progressively implemented and institutionalized. Over time, PR became a fully-fledged profession based on a solid ethos and proven procedures. As a result, relations between the corporate world and its publics became by and large less tense and adversarial.

The third and last period begins somewhere in the 1970's. The profession became progressively aware of the necessity to make a significant shift. In order to improve the quality of the relationship between organizations and their public, PR practitioners needed to go far beyond what had been developed with great success throughout the 20th century. It was now held that the public's input must be fully integrated into the corporate decision making process. Introducing bi-directionality to corporate common practice became the new PR mantra.

PR practitioners became gradually convinced of the necessity (1) to move away from the classical pattern (the corporation communicates to its public in order to nurture its reputation) towards a new type of relationship where publics are transformed into stakeholders and (2) to bring their profession to new territories where information sharing and event making become less central as process facilitation tends to move in.

There are of course variations in names, dates and events. Authors will select different anecdotes, add different case studies, or introduce specific biographical elements. Some variations can be slightly more significant. For instance, some authors would insist more on Bernays' contribution than on Lee's. Some will insist on the second period (Wilcox et al. 1989) while others will highlight the third one (Maisonneuve et al. 2000). That being said, this synthesis appears sufficient enough to support the relevance of D'Almeida's notions of "house story" and "common good story". Simply put, the "house story" is for D'Almeida a success story (D'Almeida 2001, p.106). In this case, success is everywhere. It appears right away with the coming of some bright pioneers. They developed an accurate vision of what had to be done, they were convincing enough to move stubborn capitalists, and they transformed their ideas into methods and procedures. Moreover, the story shows continuing progress, and solid institutionalization.

The canonical narrative brings as well a "common good story". It tells that PR pioneers and their followers were motivated by a great sense of commitment and fairness as it chants PR's contribution to society and democracy. Not only it has eased the information dissemination process through collaboration with journalists, PR has also deeply changed the nature of relationships between corporations and their public, change which has had an impact on the rationalisation and harmonization of society.

3.4 Discourse characteristics

We have seen that historical narration has three core characteristics, that is: (1) holism and linear chronology; (2) the great actors' strategy; (3) a normative evaluation. Let's consider our corpus.

First characteristic: holism and linear chronology. All the authors give a global account of PR trajectory, and all recount it through a linear time frame. The beginning of PR is located somewhere in the early 1900's and the closing point is somewhere at the end of the 20th century

(before the numeric revolution of the 1990s); events are presented in terms of chronology and progress. Moreover, most textbooks use a periodization similar to what had been seen. Giuly (2009) is the exception as he adopts a much more pointillist narrative.

Many authors see three distinct periods in PR history: Wilcox et al. (1989); Baskin and Aronof (1992); Dagenais (1999); Maisonneuve et al. (2000); Theaker (2001); Seitel (2004), Cutlip et al. (2006). Baskin and Aronof (1992), for instance, divide PR history in three stages: PR has evolved from (1) an attitude of indifference towards the public to (2) an attitude of respect and professionalism and, then, to (3) a mutual understanding and bidirectional relationship. Cutlip et al. (2006) introduce a fourth stage as they make a distinction between the councillor era (1900-1970) and an era made of mutual understanding. One can recognise here Grunig and Hunt's famous four models of PR in the distinction between mutual understanding and bidirectional relationship (the "two-way asymmetric" VS the "two-way symmetric"). Maisonneuve et al. (2000) use the same three stage periodization, but mix it into a three layered framework. To them, PR has evolved (1) from strict and rigid unilateralism to full bi-laterality (organization ↔ public); (2) from communication as information to communication as relationship; and (3) from spontaneity to full professionalism.

Newsom et al. (2004) propose a significantly different periodization:

- Phase 1: *communicating-initiating* (19th century). This phase is dominated by publicists and press agitators;
- Phase 2: *responding* (1900-1940). The profession discovers and learns how to deal with the press reality;
- Phase 3: *planning/preventing* (1950-1970). Corporations progressively introduce PR principles into the decision making process and planning.
- Phase 4: *professionalism*.

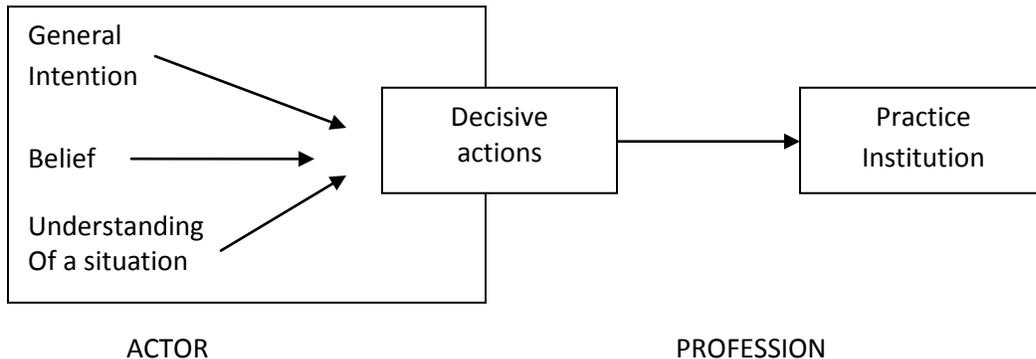
Heath and Coombs (2006) propose a similar periodization.

All these nuances left aside, it seems quite obvious that, in PR textbooks, PR history has a clear direction and is made of continuous progress.

Second characteristic: the great actors' strategy. As I said earlier, historical narrative insists on great actors and gives them most of the credit for what had been institutionalized and accomplished. In PR textbooks, great actors create history. The narrative talks of their visions,

intentions and actions as it talks of their determination and adroitness. For many textbook authors, actors are high-profile individuals who possess extraordinary skills and qualities. Dagenais (1999) puts Lee at the centre of his narrative. Baskin and Aronof (1989) stage three great figures: Creel, Lee and Page. Maisonneuve et al. (2000) insist on Lee's and Grunig's unique contributions. Others (Cutlip et al. 2006), who are not so keen about portraying giants in action, will say that PR was developed by several very gifted persons and provide their readers with a pantheon of significant contributors.

What matters most here is not so much which individuals should be picked up as central actors, but rather the scheme of intelligibility that is used. Let's have a look at the following graph.



For one part, this graph aims to show that actors (whether they are very famous or not) make decisions and act in concrete contexts based on reasons. Reasons to act are understood by observers as a combination of intentions, beliefs and cognitions. In textbooks, PR pioneers and their followers are credited with dreams (intentions): they wanted corporations to develop solid relationships with their publics in order to earn trust and legitimacy. Pioneers are also credited with right ideas: they understood the reality with accuracy and they developed the right theories. What is more, they are credited with great practical sense as they have developed efficient strategies and procedures.

On its right side, the graph indicates that acts have consequences. In contemporary social sciences, this idea makes a lot of sense. One may for instance develop a case study in terms of interaction processes made of purposeful acts that culminate with consequences that are somewhat unpredictable. Here however, consequences are conceived as being necessarily

positive outputs. They are also seen as the direct and desired result of great actors' interventions. In other words, this scheme holds that in time 1, great actors had somewhat in their mind a blueprint of a profession to be developed; they acted accordingly in time 2; and, as a consequence, they materialized, in time 3, this blueprint and transformed it into lasting practices.

Let's consider, as an example, the narrative of Lee's decisive contribution to a nascent profession. Two very famous episodes are constantly recounted. The first occurs in 1906, when a train owned by the *Pennsylvania Railway* derails (Baskin and Aronof 1989, p. 33; Dagenais 1999, p. 74; Newsom et al. 2004, p. 30; Heath and Coombs 2006, p. 53). Asked to give some advice, Lee proposed to avoid dissimulation, which would have been the normal corporate reaction at that time (in order to protect its reputation). Lee, who knew pretty well how American journalists worked, objected that such a reaction would bring opposite results. Hiding facts would nurture suspicion and stimulate journalists' appetite for further investigations; therefore, he recommended promptitude and full transparency. It was revolutionary to propose such a strategy that remains today the very basis of crisis management. The second episode brings about counsel given by Lee to John Rockefeller Jr., (a famous magnate who is feared as much as he is hated) when a strike turns into drama (Wilcox et al. 1989, p. 44; Dagenais 1999, p. 75; Newsom et al. 2004, p. 30; Seitel 2004, p. 34; Cutlip et al. 2006, p. 99; Heath and Coombs 2006, p. 53). In 1914, a strike occurred in a coal mine located in Ludlow, Colorado. A brutal clash between miners and a private militia hired by the Rockefeller family kills 25 individuals, among them two women and eleven children. The American opinion was inflamed with intense emotion, pointing fingers at the magnate's greed and recklessness. Lee recommended to Rockefeller that he react on both short and long terms. On the short term, Lee again proposed transparency (i.e. to recognize facts with accuracy) and, on the long term, he suggested developing a systematic PR policy. Lee envisioned the development of lasting relationships between Rockefeller's firm and its several publics in order not only to develop trust and legitimacy, but also to bring new meaning to the Rockefeller name. Philanthropy was presented as one of the appropriate means that should be considered.

These episodes, known by everyone, shed light on the way historic narration makes the social reality intelligible. We observe that authors infer from such stories a simple and concrete interpretation of a large institutionalization process. From the point of view of contemporary

social sciences, this interpretation could be a matter of tough criticism. Institutionalization, in the mind of most social scientists, is a long-term process occurring on a very large scale and being influenced by numerous factors. The story suggests that Ivy Lee had a solid grasp of the course of things and provoked consequences that were fully in conformity with his intentions. A causal connection is put forward by the narrative even though it remains implicit. Looking at the explicit content however, one must realize that the narration does little more than present a link between the two episodes staging Ivy Lee and the successful development of early PR. For many social scientists and professional historians, that would be too radical a simplification of social and historical reality. From Hackett Fischer's perspective, this would be a perfect example of "reductive fallacy" (Hackett Fischer 1970, p. 172) but, from a communication point of view, this narrative seems quite efficient since it brings radical cognitive simplification and gives reasons for pride and identification.

Third characteristic: the narrative brings a normative evaluation of the historical outcome. PR history, as we have seen, is presented as a real success story for the profession as well as it is for the whole of society. This evaluation comes naturally as the joint effect of: (1) the narrated trajectory; (2) the quality of the staged actors; (3) the positive nature of the selected examples and illustrations. Newsom et al. explicitly express this evaluation:

The need for professional public relations practice throughout the world is increasingly obvious, and those who are now studying public relations in colleges and universities (and who are reading this textbook) will practice public relations at a time in history when public relations will be needed as never before and hopefully will be appreciated and recognized for its importance as never before. (Newsom et al. 2004, p. 48)

There is no need, I think, to discuss and justify this point any further. This being said, it would be interesting to identify, in further investigations, all the discursive and procedures that support in conjunction this evaluation. I'm thinking here of the possible effects of the dominant locutory mode (which in PR textbook seems essentially assertive) and of the chosen vocabulary.

4. Conclusion

In this paper, I hold basically three positions. Firstly, I argued that most PR textbooks discussing PR history aim to reach a much larger audience than professional historians' circles. Textbook

authors write pedagogical books that must be commercially successful; consequently, they cannot afford to enter into deep and complex academic discussions over strictly defined problems. Secondly, I argued that PR textbooks adopt a strong narrative mode. Thirdly, I aimed to shed light on Nicole D'Almeida's theoretical approach to narration.

My position that PR textbooks discussing PR history adopt a strong narrative mode does not pretend to anything else than being reasonably plausible while considering (1) the authors' context and (2) the characteristics of the analyzed texts. In order to give more support to this position, two tasks should be accomplished. First, a much more systematic study of the corpus needs to be conducted. Second, the authors themselves should be the subject of an inquiry to be conducted in order to document their communication intentions and their representation of the profession.

This being said, I have noticed throughout this paper several possibilities for further investigations. The most obvious one is to conduct a survey of the students' reception to such an historical narrative. A second task would be to undertake a meticulous study of discursive procedures used in PR textbook narratives. Finally, one should study the critical counter-narrative of PR history in order to document their apparent similarities with PR textbook narratives, even though critical authors hold a rather negative view of PR and tend to use history as an ideological device.

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**Stages of institutionalization and professionalization of government public relations in
Romania 1989 – 2010**

Alina Dolea

PhD student

The National School of Political Studies and Public Administration, Bucharest, Romania

E-mail: alina.dolea@comunicare.ro

Abstract

Public relations are a new profession in Romania, an Eastern European former communist country which changed to a democratic regime in December 1989, and it is generally considered to have emerged after 1990, although publicity and political propaganda preceded it (Rogojinaru in Sriramesh and Verčič, 2009, p. 553). Although the Romanian practice of public relations evolved and developed quickly aligning with the international practice, several campaigns and programmes receiving awards during the last editions of IPRA Golden World Awards, SABRE Awards, Cannes Lions Awards or European Excellence Awards, there is still very little focus on research and theory. Thus, there is no major study on the history of public relations in Romania prior to 1989 to either confirm or challenge the conclusion of Grunig, Grunig and Verčič (2004) that there was no public relations in Eastern Europe before 1989 because the concept was not acceptable for socialism (p. 137). Even after 1989 public relations are, with little exception, more frequently described than researched from the viewpoint of public relations theory.

The paper aims at contributing to fill this gap in literature with a focus on government public relations in Romania after 1990, a sensitive area of PR due to its increased exposure since public interest is at stake and which can impact the entire PR industry. This aspect is best observed with regards to issues such as the Romanian Government's efforts to promote the country image or to the recent austerity measures taken by the Executive due to the global financial crises which lead to the appearance in the public discourse of a new theme framed rather negatively by media: the questioning of the very role played by the PR specialist in an organisation.

This exploratory research aims at answering the following questions: what were the main stages of institutionalization and professionalization of government public relations in Romania between 1989 and 2010, the challenges faced by public relations practitioners and the characteristics of government public relations in Romania at present.

This study will thus offer a perspective on government public relations in Romania at present with the main stages of evolution in terms of institutionalization and professionalization after 1989 until 2010, on the challenges and problems faced by practitioners, correlated with the general evolution of public relations in Romania.

Literature review

Government public relations focus on the use of public relations by public institutions in order to advance their mission and achieve their goals. Public relations can be viewed either in an instrumental perspective as a tool to increase the efficiency of communication for organisations and institutions, but it can also be understood as a strategic management function and relationship builder. In the case of public institution this mixture of instrumental and relationship building is essential because what distinguishes governmental public relations from other public relations forms is the “publicness” of the process: the communication has to obey to the rules of transparency and public access to information. And the information should be viewed not only as a final product ready to be delivered, but as something that is being built in the public space in which several actors compete in order to bring their representations in front of the public which is present and, more important, is active. If a neo-liberalist perspective is assumed, the world is a global marketplace, a global public space, and actors competing in this arena are no longer only companies, but states and institutions, as well. In order to gain attention and visibility from the publics, states and institutions have adopted public relations, marketing and branding strategies and tactics to impose themes on the public agenda. It is the exact idea of competition for attention that should make institution become more aware not only of the instrumental value of public relations, but on its long term value to connect, engage and build relationships.

From a different perspective, Lee (2008) observed that, until recently, public administration pedagogy gave little attention to the use of public relations and proved the idea with a comparative study on public administration textbooks from the 1920s to the 1950s with those of the 1980s and 1990s. Reviewing also the approaches to the external communication of public administration he notes that sometimes the term communication is used, and sometimes public relations are mentioned. In his view, “public relations capture perfectly the activity that a public or non-profit administrator would be engaging in under this rubric: managing different kinds of communication relationships with different kinds of publics” (p. 6).

At the same time, public institutions are at the intersection of politics and public administration which renders government public relations an in-between position from political communication and public communication. As they serve the public interest of citizens, public institutions are run by the representatives of the political party that won the most recent elections. From this perspective, there is a constant dialectic and negotiation between public and politic on the agenda of the institution's leader whose ultimate goal is that of maintaining power. And the best argument in persuading the publics is that of the proved efficiency of policies for the public interest while in office. This common interest bridges internally the agenda of the leader and the agenda of the PR department. Nevertheless, it is a question of how PR practitioners manage these delicate aspects of political and public communication in the process of making the institution to "talk" for and especially with the publics.

The interplay between government public relations and political communication was studied by several authors (Altheide and Johnson, 1980; Graber, 2002, Rosenthal, 1997) as noted by Gelders and Ihlen (2009, pp. 263-265). They consider that it is difficult to define and distinguish in practice between the two, stating that government public relations can be persuasive in order to influence knowledge, attitudes and behaviour. They also note that "more and more definitions and ethical guidelines about government public relations and propaganda recognize that ministers are allowed to score points in secondary order by using government public relations, as long as this is not the main goal of the communication act".

These aspects are all the more important as government public relations are used in new democracies when public communication can more easily become political communication, as it is the case of Central and Eastern Europe countries. This has impact not only on communication, but on public policies and on the continuity of programs. In one of his papers on the role and challenges of country branding in transition countries, Szondi (2007) identifies as a common mistake made by Central and Eastern European countries the fact that country promotion is politicised and it becomes the victim of domestic politics, especially when there is no agreement among the different political parties about how or by whom the country's reputation should be managed abroad which leads to the lack of continuity and strategic approach.

On the other hand, when discussing the practice of public relations in this region, several authors have coined applied concepts. It is the case of Lawniczak (2001) that proposed the term "transition public relations" to describe public relations in countries of Central and Eastern Europe that help organisations adapt to the changes implied by the transition from a

centred and planned economy to capitalism and from socialism to democracy. Grunig and Grunig (2005) consider that transformational public relations is a more suitable term to designate this new type of public relations because transformation implies a more complex process. They argue that besides explaining the transformations, public relations programs need to involve the publics affected by their consequences in decision making, not just to inform them afterwards and try to convince that the changes are good. They thus emphasize on the strategic management function in the practice of public relations arguing that the principles in the Excellence study are needed in countries facing such transformations, although the research has indicated that most practitioners in these countries lack the necessary knowledge for assuming this role and that their work is limited to media relations, product promotions and campaigns to support privatisation and other changes.

Public relations are a new profession in Romania, an Eastern European former communist country which changed to a democratic regime in December 1989, and it is generally considered to have emerged after 1990, although publicity and political propaganda preceded it (Rogojinaru in Sriramesh and Verčič, 2009a, p. 553). According to Nastasia, public relations has been neither a domain of activity nor an area of inquiry in Romania under communism and it is after 1989 that Romania discovered public relations and there has been a mixture of trends at the speculative and as well as the applicative level (2009, p. 231).

Although the Romanian practice of public relations evolved and developed quickly aligning with the international practice, several campaigns and programmes receiving awards during the last editions of IPRA Golden World Awards, SABRE Awards, Cannes Lions Awards or European Excellence Awards, there is still very little focus on research and theory. Thus, there is no major study on the history of public relations in Romania prior to 1989 to either confirm or challenge the conclusion of Grunig, Grunig and Verčič (2004) that there was no public relations in Eastern Europe before 1989 because the concept was not acceptable for socialism (p. 137). Even after 1989 public relations are, with little exception, more frequently described than researched from the viewpoint of public relations theory. The few studies of Romanian PR focus on the analysis of the relationship between journalists and public relations practitioners in Romania in 1997, 1999 and 2003 (Coman, 2004), the role and challenges of public relations in Romanian society (Bortun, 2005; Rogojinaru, 2009a), public relations in Romanian public institutions between 2006 and 2008 (Rogojinaru, 2009b), the characteristics of public relations practices inside public relations companies in France and Romania (Nastasia, 2009), the communication campaigns and initiatives of the Romanian Government to promote Romania after 1990 (Dolea and Tarus, 2009).

Analysing the development phases of public relations in Romania, Rogojinaru (2009a) identified 3 distinct moments: the pioneer phase of the early 1990s (1991-1995) based on amalgam practices of media, publicity and promotional events; the exploratory phase in the second half of 1990s (1995-2000/2001) introductory for public relations studies and transient in practice and the consolidation phase from 2001 and ongoing (p. 553).

Other relevant steps in institutionalisation and professionalisation of public relations in Romania are the establishment of professional associations (The Romanian Association for Public Relations Professionals in 1995, the Club of Public Relations Companies in 2003), the first courses in public relations introduced in 1991 at post graduate level by the National School of Political Studies and Public Administration and the official recognition of the profession in the national classification of occupations in Romania (Bortun, 2005, p. 102).

The paper aims at contributing to fill this gap in literature with a focus on government public relations in Romania after 1990, a sensitive area of PR due to its increased exposure since public interest is at stake and which can impact the entire PR industry. This aspect is best observed with regards to issues such as the Romanian Government's efforts to promote the country image or to the recent austerity measures taken by the Executive due to the global financial crises which lead to the appearance in the public discourse on a new theme framed rather negatively by media: the questioning of the very role played by the PR specialist in an organisation.

Methodology

This exploratory research aims at answering questions regarding the main stages of institutionalization and professionalization of government public relations in Romania between 1989 and 2010, the challenges faced by government public relations practitioners and the characteristics of government public relations in Romania at present.

The research area is mainly made up by government public communication (content of Government's official websites, answers and statements of government PR specialists from ministries), legislative framework, documents, organizational charts, Government's decisions for the establishment or reorganization of ministries, internal regulations for the organization and functioning of the ministries. Starting with organizational and documentary analysis to see how the organisational charts of the Romanian Government and Ministries changed in time, what were the size, functions and role of the PR departments inside the institutions, the study continues with a content analysis of the main functions carried out by the PR

departments as they are communicated on the website and/or in the answers received from the departments in response to the request for public information.

The sample used in the study included all the 15 ministries in the present structure of the Romanian Government. In order to gather data directly from the source, requests for public information were sent to all the PR departments and included a set of 11 questions regarding the year when the department was established, its main functions and its institutional subordination at that time; the legislative framework; the evolution in time in terms of responsibility, title of the department and subordination; the current name of the department, its main functions and its institutional subordination; the education and formation of the employees inside the departments; the year when the first employee with studies in PR/ communication/ journalism was hired; the existence of a spokesperson, its responsibility and legislative framework; its education and formation. Only 10 ministries of 15 sent answers and some of them incomplete. While institutional information could be completed from the websites of the ministries (with two exceptions detailed below), this was not possible with regards to the human resources dimension of the PR departments – the employees. This is the reason why the research eventually focused only on the institutional evolution of the PR departments and did not include a section on the spokesperson and on the PR practitioners. At the same time, in gathering the data for the content analysis, the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Culture and National Cultural Heritage communicated on their websites only the title of the department and the organization chart, but not the functions as such. Nevertheless, they remained part of the sample because the lack of information on the website and of response to the public information request show an institutional understanding of PR and is relevant for the research.

For the content analysis of PR departments' functions, a coding scheme was created starting from the 10 categories of assignments identified by Cutlip, Center and Broom (2006, pp. 34-35) and adapted to the Romanian context. 14 categories of functions was used in research: (1) writing and editing, (2) media relations and placement, (3) research, (4) management and administration, (5) counselling, (6) organising special events, (7) speaking, (8) production of materials, (9) training, (10) website administration, (11) representation function, (12) internal communication, (13) provide public information (544/2001), (14) crisis management. These functions were then divided in functions of a technical role associated with execution and implementation ((1) writing and editing, (2) media relations and placement, (6) organising special events, (8) production of materials, (10) website administration, (12) internal communication, (13) provide public information (544/2001)) and

functions of a managerial role associated with strategic thinking and positioning for the organisation ((3) research, (4) management and administration, (5) counselling, (7) speaking, (9) training, (11) representation function, (14) crisis management).

These results of the study offer a perspective on government public relations in Romania at present with the main stages of evolution in terms of institutionalization and professionalization after 1989 until 2010, correlated with the general evolution of public relations in Romania.

Findings

The Romanian Government comprises currently 15 ministries, each one having a Public Relations Department in its structure. Nevertheless these are not called as such, the most frequent terms used in the title of these PR structures (see Fig1) being: communication (30%), public relations (26%), media relations/ press (19%) and information (15%). The term communication predominates and, with 2 exceptions when it is the only name of the department, it is always followed by other terms to describe more specific its activities. Although public relations is the second most frequent term, it only appears in 47% of the department names and it is never the single name. This emphasizes the dimension of public communication rather than the public relations as such and might suggest an institutional understanding of this structure as a tool used by public institutions to provide information via media, rather than a strategic and relationship building approach towards publics. The following results of the content analysis that illustrate the current practice as dominated by functions associated with a technical role for the department and specialists seem to support this argument.

The current distribution of the public relations functions inside the ministries of the Romanian Government indicate that specialized communication and/ or public relations departments and, consequently, their employees, tend to focus on the instrumental aspects of the communication process (see Fig 2). The values scored for the main PR functions to be found in the first half of the hierarchy show a predominance of functions associated with a technical role (5 of 7, meaning a 71%) for: writing and editing materials (10%), media relations, internal communication and organizing special events (9%) and provide public information on the ground of Law 544 from 2001 (8%). The values in the second half show a predominance of functions associated with a managerial role (5 of 7, meaning 71%): research and counselling (7%), training and speaking (4%) and crisis management (3%) and are actually placed at the end of the top.

The PR departments that accomplish functions specific to both technical and managerial roles are part of the ministries covering major strategic domains and representation functions of Romanian state administration in relation with internal and external publics (see Fig 3) : foreign affairs, national defence and public finances (100%), administration and interior (85% managerial, 100% technical). In fact, these are the first ministries to establish a communication department after the 1989 anti-communist Revolution: in 1990 the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) created a structure of communication (the exact name was not available in their documents, but by 1992 Government's decision 814/1992 regarding the functioning of MFA stipulates the existence of a Press Section inside the Department for Culture, Press and Relations with the Diaspora); in 1991 the Ministry of National Defence (MND) - the Section for Information and Public Relations of the Army; in 1992 the Ministry of Public Finances – Department Press, Relations with the Public, Protocol and Administration and in 1995 the Ministry of Administration and Interior (MAI) - the Department Image and Public Information. Besides these and another 2 departments established inside the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection (MLFSP) in 1990 and the Ministry of Justice (MJ) in 1994, no other distinct structure dedicated to public relations was created inside the Government until 1999, as results from the data available on the website of the ministries and from the information provided by the PR departments in response to the public information request on the history and evolution of their PR structure inside the organisation.

Going back to the first departments established inside the key ministries, it can be noticed a constantly growing institutional preoccupation for the institutionalisation and professionalisation of PR: they were subject to several transformations and reorganisation from services to current directorates (MFA, MPF) and even integrated systems of communication management (the case of MND and MAI). The MFA has at present a General Directorate for Communication and Public Diplomacy incorporating (1) the Communication Division, (2) the Spokesperson Division and (3) the Public Diplomacy Division, while the MPF has a Directorate for Communication, Public Relations, Mass-media and Transparency including (1) the Communication and Public Relations Section, (2) the Bureau for Public Information, Relations with the Public and Transparency (Public information and Transparency Compartment and Relations with the Public Compartment), (3) the Media Relations Compartment, (4) the Public Relations Compartment, (5) the Protocol and (6) the Secretariat.

On the other hand, the MND has developed an impressive system for information and public relations management: a key actor is the Information and Public Relations Directorate made up of the (1) Public Information Section (Press Office and Mass Media Operations Office), (2) the Public Relations Section and (3) the Internal Communication Section and coordinates also (4) the Centre for media monitoring and (5) the Radio – TV Studio M100. Other key actors are: the spokesperson of the ministry, the services of communication and public relations from other structures of the Army, the personal appointed for information and public relations positions, the personal that cumulate these activities to their basic position (applicable mostly for the local structures in the territory) and the military press. There is even an Order of the Ministry from 2009 that stipulates the mentioned structure and also regulates the entire activity of information and public relations: the planning of activities, the job description and necessary competencies, the regulations for producing multimedia materials and obtaining approvals for materials, budget and logistics and providing the approved template communication documents of the institution. Moreover, starting with January 2004, PR is a recognised military specialisation. The MAI has a similar structure with a Directorate for Information and Public Relations including (1) the Press and Internal Communication Office, (2) the Section for Communicational Strategies and Control, (3) the Religious Assistance Section and (4) the Multimedia Centre. Through the education institutions inside the Ministry, the Department carries out courses for continuous learning and career development in PR and communication, ensuring the professionalization of both central and local employees in PR.

These four communication structures presented above form a distinctive category of structures since the agenda of their institutions was constantly linked to the agenda of NATO membership and European Union integration. They were the main actors involved in these processes and faced a growing international exposure and pressure to comply with the international standards and the EU acquis. This was reflected inside the institutions once Romania assumed the status of candidate state that faced constant evaluations and then the status of member state that has to further put into practice these policies, all the more as the foreign policy agenda brings the Schengen admission. These internal and external factors lead to a clear institutionalization and professionalization of PR departments inside MFA, MND, MPF and MAI.

A second category of departments use PR functions associated to technical and managerial roles in a variable proportion: while in the case of Ministry of Justice (MJ) there is equilibrium (71%), its PR structure being the closest to the profile of the departments in the

previous category, the Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports (MERYYS) and the Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism (MRDT) tend to have a rather technical approach of the PR function (86% technical and 57% managerial the first, 71% technical and 42% managerial the latter). As shown previously, MJ has a history of PR institutionalization started back in 1994 and undergone several processes of institutional restructuring (in 1997, 2001, 2003, 2006, 2009). Currently it functions under the title of Mass Media Compartment, and it can be assumed that its understanding inside the ministry is rather instrumental, as it is the case also for the other 2 departments in this category. For the General Directorate Communication, Public Relations and Image inside MERYYS there are no data on the history of their institutionalization neither on their websites or in the information received in response to the public information request sent during the research, thus making difficult any evaluation of the possible future direction of development inside the institution. MRDT was recently established through the fusion in 2009 of the Ministry of Regional Development and Housing and the Ministry of Tourism at all level including the communication structure: the Communication Department (Press Office, Communication Office, Analysis and Information Office). Similar to MERYYS, further data to trace and analyze its institutional history are available neither on the new or old websites, nor in the information given by the department itself. Nevertheless, the present profile and activities of the two communication departments put together with the ones collected from the rest of the ministries offer valuable data on the current practice and understanding of public relations inside the Romanian Government.

PR departments that employ rather few technical PR functions and have also a small percentage of using the managerial PR functions form a third category: the Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure (MTI), Ministry of Communication and Information Society (MCIS), and Ministry of Economy, Trade and the Business Environment (METBE). MTI first established a Department of Media Relations in 2001 that undergone 4 restructuring to its current form set up in 2009 as a Public Information and Communication Department, comprising a Compartment for Public Information and Communication and a Compartment for Relations with the Public. Its main activities are related to writing and editing, media relations and events (71%), the research and the institutional representation for other publics being the only functions related to a managerial role of PR. MCIS and METBE have at present the Compartment for Public Information and Media Relations and respectively the Spokesperson and Public Relations Office (Compartment of Communication and Image and Protocol Compartment) that rely mostly on technical functions (86% and 71%) of organizing and communicating the information to media.

The last category groups departments that list in their description of activities some PR functions related to a technical profile and even some functions specific for a managerial role but nevertheless are not similar to any of the departments from the above categories. It is this author hypothesis that inside these ministries there is not a proper understanding of general PR functions as such. The argument lies in the fact that the activities of the PR departments are not only instrumental but reduce the PR function to the “relation with the public” status that it had in Romania at the beginning of 1990 from which both PR academics and professional try to distance in both theory and practice. In that early understanding of the term, public relations was the activity of state officer that gives logistical administrative information on procedures, petitions, audiences at state representatives, on papers, and documents that are usually obtained from state institutions (drivers license, identity cards, etc). After reading the description of Public Relations structures (be it offices, compartments, or departments) inside several Romanian ministries, it appear they are in charge of these kinds of activities. The Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (MARD) currently has a Press and Public Relations Office with a Press Compartment and a Compartment of Public Relations and “Unique Office”: analyzing the functions of the 2 Compartments it can be noticed that PR functions (technical 100% and managerial 29%) are in the responsibility of the Press Compartment, while the other one has only logistic attributions of administrating public information requests, secretarial duties and petitions book keeping based on Law 544/2001 despite the fact it has Public Relations in its name. The same is valid for the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MEF) that has a Communication Department made up of a Communication Office (Compartment of Communication and Compartment of Mass Media) that handles some technical PR functions (43%) and a Public Relations Compartment: the functions designed for the Public Relations Compartment comprise petitions, correspondence, documents book keeping and furnishing of public interest information. The Ministry of Health seems to be in the same situation, too. They neither answered the public information request nor did they publish on the website information on their communication department (history, functions, institutional functioning regulations etc), but the Public Relations Compartment is given as contact for the same type of public information stipulated by 544 Law/ 2011 mentioned above. Last, but not least, the Ministry of Labour, Family and Social Protection (MLFSP) has a Public Policy and Communication Department which has a tradition of institutionalization the structure of communication initiated back to 1990 when the Department of Relations with the public and with the union organizations was put in place. It underwent 8 reorganisations (1995, 1997, 1999, 2001, 2003, 2004, 2008, and 2009)

and in 1999 abandoned the phrase “relations with the public” in its title in favour of communication, media relations and even public relations. Though, it seems to have still maintained the same profile as in 1990 since now it carries out only the logistical and administrative activities for public information on the basis of Law 544 from 2001.

The Ministry of Culture and National Cultural Heritage that has a Compartment of Communication and Public Relations is also included in this category of misunderstanding the role of PR as they have no information on the department’s functions and they also did not send a response to the information request. At the same time, it must be mentioned that the current website of the ministry is under construction and this may be a possible explanation for the missing information.

Other findings of the study regard the subordination of the departments inside the organisation and the educational background of the employees in the department. The majority of the PR departments inside the Romanian ministries are at present in the direct subordination of the Minister (73%), the rest of 27% being subordinated to the Secretary General or to the State Secretary for the relations with the Parliament. This shows a direct access of the PR department and its employees (or at least of the Director of Department) to the leaders and the primary sources of information in the organisation, namely the dominant coalition.

Only 53% of the PR departments inside the Romanian Government provided data on the educational background and profile of their employees and on the institutional efforts of professionalization through continuous learning courses. From this 53%, with the exception of MFA where the employees are diplomats and of MTI where they have studies in Economics, Law, Philology and Public Administration, all the rest of the employees currently activating inside the PR departments have studies in Communication, Public Relations and/or Journalism.

Conclusion

The research on the evolution of public relations structures inside the central structure of the Romanian Government between 1990 and 2011 shows different categories of departments and even different functions united under the common title of public relations. This reveals not only a variation in terms of approaches, but a more profound difference in understanding the role of public relations inside a public institution. It is this very institutional understanding of PR that shapes the profile and activities of the PR departments and range from strategic and relationship building PR (first category of departments) to a mixture of instrumental and

strategic PR (the second category), a predominantly technical and instrumental PR (the third category) up to misunderstanding of PR essence and incorrect use of the term (the fourth category).

The institutionalisation of PR inside the Romanian Government was started at the beginning of 90s, before the profession was officially recognized and it has to be integrated in the contexts of Romania's transformation and evolution from a status to another. The first stage, 1990 - 1995, is characteristic for a pioneer work in some structures inside the strategic ministries (defence, foreign affairs, public finance, administration and interior) in the context of a public discourse specific to the early stages of a new democracy and was rather unidirectional. It was also a period when the public agenda was dominated by "We don't sell our country", the first concept of the Romanian political communication and slogan after 1989.

After 1995, the media landscape started to be more diverse and commercial televisions appeared, new publications were launched. On political level, Romania signed the official request to become a member of the European Union, the approach towards the foreign countries started changing and a right wing political coalition won the election in 1996 with a political platform towards the future. The European Union themes started to become constant on the political and media agendas all the more as the European Commission started publishing the regular monitoring reports on Romania and its progress to EU membership. In this period, the existing PR structures inside the government continued the institutionalisation and professionalization processes, while others were starting to include in the organisational charts the first communication departments.

The passing of the Law that granted access to public information (544/2001) and of the one that compelled institutions to transparency (52/2003) marked the debut of a new phase of institutionalisation. Starting with this point, every public institution, including the ministries, was obliged by Law to have a department to communicate with various audiences. Most probably this is the exact point that led to the misunderstanding of PR or the reduction of PR to this administrative role reduced to the communication with the citizens.

This study shows that at present PR is institutionalized inside the Romanian Government and that there is a predominance of technical role and a rather asymmetric model of public information, thus confirming a conclusion of another study on public relations in public institutions in Romania (Rogojinaru, 2009b). Future research should focus on testing qualitatively these findings in order to gather a more profound and nuanced understanding of the stages of professionalization, investigating the role of PR practitioners inside Romanian

Government and how they define their functions in organisation. Then, correlating practitioners' definitions with the institutional definitions of the PR functions and roles that were reflected by this research can be obtained a more accurate view of the phenomenon.

At the same time, these stages of institutionalisation and professionalization of governmental PR in Romania must be also correlated with the other actors involved in the process: the educational system that offers doctoral education in communication as of 2008, the professional associations that should have a greater and constant role in establishing and maintaining professional standards, more focus on research in profession, not only for Academia, but mainly for practitioners and also the media landscape.

Specific social, political and economical contexts for a former communist country and socialist system that underwent a process of transformation and evolution towards a democratic society together with the degree of activism from these different actors responsible for the process of professionalisation brought a series of constraints for the understanding and practice of public relations in Romania. This research is a first step to investigate the characteristic of the governmental public relations in Romania and it shows that Romania is no exception for the Central and Eastern European area, elements of transformational public relations (Grunig and Grunig, 2005) being identified inside the Romanian Government.

* Alina Dolea is a beneficiary of the project "Doctoral scholarships for the development of the knowledge-based society", co-funded by the EU through the European Social Fund, SOP Human Resources Development 2007-2013

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Ministry of Economy, Trade and the Business Environment - <http://www.minind.ro>
Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports - <http://www.edu.ro>
Ministry of Environment and Forests - <http://www.mmediu.ro>
Ministry of Foreign Affairs - <http://www.mae.ro>
Ministry of Health - <http://www.ms.ro>
Ministry of Justice - <http://www.just.ro>
Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection - <http://www.mmssf.ro>
Ministry of National Defence - <http://www.mapn.ro>
Ministry of National Defence, Information and Public Relations Directorate -
<http://www.mapn.ro/dirp/>
Ministry of Public Finance - <http://www.mefromania.ro>
Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism - <http://www.mdlpl.ro>
Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure - <http://www.mt.ro>

Annexes

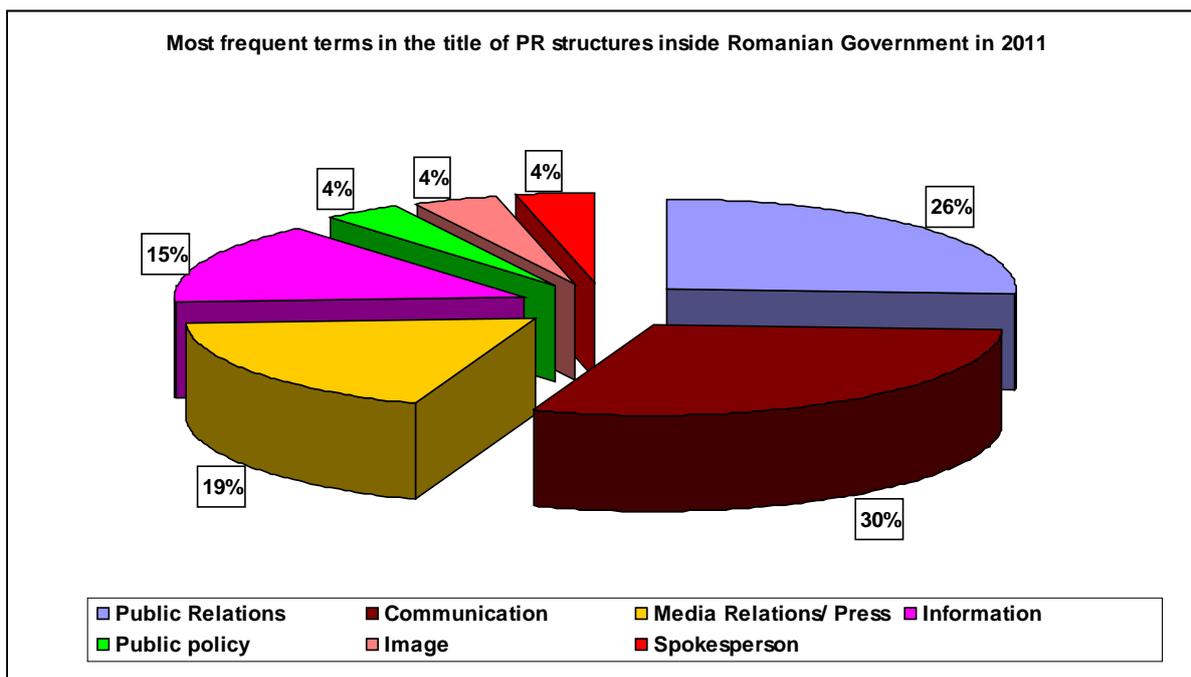


Fig 1: Most frequent terms in the title of PR structures inside Romanian Government in 2011

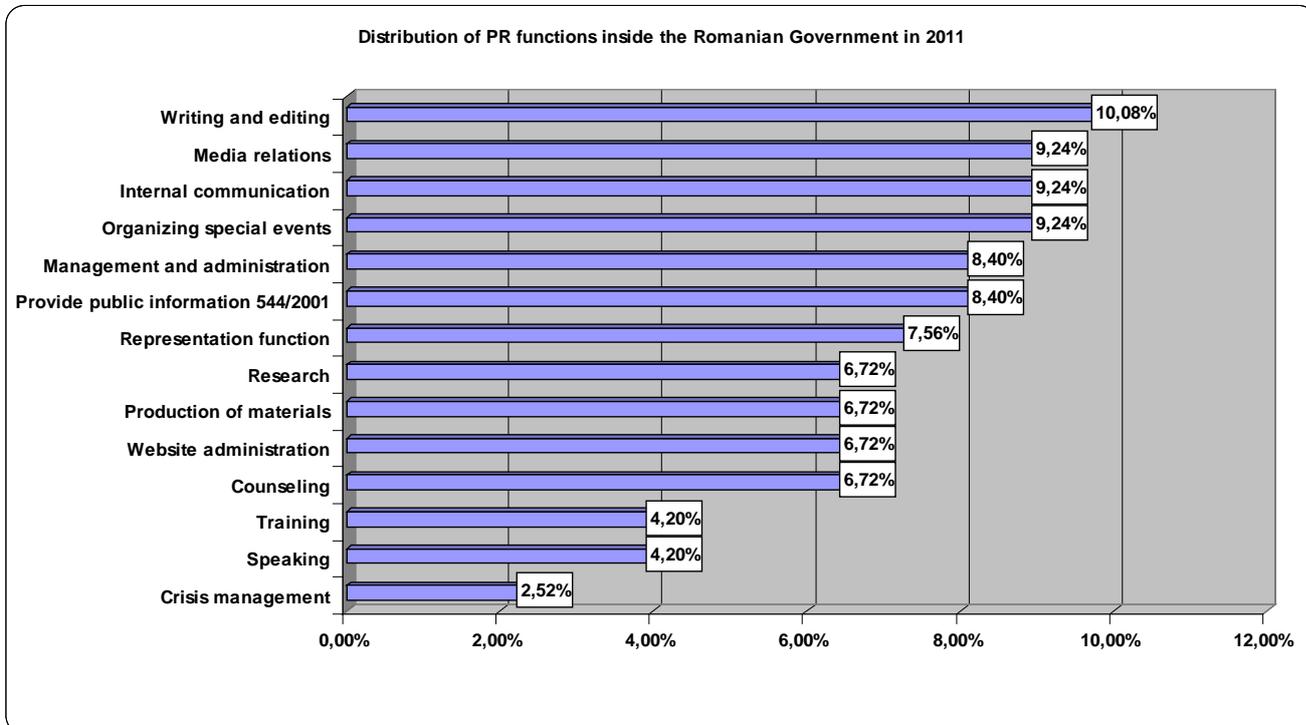


Fig 2: Distribution of PR functions inside the Romanian Government in 2011

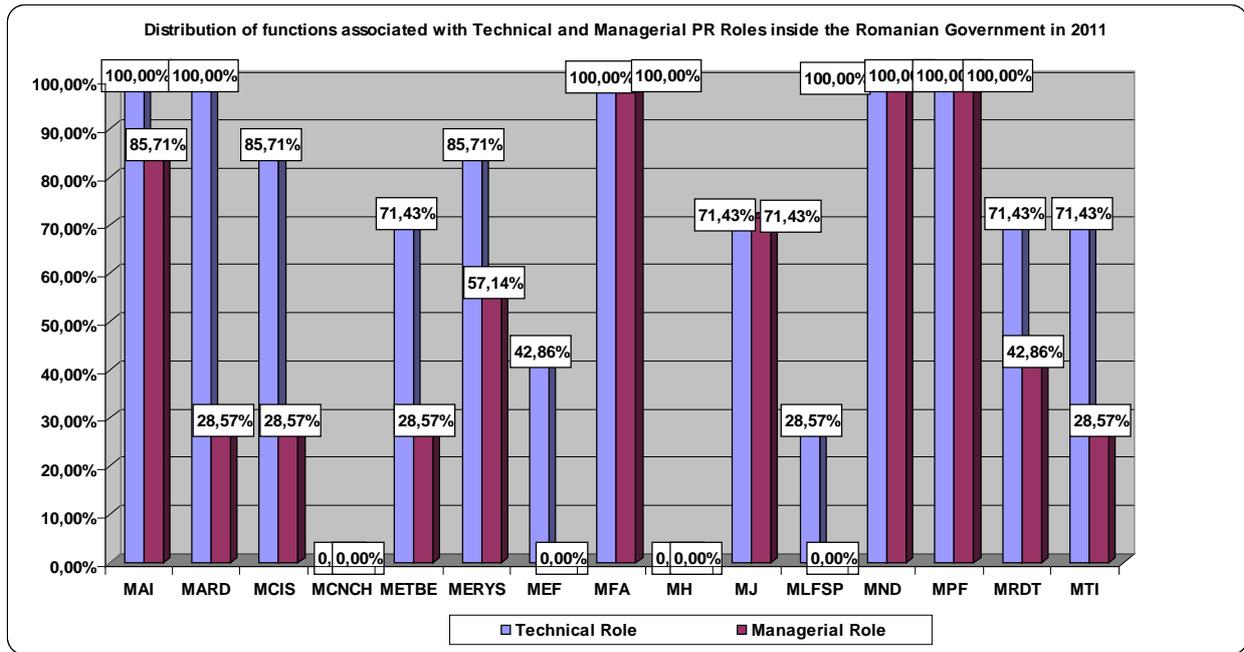


Fig 3: Distribution of functions associated with Technical and Managerial PR Roles inside the Romanian Government in 2011

Legend: MAI - Ministry of Administration and Interior; MARD - Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development; MCIS - Ministry of Communication and Information Society; MCNCH - Ministry of Culture and National Cultural Heritage; METBE - Ministry of Economy, Trade and the Business Environment; MERYS - Ministry of Education, Research, Youth and Sports; MEF - Ministry of Environment and Forests; MFA - Ministry of Foreign Affairs, MH - Ministry of Health; MJ - Ministry of Justice; MLFSP - Ministry of Labor, Family and Social Protection; MND - Ministry of National Defence; MPF - Ministry of Public Finance; MRDT - Ministry of Regional Development and Tourism; MTI - Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure

Mixed models: The growth and development of public relations in Jamaica

Carroll Edwards, PhD
The University of the West Indies, Mona
St. Andrew, Jamaica, West Indies
carroll.edwards@uwimona.edu.jm

Introduction

This paper provides an overview of the growth and development of public relations in Jamaica, West Indies. It examines the practice against the background of Grunig's four models of public relations and Dozier's research on roles in public relations practice in order to determine whether there are commonalities with the practice in other parts of the world. The practice is also reviewed using the framework suggested by Sriramesh and Vercic (2003, 2009) who contended that public relations can only be truly understood in the context of a country's political system, level of economic development, level of activism and its culture, as well as the state of its media and its legal system.

There is no official record of the actual number of persons working in public relations in Jamaica. Significant variations also exist in organizational titles for persons performing public relations functions. Accordingly, research for this paper was conducted among practitioners who were members of the two professional associations in Jamaica which have sought to register/identify persons engaged in the practice: the Public Relations Society of Jamaica (PRSJ) and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Caribbean Chapter.

The subjects were 80 public relations practitioners and communication consultants, sixty two (62) of whom were females and eighteen (18) males. They were employed in companies within the public sector, the banking and finance, service and manufacturing sectors in the Kingston Metropolitan Area, and primarily from the tourism/hospitality and bauxite sectors in the rural parishes. The primary research instrument was a descriptive questionnaire which sought to elicit information on what constitutes public relations practice in Jamaica, whether or not there was a dominant public relations model and the roles performed by practitioners.

In-depth interviews were also conducted with nine public relations practitioners who had worked in the field for over 30 years and were either pioneer members of the PRSJ, or representatives of the main areas of public relations activity in Jamaica: the public and private sectors, the bauxite industry and tourism.

Historical background

Public relations is said to have been practised in Jamaica since the 1930s, although the first fully Jamaican-owned company was not established until 1962, after the country gained its independence. The practice developed over the period 1939 to 1949 during the war between England and Germany. Neita (2004) maintains that England realized it needed support from its colonies to join its armed forces and to work in its munitions factories and embarked on an effort to build support within the colonies. The initiative was not called public relations; rather, it was projected as a means of providing “information” to the colonies. However, this information was really “weak propaganda” aimed at bolstering British influence (Taylor 1981).

After World War II, Jamaica began demanding greater autonomy and by the 1950s was being fully self-governed. In 1955, the Government “decided that in the same way that Jamaica and Jamaicans were persuaded to be loyal Britons, an agency could be created by the Jamaican Government to provide Jamaicans with information about Government’s policies, programmes and projects and explain why they were being implemented” (Neita, Interview with Carroll Edwards, April 2004). The 1950s therefore saw a deepening of the information function in Jamaica.

In 1957, the operations of the Government Public Relations Office (GPRO) were widened and the name was changed to Public Relations and Information Services to reflect its expanded focus. In January, 1963, it was announced that the GPRO was to be known as the Government Information Office (later changed to the Jamaica Information Service) as the office had “added a number of new information services and the term ‘public relations’ is now too limited to befit the scope of the functions ...” (Neita Interview, 2004). A television section was added when television was introduced to Jamaica, and the newly incorporated JIS was organised into divisions dealing with Press and Photography, Publications and Campaigns, Distribution and Mobile Units, Radio, Films and Television. The Government was now in a position to conduct full scale public education programmes on a range of topics as it sought to promote understanding of its policies and projects across the island.

There was early recognition that if Jamaica was to effectively govern itself, or achieve independence, the country needed to find new areas to stimulate and grow its economy. Attention turned to industries that could complement the island’s dependence on sugar and agriculture. One such industry was tourism. The Jamaica Tourist Board (JTB) was established in 1955 “to promote tourism with maximum vigour and effectiveness” (JTB 50: Sharing the Jamaican Experience, p. 5). Increased emphasis was placed on marketing and

promotion with intensive advertising and publicity campaigns mounted overseas as well as locally (p. 6). The aggressive marketing campaign continued into the early 1960s, with new offices opened in London in 1961. Additionally, the JTB opened its own public relations department in North America, appointing leading New York advertising firm Doyle, Dane and Bernbach to spearhead the effort along with the public relations firm Sontheimer and Company. The infusion of North American practices into the promotional mix took Jamaica's tourism marketing to another level.

Bauxite mining emerged as another area for industrial growth. If the British government was pioneer of public relations in government, then the credit for the start of corporate public relations must go to the bauxite companies, Kaiser and Alcan and, to a lesser extent, Reynolds Jamaica Mines. Their entry into Jamaica ushered in a period of massive community-based public relations programmes, aimed at winning the support of rural folks whose way of life had been disrupted by the bauxite mining.

Public relations activity in the private sector also emerged during the 1950s. Neita (2004) recalls that at that time, public relations was regarded as a 'female' activity. Practitioners were for the most part fair-skinned, attractive young women who smoked, then a sign of elegance, and were engaged mainly in the organization of cocktail parties.

By the 1960s, "Jamaicans were just beginning to be aware of the profession, and then practitioners were mainly associated with advertising agencies and some semi-Government organizations such as the Tourist Board, the Jamaica Industrial Development Corporation and the Kingston and St. Andrew Corporation" (Neita interview, 2004). One of the reasons for that awareness was that the sixties was a time of burgeoning business for Jamaica, and much of that business had links to North America. The Americans were accustomed to using public relations techniques in their operations and expected no less when they established companies in the island.

Based on this overview, the practice of public relations in Jamaica has a relatively well established history. Its pattern of development seems similar to that in other former British colonies; that is, rooted in propaganda, publicity, public information and community relations, before adopting a more professional approach, consequent on the entry of international firms to conduct business.

Level of education and training

The questionnaire results indicated that the majority of persons engaged in public relations activities in Jamaica although highly educated, have not benefitted from specific training in

the field. Most respondents (90%) stated that they had university level qualifications; however only 21% indicated that their degree was in public relations or communications. The educational background of practitioners was diverse, the other commonly mentioned degrees being business administration, language and literature, marketing and management studies, along with qualifications including accounts, engineering, hotel management, human resources, library and information services and law. This situation has serious implications for the development of public relations practice in Jamaica since the ability of the practitioner to provide appropriate guidance and counsel must lie in the competence to perform this critical role.

However, the situation is similar to findings in Germany where between 70-80% of practitioners indicated that they had graduated from a university or polytechnic institution; however only 20% had taken public relations courses or majored in public relations. Similarly, in Singapore, some 84 % of senior public relations practitioners were found to have had training in disciplines other than public relations. In contrast, a similar study conducted among practitioners in Australia (Watson and Simmons 2004) found that 91% had tertiary qualifications, with 72% having these qualifications in Public Relations itself. In Taiwan, Ming-Yi Wu, Taylor, Maureen, and Mon-Ju Chen (2001) reported that 72 % of practitioners surveyed had completed a bachelor's degree and 20 % had completed a master's degree. Of these practitioners, 85% had majored in communication at some point in their higher education.

Main focus of activity

The study indicates that Jamaican public relations practitioners are engaged mainly in media relations and publicity activities (37.3%) followed by image building (20.3%) communication management (18.6%) and relationship building (10.2%). The focus on media and publicity suggests efforts to boost public perception of the organization and lends credence to Hallahan's (1999) position that framing is a useful paradigm for public relations. That promoting mutual understanding was positioned at the bottom of the list of activities would seem to reinforce this view.

When the focus on image building is considered alongside the practitioners' emphasis on media and publicity, it suggests that public relations in Jamaica has not resolved the paradigm struggle to which Grunig (1993) alluded, that is, between "practitioners who use only superficial symbolic activities – the quest for positive images - , and those who build substantive behavioural relationships between organizations and publics." (p.121)

Roles and status of practitioners

The majority of practitioners (46.25%) described themselves as 'Managers'; 21.25% said they worked as 'Consultants' and 17.5% indicated that their dominant role was that of 'Communication Technician'. Of note is the fact that while many practitioners held the title of 'manager', a majority also described themselves as communication technicians. This seemed somewhat contradictory. By their own account, they have access to top management, management seeks their views and they encouraged management involvement in decision making. However, they indicated that they were not themselves engaged in communication policy decisions.

Jamaica is not unique in this regard. A similar situation emerged in other former British colonies, such as Australia, India, Nigeria and Singapore. However, this cannot be placed solely at the foot of their common colonial heritage since the former colonies are not the only countries with this focus on media relations and publicity. Countries such as Brazil, China and Thailand, also demonstrated those tendencies. A possible conclusion could be that these countries are all in the craft or pre-professional stage of public relations practice, marked by a focus on the one-way communication model of press agency, thereby limiting the extent to which practitioners are able to move beyond the technical to the strategic management level.

The role most frequently performed appeared to represent that of expert prescriber and communication facilitator. The second most frequently performed role appeared to represent the technical functions of public relations while the third role contained a mixture of items related to being problem-solving facilitator, expert prescriber and communication technician.

The emergence of the expert prescriber and communication facilitator role as the first component suggests that the majority of practitioners are functioning in an environment where management is only passively involved in determining public relations problems and solutions, preferring to see public relations as 'belonging' to the practitioner who must define the problem, develop appropriate programmes and take full responsibility for its implementation. But even with the elevation of the expert prescriber role, the practitioner is simultaneously being asked to play the role of communication facilitator, which requires the practitioner to act as liaison between the organization and its publics, keeping channels of communication open. Jamaican practitioners are therefore being asked to perform a balancing act in which they are simultaneously required to deal with public relations problems that

might arise without necessarily having the input of management at critical stages, while being expected to act as liaison between management and the target publics.

The isolation of the second component, the technical function, would seem to indicate that a significant percentage of practitioners are providing technical services only. The fact that this is the second largest group among the practitioners suggests that a significant number, no matter their reported status in the organization, are operating on the periphery of the dominant coalition. This is a matter of concern, especially in light of the low regard in which the purely technical aspects of public relations are held.

However, one would wish to be cautious in arriving at a definitive conclusion, especially when one takes into account the situation in Austria which displays striking similarity to the state of affairs in Jamaica. According to Nessman (2004), the majority of practitioners in Austria see themselves as managers but routinely perform the duties of communication technician. He argues that “this is probably due to the structure of the public relations branch in Austria, which has considerably smaller organizational units and not such a clear division of managerial and technical roles as in the US. In other words, Austrian public relations managers simply consider technical activities to be a part of their job.”(p.20) Can the same be said of practitioners in Jamaica? This is an area requiring further investigation.

The third role which emerged contained a mixture of items related to being problem-solving facilitator, expert prescriber and communication technician. This group, although in the minority, is noteworthy since it combines the role of working closely with management to solve problems with that of being required to formulate solutions and then having to create the public relations material necessary for the agreed programme to be implemented – in other words, a Jack/Jill of all trades.

The extent to which practitioners successfully perform this last role has implications for the way that the public relations practitioner is perceived in an organizational context. Researchers in the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom have found that “the major predictor of public relations excellence was the extent to which the organization’s top public relations executive was able to enact the manager role versus the technician role” (Cutlip, Center and Broom 2000 p. 46).

Against this background, it would seem that the characteristics for excellent public relations programmes (as identified in Grunig et al, 1992) are not uniformly present in Jamaica. Questionnaire responses suggested that practitioners are functioning mainly as technicians, not managers, and there is limited management involvement in Public Relations

itself. Analysis of the data suggests that practitioners are not fully utilizing their advantageous position in the organizational hierarchy to provide the kind of service which would assist management in judging the cost/benefit of the public relations effort. This could be due in part to the fact that most practitioners do not have specific training in public relations and therefore lack the basic body of knowledge which would facilitate performance as professionals. This lack of knowledge also makes practitioners unable to demonstrate the value of public relations to achieving organizational effectiveness.

The admitted focus on media and publicity also has negative consequences. If practitioners highlight this, rather than emphasizing other meaningful activities which would add more intrinsic *value* to the organization (like helping clients avoid mistakes, shaping positions and perceptions (Lesley (1991) it means that the practitioner's most frequent interaction with the management team occurs mainly in the context of seeking publicity or information dissemination. There would therefore be little opportunity to provide advice or demonstrate strategic thinking or for management to benefit from the communication insights that the true professional would bring to the table.

Public relations models

Questionnaire responses suggested that no single public relations model as described by Grunig (1984) appeared to be predominant in Jamaica. Characteristics of the two-way Asymmetrical model (26.3%) and the two-way Symmetrical model (15%) were more frequently observed than characteristics of the Press Agency/Publicity model (7.5%) or the Public Information model (5%). However, the vast majority of practitioners (46.3%) performed a range of duties which incorporated elements of all four models and were therefore classified as pursuing a 'Mixed' model.

Practitioners were performing the role of expert prescriber and communication facilitator, making communication policy decisions, informing management re public reaction to organizational problems, planning actions to solve public relations problems and conducting communication audits. These are activities largely associated with the two-way symmetrical model.

They also reported that they were carrying out technical functions, incorporating the duties of media relations specialist and communications liaison, writing press releases and public relations material and making media contacts - activities associated with the press agency/publicity and public information models. Finally, practitioners were also performing the role of problem-solving facilitator, expert prescriber and communication technician,

encouraging management participation in public relations decisions, taking responsibility for the success or failure of public relations programmes and producing brochures. These activities are strongly associated with the two-way asymmetrical model.

This 'Mixed' model seemed to be the most prevalent among freelancers/agencies and in-house practitioners. When examined more closely by sector, practitioners in the public sector were most likely to be utilizing the 'mixed' model compared to their counterparts in the private sector and in non-profit organizations/trade unions. This contradicts Grunig's assertion that practitioners in the public sector would be more likely to be utilizing the public information model. This finding is unexpected and requires deeper investigation given the historical development of government Public Relations with its emphasis on public education and information.

The results further showed that the two-way asymmetrical model was most popular among private sector practitioners and least used by practitioners in the public sector. This is not surprising and supports Grunig's belief that the two-way asymmetrical model would be most common in the private sector, due to the competitive rather than collaborative environment that obtains. The research also indicated some support for his position that practitioners in non-profit organizations were most likely to be using the two-way symmetrical model of communication although they showed no marked preference for any single model, with equal numbers indicating that they utilized the two-way asymmetrical, two-way symmetrical and mixed models of communication in their practice. The research further supports Grunig's belief that the two-way asymmetrical model would be most common in the private sector although his assessment of usage in the other sectors proved to be inaccurate.

These research findings regarding the absence of a dominant model in Jamaican public relations practice echo conclusions regarding public relations in Asia. A study of the practice in Taiwan, showed that public relations practitioners "use what Murphy identified as a 'mixed motive' approach to communicate with their publics" (Wu, Taylor and Chen 2001, p.330). In Thailand, research showed 'a progressive move towards two-way asymmetrical communication in public relations practice'. The findings confirm Botan's (1993) conclusion that in the Third World, the emphasis of public relations is on publicity and reflects the two-way asymmetrical model of communication. In this regard therefore, it would seem that public relations practice in Jamaica is broadly consistent with what occurs in other Third World countries.

Use of research

The questionnaire investigated practitioners' use of research in order to test whether Grunig's thesis that the conduct of research is dictated by the public relations model pursued, is applicable to the Jamaican situation. The survey results indicated a weak commitment to research among public relations practitioners. In response to the question "Do you use research in the performance of your duties?" the majority (58.2%) admitted that they only conducted research 'sometimes'. For most practitioners, but more so for those in the public sector, counselling management is not research driven. In other words, those practitioners who are counselling management are doing so based more on gut-feeling and instinct (the 'flying by the seat of the pants' approach as one researcher described it) rather than using the 'scientific' or 'best-available-evidence' approach based on empirical data.

This of course has very serious implications for the way public relations are practiced and, equally important, for the way it is perceived. In an increasingly results-oriented business environment, companies are demanding facts and figures to prove the extent to which public relations activity is providing a return on investment. In the absence of empirical data, there is no meaningful basis to accept the practitioner's contention that public relations is a critical management tool.

Among those who conducted research, the results indicated that practitioners were tending more towards the two-way asymmetrical model in their use of research, although there is some use of research more commonly associated with the two-way symmetrical model. However, when one takes into account that the vast majority of practitioners admitted that they only used research 'sometimes' and the fact that they were not asked to specify what they meant by 'research', this would seem to justify the conclusion that the use of research associated with any of the models is not widespread.

Predominance of women

The study confirmed the worldwide trend of a predominance of women in the profession. (Culbertson and Chen 2003); Grunig and Grunig 1984) There is nothing to suggest that there has been a shift from male dominance to female majority among practitioners in Jamaica. Neita (2004) indicated that public relations was always considered a 'female' activity. Indeed, the first company which opened in 1950 was owned by a (American) woman.

No single explanation has been advanced for the predominance of females in the profession worldwide although some researchers have offered low salaries as a likely reason.

In Jamaica, salary would not seem to be a factor, especially since public relations practitioners have traditionally received higher salaries than their counterparts in other areas of media. One is tempted to conclude that the early nature of the job (acting as hostesses at cocktail parties, etc.) would have made public relations appear ‘unmanly’ in a highly masculine society and that later, even as a more professional approach was adopted, the very *nature* of public relations, with its emphasis on consensus and relationship building would have attracted more females than males.

L. Grunig et al (2001) suggested certain consequences to the feminization of the profession. They argued that any field which shifts to a female majority faces the realities of dwindling salary, status and influence within organization. They also suggested that with the increase in the number of women comes the real possibility that Public Relations will be “sublimated under another, related organizational function such as marketing” (p.171).

The survey of Jamaican practitioners did not support this notion. Gender did not emerge as a factor in whether the practitioner functioned as technician, manager or consultant. Nor did it impact whether or not practitioners functioned as part of the dominant coalition in the organization. Furthermore, being male or female did not seem to influence the extent to which practitioners counselled or had access to management, were asked for advice or had senior management seek out their opinion.

The situation in Jamaica is in line with more recent research by Dozier and Broom which contradicts the notion that gender roles hamper development. The research supports the conclusion that “professional experience had become a more powerful predictor than gender of managerial role” (L. Grunig, 2001, p.224). Tench and Yeomans (2006) also refer to a study conducted by Moss et al (2004) which pointed out that in their study of practitioners in the United Kingdom, “over half the respondents were women and their patterns of work did not differ significantly from their male counterparts, either in terms of the amount of involvement they had with senior management or the amount of technical tasks executed as a proportion of the overall role. They argue that it is possible that female practitioners in the UK have, at least in part, surmounted the glass ceiling in terms of the responsibilities they take on and are required to fulfill” (p.174)

The same seems to be true of female practitioners in Jamaica. Veteran Jamaican public relations practitioners Berl Francis, Carmen Tipling and Errol Miller in separate interviews maintained that in their experience, level of professionalism and expertise were more important than gender in determining the level at which practitioners functioned. This suggests that there is a significant difference relating to gender considerations between the

United States and Jamaica and may reflect the progress being made towards gender equality in the latter country. With the movement of more women into senior managerial positions, gender should become even less of an issue in the future.

Influence of Jamaica's social, cultural and political context

The study also explored the influence of the country's infrastructure (political system, level of economic development, and level of activism) media environment and societal culture (power distance, collectivism, masculinity-femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation) - factors which Sriramesh and Vercic (2003, 2009) argued will impact public relations practice.

Jamaica can safely be described as a relatively stable parliamentary democracy whose political and legal traditions are patterned on those of the United Kingdom. In this environment, the rights of public relations practitioners to represent various views are guaranteed. The level of economic development in the country would suggest a fair number of organizations and providers of goods and services competing for attention and therefore requiring the services of practitioners. At the same time, an anaemic economy, growing levels of unemployment and poverty imply an environment in which there would likely be reduced demand.

The media environment

Jamaica has a diverse media landscape which generally encourages a range of views and comments. Since the beginning of the 1990s, the trend has been towards market liberalisation with the Jamaican Government granting licenses for a number of radio and television stations as well as cable providers. Accompanying the dramatic change in the media landscape is an increasing trend towards media consolidation and convergence.

Television is an important source of information and entertainment. Currently, there are three television stations - the privately owned CVM Television, Love TV, a religious station, and Television Jamaica, a part of the RJR Communication Group which also operates the entertainment cable channel, RETV, and the news and information cable channel, Jamaica News Network (JNN). Other local cable providers facilitate local and foreign television programming.

There are three daily newspapers, owned by very powerful private sector interests: The Daily Gleaner Company Limited was founded in 1834 by Jewish brothers Joshua and Jacob deCordova, and is the longest surviving newspaper in the island. It has since evolved

into the Gleaner Company Limited, publishing an evening tabloid, as well as smaller niche publications. Weekly editions of the *Gleaner* are also published overseas in the United States of America, Britain and Canada.

The *Daily Observer*, and its sister publication, the *Sunday Observer*, are part of the ATL Group of Companies owned by leading businessman, Gordon “Butch” Stewart, who also owns the Sandals chain of luxury hotels. The Observer also produces an afternoon tabloid *Chat*. The newspaper’s editorial direction is heavily influenced by Stewart’s own business interests.

A third weekly newspaper, the *Sunday Herald*, tends towards investigative journalism, and is not generally perceived to be a part of the establishment media. There are a number of smaller, community publications, which are all privately owned. Independent content is provided by journalist Cliff Hughes, through his Nationwide Network, which operates under a lease arrangement with the Government for use of a channel previously earmarked for public broadcasting. The Government itself operates four media houses: the Creative Productions and Training Centre (CPTC) which has its own cable channel, CTV; the Public Broadcasting Corporation of Jamaica (PBCJ), the Jamaica Information Service (JIS) and the radio station Kool FM. Market liberalization has also led to a number of overseas media operating in Jamaica including the British Broadcasting Corporation and the French radio station Radio France International operated by Alliance Francaise.

While the number of media outlets has increased dramatically, there still is an issue of media access. Freedom of speech ensures that the average person may air his or her views virtually unrestricted on the large number of talk shows which are heard throughout the day on most radio stations. However, there is only limited access to editorial space, particularly for members of the lower socio-economic groups in the society.

The influence of culture

Power distance

The dimensions of culture outlined by Sriramesh and Vercic are clearly visible in Jamaican society although in largely contradictory modes. Carl Stone (1980) described Jamaica as a stratified society with four main status groupings: the capitalist class, comprising owners and managers of large and medium scale privately owned enterprises and farms; the upper and middle classes, comprising public sector top bureaucrats and technocrats, independent service professions, politicians; the lower middle class, including independent property owners, shopkeepers, small businessmen, white collar workers and high-way skilled workers; and the

lower class, comprising small farmers, higglers, low wage manual workers and the long-term or indefinitely unemployed.

He notes that in the period prior to independence, “Jamaican social structure ...centred on the dominance of European values and the white bias in the power structure” (p.21). However, growing black racial consciousness has meant that while “colour and racial differences remain as a residue of the “plantation” slave history of the society..... black and dark skinned individuals now make up a majority of the professional sector of the upper middle class, a growing proportion of the private sector top management and a majority among white-collar workers and the state sector’s administrative elite” (p.22) with the result that class structures are constantly evolving, “conflict-prone and competitive”(p.25).

The hierarchical tendencies which have developed as a consequence of this history have resulted in a society with high power distance reinforced by the highly inequitable distribution of power and wealth among the various classes. Wealth has traditionally been concentrated in the hands of a few; however, in recent years, the emergence of ‘new’ money, arising from the burgeoning economic clout of entertainers, sportsmen and “dons” (who are alleged to have enriched themselves through the illegal gun and drug trade), has led to an underlying tension in the society as the traditional and new elite struggle for control. As a consequence, Jamaican society appears to be in a constant state of flux as traditional structures, values and attitudes are continually challenged while nothing has emerged to replace them.

Masculinity-femininity

Jamaica is regarded as having an essentially masculine culture, which values assertiveness and displays of power over negotiation and compromise. (Hofstede 2003) Yet it is also a society in which women have made tremendous strides and are outperforming men, particularly in the educational arena. In 2006, the country elected its first female prime minister and, in 2011, three of the top legal positions – Attorney General and Minister of Justice, Chief Justice and Director of Public Prosecutions – were held by women. However, as many scholars have pointed out, the real power still lies in masculine hands (Bailey and Ricketts, 2004; Henry-Lee, 2005; CEDAW Report, 2010).). The implications for public relations practice which is conducted predominantly by females are obvious.

Collectivism-individualism

Jamaica is characterized as a highly individualistic society, evidenced by the large number of own-account entrepreneurs and the country's outstanding performance in music and athletics where individual excellence is commonplace. At another level, the highly partisan political environment, and the existence of powerful trade unions and lobby groups make it very difficult to achieve consensus even on matters relating to national development, so collaboration and consensus building, which would define a collectivist culture, are difficult to achieve (Bertelsmann Stiftung, BTI 2010)

Uncertainty avoidance

Jamaican society also displays low uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 2003). Successive administrations have passed laws and introduced regulations to provide structure in society but in reality, people conduct business in a relatively unregulated environment in which policies change, the dollar fluctuates and the country continually has to adjust to new challenges.

Legal system

Jamaica's judicial system follows British practice with some local variations and the judiciary is generally recognized as being independent. The necessary legal and institutional framework exists to regulate and enforce appropriate behaviour among its citizens and organizations and to ensure freedom of the press. In October 2008, the organization Reporters San Frontieres (Reporters without Borders) an organization which fights for press freedom and denounces human rights violations across the world, in its World Press Freedom Index 2008, ranked Jamaica at No.21 in relation to the degree of press freedom that journalists and news organizations enjoy in the country and the efforts made by authorities to respect and ensure respect for press freedom. The United States was ranked at No.36 in the same report.

A Broadcasting Commission monitors and regulates the operations of the electronic media. It also oversees the granting and renewal of licences for radio, television and subscriber television (STV) services and has the right to prohibit the transmission of certain matters and to recommend the suspension of licences if there is a serious breach of its regulations. Laws exist to deal with intellectual property rights, incorporating copyright and trademark issues, libel and slander, the invasion of privacy and Internet issues. There is an Access to Information Act and the Copyright Acts of 1993 and 1999 provide internationally accepted levels of protection in terms of categories of works protected, the nature of rights, the scope of protection, the duration of rights, sanctions and penalties (D. Daley 2005).

Level of activism

Jamaica has a long history of activism dating back to the days of slavery. The country's national heroes include persons such as Paul Bogle, revered for his fight against poverty and injustice in the society which resulted in the 1865 Morant Bay Rebellion, and George William Gordon, son of a slave mother and a planter father, also an active participant in the Morant Bay Rebellion against injustice in the country.

The birth of trade unions in Jamaica was itself the result of worker revolt against terrible working conditions. In more recent history, the country has seen the rise of various community organizations, service clubs, professional associations and human rights organizations all making demands on behalf of their various constituencies. The public relations response to activism has tended to be reactive rather than proactive. However, the pervasiveness of new electronic media is forcing many companies to respond more quickly and accurately to issues raised.

Summary

If one accepts Sriramesh and Vercic's position that public relations is impacted by, and can only be truly understood in the context of a country's political system, level of economic development, level of activism, as well as the state of its media, legal system and the country's culture, then this overview of public relations development in Jamaica suggests a society with largely contradictory characteristics. The country has an independent political system, an acceptable legal regulatory framework and a number of active pressure groups. There is economic development and a competitive media environment. All these are variables which, according to Sriramesh and Vercic, should impact positively on public relations development and practice.

At the same time, however, public relations practice seems not to have evolved beyond the focus on publicity and public information models. Practitioners seem to be functioning primarily in the roles of communication facilitators and technicians, limiting their ability to influence policy decisions and effect meaningful change.

It would appear that Jamaica's culture significantly influences the way in which public relations is practised. The high levels of power distance, the essentially masculine and individualistic nature of the society, coupled with the absence of a strong professional body, would seem to limit the extent to which public relations has operated or can operate as an effective management tool. High levels of power distance also make it difficult for public relations to become part of the dominant coalition since managers are less likely to see public

relations practitioners as equals. These characteristics effectively neutralize the benefits which the other variables would otherwise produce and create an environment which is not generally conducive to excellence and in which the practice of public relations becomes a challenging undertaking.

The predominantly masculine culture and patriarchal nature of the society might also be impacting the practice, in a context where practitioners are predominantly female. As one (male) practitioner was told by a senior (male) manager “The PR person should really be a bright personable young lady,” who was not expected to participate in ‘serious’ management decisions.

The level of individualism in Jamaican society may be another factor impacting public relations practice. Jamaica’s highly individualistic, opinionated and risk-taking society places great emphasis on individual rather than collective achievement. This is a challenging environment in which to practise symmetrical public relations which depends on its ability to achieve consensus and relationship building. It might also help to explain the emphasis on media relations and publicity which are ideal for promoting individual achievement.

The practitioners’ focus on media and publicity has also been encouraged by the fact that Jamaica is an open very competitive society with strong democratic traditions. As Larissa Grunig (1992) has pointed out, a country which is democratic is likely to value public opinion and require a range of media outlets in which to express this. At another level, the plethora of media outlets has resulted in an extremely competitive environment in which journalists are in constant search of material appropriate for publication. This has given rise to tremendous opportunities for the public relations practitioner who is well placed as a potential source of ‘news’. The resulting segmentation has made it easier for the practitioner to use different channels to target specific audiences by choosing the most appropriate media channel to reach key audiences. However, practitioners have observed that the media’s fascination with negativity and sensationalism makes it difficult to place certain stories.

There does not seem to be significant pressure from the public that providers of publicity/public relations services should be specifically trained. Based on the practitioners’ comments, anyone is able to present him or herself as a public relations specialist without challenge. The situation is compounded by the perceived inactivity of the PRSJ which has not made this a strong political issue.

These findings demonstrate that the situation in Jamaica is similar to that in countries like Australia and New Zealand (Motion, Leitch and Cliffe, cited in Sriramesh and Vercic 2003) where there is also no requirement that practitioners belong to a professional

association and anyone, regardless of education, experience or ethics, is able to use the title of public relations practitioner. Nonetheless, one wonders at the extent to which this perceived lack of concern about qualifications and training might be due to the absence of a culture of communication with target publics within the companies themselves. Both Munroe (1995) and Lindo (1995) have pointed to a tendency towards one-way transmission of information, the bureaucratic nature of many organizations with authority, control and the flow of information concentrated at the top of management.

Given this scenario, an emphasis on publicity would be considered far more necessary to achieving organizational goals than any movement towards dialogue and consultation which the public relations practitioner could facilitate.

Conclusion

The study found that public relations practice in Jamaica shares characteristics with the practice in both developed and developing countries even as there seems to be movement towards two-way asymmetrical communication. Jamaica's focus on media relations and publicity is also to be found in countries as far apart as India, Korea, Costa Rica and Brazil. The story of its development, rooted in Jamaica's colonial past, is also the story of how public relations developed in other former colonies such as India, Australia and New Zealand. The complaint that public relations is not highly regarded is echoed by practitioners in Australia and in Singapore.

Another finding is that the models put forward by Grunig et al do not accurately reflect public relations practice in Jamaica. Instead the dominant model incorporates characteristics across Grunig's four models of public relations practice. For that reason, it has been labeled a 'mixed' public relations model. In this, Jamaica is no different from countries like Singapore (Chay-Nemeth, 2003) or Germany (Bentele and Wehmeier, 2003).

The absence of a research culture in Jamaica needs to be resolved. An important finding of the Excellence project was that public relations activities could not contribute to organizational objectives unless they were grounded in research. Public relations activities which are grounded in media relations and publicity by their very nature *cannot* provide organizations with the feedback required to enable them to engage in strategic decision-making since they use technologies (the mass media) which are merely transmitting information and not facilitating real communication between organization and target publics. This is therefore a major weakness in public relations practice in Jamaica. However, the growing use of new media and communication technologies which by their very nature

incorporate feedback, to the extent that they are embraced and utilized by organizations in their interaction with target publics, should lead to changes in this area.

Public relations at a crossroads

Public relations in Jamaica is now at a cross roads. Given its strategic location within many companies, the stage is set for the practice to take a tremendous leap forward. However, much of this is predicated on the practitioners themselves recognizing the limitations which their own lack of training and limited use of research have imposed on the profession, and taking steps to correct this.

The increased availability of training opportunities for public relations practitioners and the initiative to provide accreditation would seem to be a response to the pressures of globalization and are steps in the right direction. However much more emphasis needs to be placed on training at the lower levels if a new phase of public relations activity is to begin and the profession is to be considered a core organizational function rather than as a 'superfluous appendage'.

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ABSTRACT

The evolution and significance of public relations specialisation in the contemporary UK (1985-2010)

Nicky Garsten and Jane Howard
Greenwich University, UK; Chartered Practitioner, UK
Email: n.garsten@greenwich.ac.uk; jane.howard1@hotmail.co.uk

The importance of specialisation within the UK public relations industry is acknowledged by scholars and commentators (for example, Black 1995; Dibb, Simkin and Vancini 1996; Morley 2002; Coleman-Smith 2010). Notably, many PR consultancies offer distinct areas of expertise (Gregory 2010 [2000]). Similarly, professional PR organisations in the United Kingdom (notably the Chartered Institute of Public Relations and the Public Relations Consultants Association) have a variety of special-interest groups. Meanwhile, in the academic arena, several core public relations textbooks published in the UK have chapters on different areas of specialisation (like Gregory [1996] 2007; and Tench and Yeomans ([2006] 2009)).

Areas of PR specialisation are categorised by Morley 2002 into three different types. Firstly, by 'industry, business and organization', such as PR for technology or consumer products; secondly, by 'PR practice areas' like public affairs or employee communications; thirdly, by 'technical skills' such as publications and video production

Previous research has noted the importance of PR specialisation in the UK (for instance, Black 1995; Dibb, Simkin and Vancini 1996; Morley 2002). The history of some specific specialisations, like lobbying and financial PR, in the UK have been examined (Davies 2002; L'Etang 2004; Milner 2005, cited by Tench and Yeomans 2006; and McGrath 2010). Nevertheless, there has been little research that has sought to measure the trend of specialisation overall in the UK PR industry over the last two decades. Reasons for PR specialisation have usefully been identified (Black 1995; Dibb, Simkin and Vancini 1996; Morley 2002; and Lages and Simkin 2003), yet there has been little research measuring the value of specialisation.

This exploratory study builds on current scholarship by asking three questions. Firstly, has specialisation measurably increased over the last 25 years? Secondly, if so, has the increase in specialisation is neatly incremental or not? Thirdly, can specialisation be valuable to PR consultancies?

Three principal avenues of research are used to explore the measurement of the possible growth and value of public relations specialisation. Firstly, the development of specialist pages in the UK's main PR magazine over the last quarter of a century, *PR Week*, is measured. Secondly, the number of *PR Week* awards over 25 years is identified. These awards are then categorised as either 'generalist' or 'specialist'. Thirdly, business data from PR consultancies, from 1991-2010, are analysed to identify how consultancies rate the importance of specialisation in terms of promoting successful client relationships and what significance specialisation has in terms of consultancy profitability.

Sources drawn upon are: the April and October issues of *PR Week* over twenty-five years (1985-2010), *PR Week Award* supplements (1987-2010), and PRCA benchmarking data. In addition, annual consultancy financial returns (1991-2010) from the PR sector's auditors, Kingston Smith, are also examined.

This exploratory, historical study into the evolution of specialisation in the UK PR industry finds that, in relation to the three avenues of research explored, overall PR specialisation has had measurable importance and value. In relation to *PR Week*, the researchers find that over the last 25 years there has been a trend towards greater

specialisation with the introduction and growth of specialist pages. Since the PR awards were set up in 1987 there has been an increase in the number of specialist awards. Nevertheless, they discover that these increases have not always been neatly incremental over these times. Importantly, they also find the specialist consultancies can be extremely profitable. The researchers, when looking into financial returns of leading consultancies from 1991-2010, identify that in each of these years, the most profitable consultancy in the UK was a specialist. Analysis of PRCA benchmarking data from 2003, 2007 and 2010, shows that that consultancies rate 'sector knowledge' as a key ingredient when considering successful client/consultancy relationships.

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Government and the dance with communications: Coming full circle in the 21st Century

Anne Gregory, Leeds Business School,
Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds, UK
Email: a.gregory@leedsmet.co.uk

Preface and methodology

This paper is written from a particular perspective. The author has been involved with the UK Government's communications community for the last decade. She has had two periods of secondment to it: the first during the mid 1990s to the Cabinet Office, and the second during 2010 to 2011 in the Department of Health. She has also been involved in developing and delivering short and post-graduate courses for government departments, and advising on various Departmental Management Boards and Working Parties, as well as undertaking research and consultancy projects for the Cabinet Office and other government departments.

As such this paper partly takes an ethnographic approach in that it is written both as a non-participant and participant observer of the development of UK Government communications. The sources for this paper include these observations supplemented by interviews with the incumbents of the most senior Government communications post in the first decade of the 21st Century, namely; Mike Granatt, Head of Profession and Director General of the Government Information Service (GIS), renamed the Government Communication and Information Service (GICS) in 1998; Howell James, Permanent Secretary, Government Communications, and Matt Tee, Permanent Secretary, Government Communications. Although each interviewee spoke to the author "on the record" no material is attributed in this paper, the author wishing to synthesise their views pointing to differences as appropriate. The research is complemented by secondary research using original Government papers.

This paper is the first in the public relations literature to chronicle the events of Government communication in the early 2000s.

Introduction

On 19th of January 2004, the UK Government published "An independent review of Government communications" (Phillis, 2004), known as The Phillis Review, after its Chair, Robert Phillis, later Sir Robert Phillis. The Government declared it would implement the Review's recommendations in full.

The immediate history preceding this announcement was that in the late 1990's and early 2000's there had been significant blurring of the lines between politically neutral civil servants employed as Information Officers for the Government, and Special Advisers, who were the personal appointees of Government Ministers, some of whom were also charged with communications responsibilities. In addition, a number of media scandals, which will be enumerated later in this paper, and changes in personnel had led to accusations of the politicisation of the civil servant Information Officer group. The powers given to Alistair Campbell (Prime Minister Tony Blair's Director of Communications and a Special Adviser) to direct civil servant Information Officers, reinforced this view.

One of the recommendations of the Phillis Review was the appointment of a civil servant of the most senior rank, a Permanent Secretary, to lead the information (or communications as it is now known in Government) profession. This was implemented by the Government and there have been two holders of this post: Howell James from March 2004 to May 2008 and Matt Tee from November 2008 to January 2011, when the post was abolished. At the time of writing, June 2011, the plans for the replacement of the Permanent Secretary post are unknown, but speculation is that it is likely to be abolished.

In addition, and in line with Phillis's recommendations, the professional group belonging to GICS of some 1300 specialists was replaced by the GCN, made up of these specialists and non-specialist staff in communication roles and numbering over 3000 people.

This paper seeks to describe and comment on the events in UK Government Communications in the first decade of the 21st Century, taking as its focal point the Phillis Review and its recommendations, particularly around the appointment of a Permanent Secretary. This appointment might be regarded as the zenith of the profession in Government, but the history leading to and the issues around the Review are part of an unfolding narrative in Government Communications.

Context

To understand the context of events, it is important to briefly describe the structure of Government in the UK and the history of Government information services.

Structure of Government

In simple terms, the UK Government today is structured into Departments of State, which have traditionally had a large amount of autonomy. Heading these departments are Secretaries of State. The more well-known departments include The Treasury (based at No. 11 Downing

Street and headed by the Chancellor of the Exchequer), the Home Office, Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Departments of Defence, Health, Work and Pensions, and Education. The number of departments fluctuates since each government has the powers to reorganise and introduce new ones if it deems fit. Each Department has a formal communications function made up of civil servants. There will also be Special Advisers who may or may not have communications in their remit. The difference between the civil servant and Special Advisor roles are that civil servants are politically neutral, have permanent posts and serve whichever government is in power. The Civil Service is their career. They are bound by the Civil Service Code to be impartial. Special Advisers are temporary civil servants appointed by Ministers to advise on policy. The Constitutional Reform and Governance Act 2010 (2010) makes this clear by stating that the Civil Service Code requires civil servants to "to carry out their duties for the assistance of the Administration as is duly constituted for the time being, whatever its political complexion". The Code requires civil servants to carry out these duties with integrity and honesty and, with objectivity and impartiality. However the Code does not require Special Advisers to carry out their duties with objectivity or impartiality.

The Cabinet is the formal, supreme decision-making body in Government. Chaired by the Prime Minister, it is made up of the most senior government Ministers, mainly Secretaries of State and meets weekly to decide on strategy and policy across Government.

The Cabinet Office supports the Cabinet and coordinates strategy and policy across Government. The Cabinet Office has a communications function and it also currently home to GCN which is responsible, among other things, for developing the capabilities of communicators and advising on propriety issues. The Permanent Secretary, Government Communications, based in the Cabinet Office, headed GCN until March 2011. There are also Special Advisers in the Cabinet Office, advising those Ministers who are based there.

Number 10 is the colloquial name for the Prime Minister's Office and refers to Number 10 Downing Street, his official residence. Number 10 is there to serve the needs of the Prime Minister and also houses the Prime Minister's Official Spokesman, a civil servant post and until 2010 a strategic communication unit peopled by civil servants, plus his own Director of Communications who is a Special Advisor.

From this explanation it can be seen that the web of those involved in communication is complex. There can be communication about specific policies from individual Departments, there can be communication from the Cabinet Office about cost-cutting policies and also from the Prime Minister's Office where an intervention from him is deemed

appropriate, or a mixture of all these. Furthermore, Number 10 communicates everyday through the Lobby Briefing process. In addition, there can be comments to explain Government policies from civil servants and communication defending or promulgating political decisions from Special Advisers. It is partly the to-ing and fro-ing between these constituents and the indeterminate boundaries between them that prompted the Phillis Report and the preceding and subsequent reorganisation of Government communications.

A relatively brief history of Government information services.

The origins of organised Government Communications in the UK are normally traced back to 1854 when the Post Office published its first Annual Report (Ogilvy-Webb, 1965; L'Etang, 2004). In 1876 the Post Office embarked on the first Government mass advertising campaign distributing 1 million handbills advocating the benefits of savings. Probably the first specialised information unit in Government was located in the Board of Education in 1895: the Office of Special Inquiries and Reports. However it is broadly true to say that before World War One:

... some information services existed, but they were carried out patchily and piecemeal in various odd corners of Government Departments. (Ogilvy-Webb, 1965, p.49).

In 1917 a Department of Information was set up to coordinate propaganda for the war effort for Government and by the end of the War “information and propaganda had become accepted features of central administration” (Ogilvy-Webb, 1965, p.50). Despite this the Department was dismantled after the war and a number of its functions dispersed to other Government Departments and agencies.

A few departments started their own press functions shortly after the war, for example the Air Ministry had a press officer from 1919 when it was instigated and Health created a Housing Information Office in 1919. However, progress was slow in the 1920s except for the seminal activity of the Empire Marketing Board set up in 1926 to 1933 and led by the innovative Sir Stephen Tallents to promote the production and marketing of British and Empire products. While leading the Board, Tallents, (1933) was prescient in his view that:

... central Government and local Government must be weaned from the idea that publicity is a luxury, if not a folly... Publicity should be recognised as a professional job demanding special training and special capabilities (p.265).

While at the Board, Tallents created a film unit which he took with him to the Post Office in 1933 and which eventually became the Central Office of Information film unit, continuing until 1952. These documentary films became a central part of government information and immensely popular at the time, (Edwards, 2008; L'Etang, 2004). It was not until 1932 that a Chief Press Liaison Officer was attached to the Prime Minister's staff – a post shared with the Treasury for 10 years.

During the 1930s and 40s the number of press officers grew and Government Departments gradually set up information divisions. During the Second World War (1939-1945), the Ministry of Information, led by a Minister, was recreated to coordinate central publicity and propaganda efforts and to control a series of local information committees. Departments too ran their own campaigns, for example the Ministry of Food developed publicity on the best use of food, with the result that at the end of the War, despite the privations of rationing and lack of certain foodstuffs, the nation was better nourished than before (Ogilvy-Webb, 1965).

After the war in 1946, the Ministry of Information was abolished, albeit the Prime Minister Clement Attlee declared that the Government was satisfied that:

... these services... have an important and permanent part in the machinery of government under modern conditions. It is essential to good administration under a democratic system that the public shall be adequately informed about the many matters in which Government action directly impinges on their daily lives (Deb, 1945-6, p.417).

The production divisions (advertising, publicity etc) became the nucleus of a Common Service Department, set up in 1946, the Central Office of Information (COI), which remains a production and procurement organisation for public sector materials until this day. Until the mid 1980s the COI was voted a budget by Parliament, and Government Departments who wished to run publicity campaigns had to bid for funds held by the COI. The disappearance of the Ministry of Information meant that there was neither a Minister for Information to coordinate the information policies and activities of Departments, nor a knowledgeable spokesperson in Parliament. Hence, in 1947 in the face of popular demand from Members of Parliament, the press and others, The Economic Information Unit was created to work alongside Central Economic Planning, running in parallel with the COI. Interestingly the press wished it to be led by a civil servant rather than by someone recruited from their ranks, a common practice in those days (Ogilvy-Webb, 1965).

In the late 40s there were two important inquiries into the Government Information Services. In 1947 the Crombie Committee's (1947)ⁱ recommendations resulted in the creation of a class of Information Officers in the Civil Service. The French Committee (1949), criticised Government expenditure on information, then £5 million and it was subsequently cut by half, with the COI taking the brunt of the cuts as the Government sought to exploit non-paid-for media, including the press, more vigorously.

In the 1950s and 60s, the Government Information Services gradually increased numbers, with Government Departments taking the lead. Meanwhile, Number 10 press appointments fluctuated between civil servant and external post holders, but in 1956 Dr. Charles Hill, the Post Master General and a member of the Cabinet, took charge of all Government communication and was given responsibility for coordination across Government Departments. He was the first Minister to take charge of information policy without any other departmental responsibilities and, assisted by Mr Fyfe, Clark (seconded from the COI) put a system in place to coordinate activities between departments and central Government (COI, 2002). This Cabinet Office has played a significant role from this point on.

The next development of note was in 1974 when the government of Harold Wilson formalised the current system of Special Advisers, (House of Lords Constitution Committee, 2010). In 1974 there were 31 special advisers, increasing to 38 by the end of the Major Government in 1997 and almost doubling to 70 during the first year of the Blair administration (1997-1998), rising to 84 in 2004 and declining to 74 in 2009 (House of Lords Constitution Committee, 2010). Special Advisers, as mentioned above, are not politically neutral. The most recent Constitutional Reform and Governance Act (2010), states that they have civil service terms and conditions, but they are not career civil servants. They are "appointed to assist the Minister of the Crown, after being selected for the appointment by that Minister personally" (P.8). The appointment is approved by the Prime Minister, but the appointee has to leave their post if the Minister loses the Ministerial Office for which the Special Adviser was appointed, or after a general election.

In 1979 Margaret Thatcher became Prime Minister and appointed Bernard Ingham as her Chief Press Secretary (civil servant post) in Number 10, a post he filled for 11 years until his retirement in 1990. While recognising the potential for civil servants to become politicised, Mr Ingham accepted Mrs Thatcher's offer to become Head of the GIS, with a personal agenda to begin to professionalise the service in response to criticisms of its quality, especially that provided by the COI. He set up the Information Officer Management Unit (IOMU), in order to combat criticisms that Information Officers were not professionally

qualified and some were not up to the job. The IOMU set up a rigorous selection process for recruitment to the GIS and instigated professional career paths which included training and promotion by panel selection for career professionals. The purpose was to set up a professional network and to maintain standards. It was Ingham who introduced the Red Book, which was both training manual and professional standard-setter, and propriety guide. This was translated into the GIS Handbook by Mike Granatt, Director General of the GIS and Head of the Profession from 1998-2003.

About the same time (1984) funds were devolved to departments to purchase their own publicity materials to spend as they will and with whom they willed. The COI's monopoly on Government publicity was broken. In 1990 the COI became an executive agency of the Cabinet Office, at arms length from Government and in 1991 began to operate as a Trading Fund, that is, they covered their costs by charging other statutory bodies for their services. In it took a substantial proportion of the Government's £1.01 billion total expenditure on communication (Tee, 2011).

In 1994, Alistair Campbell was appointed as Press Secretary for the Leader of the Opposition, Tony Blair. Together with Peter Mandelson who ran Labour's Election Campaign, they ran an effective media machine and Labour won the General Election in 1997 with a landslide, whereupon Alistair Campbell became the Prime Minister's Director of Communications, a Special Adviser post, based in Number 10. 1997 is the turnkey date for the changes in Government communications that led to the Phillis Review of 2004.

Conclusions to be drawn from the structure and history of Government communications

From the foregoing, a number of salient conclusions can be drawn about communications as it moved into the era of the first Labour Government:

- Government Departments enjoyed a great deal of autonomy in structure and delivery of their communication efforts.
- Coordination across government departments was certainly present, but there were still issues on the jurisdiction of the Cabinet Office and Number 10 and their ability to direct Departments. The relationship between civil servants and Special Advisers was relatively stable and understood, but there were no written-down rules on jurisdiction.
- The Labour Party in opposition had been “very, very effective in its news management” according to Sir Robert Phillis (House of Lords, 2008).

- The COI had lost its 'exclusive relationship' with Government Departments who could procure communication support services from other suppliers.

The arrival of the Blair Government

In opposition, the Blair Government had seen the role of communications as vital to furthering and enacting their policies. A central player was Alistair Campbell, the Prime Minister's Director of Communications. On their ascent to power the Government passed an Order in Council, so that Alistair Campbell and Tony Blair's Chief of Staff, Jonathan Powell, had the authority to instruct civil servants. This bringing together of civil service communicators and Special Advisers under one Director of Communications, was fundamental. According to Sir Robert Phillis (House of Lords, 2008) and the three most senior civil servants the author interviewed, the view of the new Government was that the GIS was not well equipped in news and media management in particular, and that the service overall needed upgrading to deal with the modern world of communication.

In September 1997, the Cabinet Secretary of the time Sir Robert Butler, appointed Robin Mountfield to review GIS, this he did with his review team including Alistair Campbell and then Director General of GIS, Mike Granatt. The Mountfield Report, as it became known (Cabinet Office, 1997) was published in November 1997 and identified a number of weaknesses. These included significant variation in practices and effectiveness of the press function across Departments. On some occasions there was a breakdown in coordination between civil servant Press Officers and Special Advisers when briefing the media. There were also suggestions that some departments had been briefing against others and some senior members of the Lobby press corps complained about losing an impartial and 'on the record' service as provided by civil servants.

In response, Number 10 set up a Strategic Communications Unit, answerable to the Prime Minister, working through the Chief Press Secretary (a civil servant). The Government also introduced reforms to the Lobby, including on-the-record briefings with attributable sources: although some believe this was desired by Alistair Campbell who wanted to ensure power over the Treasury who were undertaking extensive off-the-record briefings of journalists. The Government also sought to encourage clarification of roles and closer cooperation between Press Officers in Departments and Special Advisers. Finally the GIS was re-named the Government Information and Communication Services (GIC S) in an attempt to indicate a renewed focus on two-way communication with the public (House of Lords, 2008).

In the two years following the 1997 election, 17 of the 19 Departmental Heads of Information left office. Since the recruitment process instigated by Bernard Ingham, Heads of Information were recruited in two ways: either through the GICS process of selection, whereby a Minister could choose from a shortlist proposed by their Department, or by open external competition overseen by the Civil Service Commission. As Robin Mountfield noted in a later report (Mountfield, 2002) this process did not deal with an individual being 'squeezed out' if their face did not fit, or if a Minister insisted on a change because the 'personal chemistry' did not work.

Following the Mountfield Report the Director General of GICS, Mike Granatt, prepared a follow-up document for Mr Mountfield in June 1998 reporting on progress. He had sought the views of GICS staff, which indicated poor morale. This was supported by the Institution of Professionals, Managers and Specialists, who attributed the fall in morale to recent changes in Departmental Heads, increased demand for Press Officer services without additional resources, poor management and inadequate training and career development opportunities (House of Commons, 1998).

However it was events in early 2000 that brought things to a head. The most notorious event occurred on 9th September 2001 when Special Adviser Jo Moore, based in the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions, advised civil servants by e-mail that they should release "anything that we want to bury", given that attention would be deflected following the terrorist attacks in the US. The email was published by the press in October 2001 and after reprimands and an apology, Ms Moore continued in her post, much to the rumoured resentment of some civil servants who believed they would have been sacked for such an offence since it contravened their ethical standards. On 14th February 2002 reports alleged that Ms Moore had urged release of adverse rail statistics on the day of Princess Margaret's funeral - this was countermanded by Director of Communications Martin Sixsmith. There followed a debacle which resulted in both Ms Moore and Mr Sixsmith resigning.

These events were investigated by the Public Administration Select Committee (House of Commons, 2002). Their report recommended a 'radical external review of Government communications' and that the review should look not only at the effectiveness of GICS, but at the respective roles of civil servants and Special Advisers with responsibility for communications. Again, clarification of the roles and the boundaries between them was advised. They also called for public advertising of Special Adviser roles and induction training for them so that they understood the machinery of Government. The Report

recommended a system for handling disputes between Ministers, Special Advisers and civil servants, with the Prime Minister being involved if these became irreconcilable.

Alongside these structural problems, there were other issues that threatened the integrity of the communication service. For example, in December 2002, after denials from the Prime Minister's Office in Number 10, it emerged that Tony Blair's wife had brought property for her son, in Bristol, via the fraudster boyfriend of her lifestyle adviser – an embarrassment for the Prime Minister, but not something his office should have handled. There was also controversy about the role Mr Campbell played in evidence presented to Parliament supporting the case for entering the war in Iraq. It was claimed he had “sexed up” one dossier of evidence.

The Phillis Review

Amid mounting clamour about the politicisation of the civil service, spin, inappropriate use of Government services and an increasingly adversarial relationship between the press and the Government, the Government set up ‘An Independent Review of Government Communications’ chaired by Bob Phillis, Chairman of the Guardian Media Group. The Phillis review group reported to the Minister for the Cabinet Office in January 2004 (Phillis, 2004). The Government stated before Phillis reported, that it would accept its findings in full. The Review led to far reaching changes in government communication, the most relevant for this paper being:

- The appointment of a civil servant of the most senior rank – a Permanent Secretary - who would lead the civil service communication profession. The authority of Special Advisers to direct civil servants was broken, although the Order in Council which gave Alistair Campbell and Jonathan Powell these powers was not revoked until 2007 by Blair’s successor, Gordon Brown.
- The renaming of GICS to the Government Communication Network (GCN), open to all civil servant communicators, including those not appointed through the GICS process.
- A redefinition of the role and scope of Government communications since the Review found that on the whole, the civil service and not grasped the potential of modern communications as a service provided for citizens.
- That each Department’s communications activity must contribute to the achievement of the Department's overall policy objectives.

- A greater emphasis and investment in regional and local communications.

In March 2004, Howell James, a former Special Adviser in a number of Departments and with extensive public relations experience in the commercial world of broadcasting, was appointed as the first Permanent Secretary, Government Communications. The civil servant communications community re-established its independence from Political Advisers, their numbers increased (partly as a result of the integration arising from the re-structuring from GICS to GCN) and they found a new confidence and role in Government, although some reportedly saw the ability of departments to make appointments without use of the GICS professional competencies framework, as the beginning of de-professionalisation.

The period of Permanent Secretaries, 2004 to 2010

It is the view of those interviewed that the appointment of a Permanent Secretary was mainly a response to the circumstances of the time. In 2003, Alistair Campbell had resigned and shortly thereafter Phillis had given its judgement that there had been a "three way breakdown in trust between Government and politicians, the media and the general public" (p.2).

The report goes on to state that three factors contributed to the breakdown in these relationships:

- The communications strategy adopted by the Labour administration on coming into power in 1997
- The reaction of the media and the press in particular to that; and
- The response of the civil service to the new demands that were placed on it.

Labour's past experience of handling the media, and its belief that government communications staff were not up to the mark, saw a rise in the media handling role of politically appointed, unelected Special Advisers. Their more aggressive approach and their increased use of selected briefing of media outlets, in which government information was seen to be being used to political advantage, led to a reaction from the media that has produced a far more adversarial relationship with government.

We received much evidence on the insatiable appetite of the media for facts, interpretation, speculation, observation and political comment, driven both by the rapid growth in the number of media outlets and by the resulting competitive pressure. At the same time, there has been an explosion in the many different ways in which the government might communicate. This has put extra ordinary strain on a communications system designed in a less frenzied media age (p.2-3).

The report also identified poor coordination between Departments and Agencies, the COI, the Cabinet Office and Number 10 as a significant problem.

The government wished to put this negative agenda behind it and the Phillis Review provided an opportunity to draw a line. The decision to accept all proposals was a pragmatic one and indeed the government would have accepted whatever was recommended. While some in government thought that Director-General level was senior enough for the leadership of the profession, the appointment of a Permanent Secretary as a peer with those who ran Departments, was a deeply symbolic act which demonstrated the Government was intent on putting its house in order. Again, while some in Government and the press expected that the Permanent Secretary role was essentially that of Super Press Officer, the purpose of the post was to ensure clearer governance and to improve the capability of the service. The remit also included drawing the communications community together across departments so that they worked in a more co-ordinated and collaborative manner, especially on cross-departmental projects.

The recommendations of the Phillis Review were not universally welcomed by the three interviewees. For one the demise of the GICS selection and promotion processes was a retrograde step. The GICS had developed a comprehensive set of competencies and a rigorous Assessment Centre battery of tests which applicants had to pass before they were accepted and appointed. The opening up of the service to others who had not gone through this process led to a dilution of standards according to this source.

During the period that the first Permanent Secretary was in office, many of the propriety issues were dealt with and the "temperature was taken down" with the media. He also focused on developing the communications community, now called the Government Communication Network (GCN) and instigated a number of co-ordinated training and guidance initiatives open to, but not compulsory for, all Government Departments (note Departmental autonomy is still strong). The aim was to embed standards and inject some consistency of approach. At the same time, a substantial effort was put into developing a strategic planning model which was more marketing-based and aimed at achieving behaviour change. This was of particular interest to civil servants and special advisers who operated in the policy-making area and at the time that Howell James left, it is true to say that communications expertise on insight generation was more accepted as a part of policy development.

Given that many of the systems and structures had been put in place by his predecessor, the focus of the second Permanent Secretary Matt Tee, was very much on the development of civil servant communicators. Four specific issues characterised his period in post:

- Addressing professionalism and capability in the service
- Rising to the changes that the proliferation of digital media presented
- A major increase in spending on marketing and advertising with large-scale behaviour change programmes being put in place such as the Change 4 Life obesity program and the Green Deal climate mitigation programme. Indeed, Government became the country's largest advertiser, a situation justified because of the ambitious policy goals that it had in place
- The requirement to service the media 24 hours per day with a specific concern being obtaining the authorisations required around the clock.

On 26th of January 2009, the House of Lords Select Committee on Communications produced its report (House of Lords, 2009) reviewing progress on the Phillis Review (2004) and making recommendations for further improvements. Its conclusions were that good progress had been made, but recommended, amongst other things, that all "highly-flying" civil servants should spend time in a Departmental Press Office, and that Special Advisers should stay within the limits of influence set down in guidance. In response to criticisms from MPs, the Committee also stressed that "the most important announcements of government policy should be made in the first instance to Parliament" and not to the press. It noted that the number of communications staff employed by Government Departments had risen from 795 in December 1998 to 1376 in September 2008 and that the Press Officer corps in central Whitehall Departments had risen from 216 in December 1998 to 373 in September 2008. So, despite some of blurred boundaries between Special Advisers and civil servants and the lack of acceptance in many areas of the civil service about the role and importance of communications, it appeared to be on track for growth and greater status within Government.

In May 2010 a new Coalition Government came to power led by David Cameron. From the beginning of his tenure in Number 10 he made it clear that reducing the country's deficit was to be a priority. In the same month, a freeze was placed on all Government marketing and advertising activity. As a result the annual volume of communication activity commissioned through COI fell from £540 million in 2009/10 to £125 million. The COI promptly reduced staffing numbers by 40% from 737 to 450 and operating costs by 43% from £63 million to £36 million (Tee, 2011).

The post of Permanent Secretary was declared redundant and the post holder left the Cabinet Office in January 2011 taking on responsibility for a "Review of Government Direct Communication and the Role of CIO" before leaving government service in March 2011.

The reaction of all three interviewees to Government cuts, where they had an opinion, was similar. Clearly, communications along with other government expenditure could not be immune from cuts and there was an acknowledgement that there had been some overlap and even extravagance in some Government campaigns. However the depth of these cuts came as a shock and the removal of the Permanent Secretary, although not entirely unexpected, was regarded as symbolically very important. None of the interviewees had knowledge of how the communications service will be led in the future, but all signalled concern that six months after the announcement of the last Permanent Secretary leaving, there was no clear indication of what succession arrangements would be put in place. As one former incumbent pointed out, there is a limit to how long Government can go without a Head of Profession and Government needs to be careful about the "mood music" around the cuts in communication in that their severity could indicate that it is unimportant. A further danger is that capable communicators in leadership positions are now leaving the service because they see it as a profession that is unsupported. Once again, the service is in the throes of leadership churn. Within 12 months it is predicted that few Departments will have the same Director of Communications and that any replacements could well be at lower grades. Furthermore, although there is no indication that this is happening at the moment, the longer the profession goes without a recognised leader, the more prone it will be to political interference from Special Advisers and others. Finally, the long fought for coordination and cooperation across departments is likely to dissipate the longer the hiatus in leadership continues.

The former incumbents of the most senior post in Government communications have a sense of realism about their achievements. There is a view that at the time of the last Permanent Secretary's leaving there was still some way to go in securing the position of communications as essential in and to Government. For example, communicators still find themselves having to justify their existence and defend their role far too often. Government still lags behind in digital communications, although it is accepted that the issues with which it deals are usually more complicated than those in the private sector. It is known that Government can protect its citizens by influencing their behaviour for their own and society's good, for example, anti-smoking campaigns do work. However what the mix of legislation, encouragement and enforcement should be to be most effective is as yet unknown. There are also fruitful collaborations between Government and the private sector which should be

explored further. The success of the Change 4 Life campaign in attracting partnerships is something to build on for the future, however some of the issues around this include the shortage of skills in government in forming partnerships and in negotiating arrangements that will have mutual benefits.

The period that the Permanent Secretaries were in post represents a particularly high symbolic point in Government Communications. Having a voice at the heart of government in the Cabinet Office and at such a senior level advanced and defended the cause of communications. The Permanent Secretary role provided entry to the highest levels of Government and secured influence in Departments that would not have been possible for someone of lesser rank. What then for the future of Government communications?

A view of the future

In beginning to formulate a position for the future it is important to be reminded of the purpose of Government communication. To quote the House of Lords Communications Committee (2008):

One of the most important tasks of Government is to provide clear, truthful and factual information to citizens. The accurate and impartial communication of information about government policies, activities and services is critical to the democratic process (p.7).

This is supported by the House of Commons Public Administration Committees Eighth Report (2002)

Those who are responsible for government communications therefore have a vital role in serving the public interest (p.3).

The notions of providing clear and factual information to citizens to serve the public interest are at the heart of the British democratic process. Representative democracies require "informed consent". That is, citizens are able to hold Government to account by being provided with factual information on their performance and policies. This enables them to carry out their electoral obligations in a knowledgeable way. As Robin Mountfield (2002) in a note following the Mountfield Report says:

The Report started with the statement that the effective communication and explanation of policy and decisions should not be an afterthought, but an integral part of the democratic government's duty to govern with consent (p.2).

This is not a new concept. It has been a core purpose of the communication professionals in the public sector ever since it began to formalise its communications with the public. Ogilvy-Webb (1965) catches the essence of the Chief Information Officers role thus:

..... He has three kinds of duty towards the public. First, the duty to tell them what the government is doing in their name, and how their money is being spent - to explain to them the general activities and policy of his Department. Second, the duty to make clear to the citizen, his, the citizen's, rights and obligations as set out in law, government regulations and so on - this is essential for efficient and fair administration, as well as for the citizen's own convenience. Third, the duty to persuade the citizen into some course of action which is not a matter of political controversy, for his own for the community's good, e.g. to have his children immunised, not to drink and drive, to enrol in the Army or to return to teaching career (p.100).

The notion of informed consent is not however, without its complications. As Gaber (2007) points out, citizens want politicians to be honest and accountable, but at the same time politicians have another agenda, that is, to secure the approval and votes of citizen's at the next election. The inclination is therefore, for politicians to constantly desire communications which achieve a positive impact rather than total public enlightenment. Hence Governments make communications per se a priority and this can lead to a masking of the reality of performance which over time, breeds cynicism. As a result, trust not just for individual politicians, but in the political system as a whole is undermined which in turn puts in jeopardy the very democratic system communications was designed to support.

In broad terms then, there is an inbuilt paradox in the British system. A career civil servant, who is bound by rules of impartiality and is apolitical, communicates on behalf of a government which is inherently political. There is inevitably an inbuilt political bias if the party in government has a whole machinery which is there to explain its policies. Furthermore, governments have traditionally employed Special Advisers who are not bound by the same rules of impartiality, many of whom are either directly involved in communications, or seek to influence it as the Jo Moore incident referred to earlier amply demonstrates. Ironically, as Mountfield (2002) pointed out, the appointment of Alistair Campbell within his explicitly political role as Director of Communications with the authority to direct civil servants, actually clarified the position and indeed could be argued to be a more honest position. The lines between civil servants and Special Advisers have been a constant issue and as recently as 2008 (House of Lords, 2008) Ministers were reminded of their duty to ensure their Special Advisers remained within the rules. It was not until 2010 (Constitutional

Reform and Governance Act 2010, 2010) that the propriety lines between civil servants and Special Advisers were finally codified.

The concept of informed consent also requires that opposition parties be given equal voice to those parties in government so that citizen's have all the information they require to make an informed decision at the ballot box. However, there is no facility for opposition parties to avail themselves of impartial civil servant support for their communication efforts. This reinforces the imbalance in communication within the system towards the Government in power.

There is another paradox which merits discussion. One of the complaints of those involved in communication, is that communicators are not involved in policy decisions early enough to be able to influence that policy. Indeed, as mentioned earlier, the first Permanent Secretary went to some lengths to bring together policy and communications staff by persuading policy civil servants that communications expert could bring valuable "Insight" to the policies they were developing, particularly when they involved changing the behaviour of citizens. The paradox is that being involved in policy decisions means that communicators will "own" them and they are hence, more likely to defend and promote those policies rather than just explain them.

Perversely, there is a cogent argument that communicators should not be involved in policy-making in order to maintain their impartiality and objectivity when explaining them.

With these thoughts in mind, these then are some suggestions about the future of Government Communications. The reality of the current situation is that communications is likely to fall back to the level that it was at pre-2000. Without a Head of Profession at the heart of government, and at a significant level, there is neither the ability to influence at the highest level in government, nor to coordinate effectively communications across departments. This is a situation exacerbated by the recent cuts in communication budgets and the reducing of numbers of civil servants. Although there has been some lifting of the most tight restrictions in budgets, it is unlikely that there will be a return to the pre-2010 position within the foreseeable future. Within the next three years this author posits that the following is likely to happen:

- There will be a replacement for the Permanent Secretary post but it is likely to be at the most optimistic, Director General level, or become the responsibility of the most senior civil servant communicator in Government at the time.

- The recent trend of appointments of Directors of Communications sitting at Board level within Departments will slow down and as incumbents leave, they are likely to be replaced by individuals of a lower grade.
- As Directors of Communications see their career opportunities limited (and there is still little transfer from the communications specialism to other specialisms in Government) more of them will leave.
- There is a risk that as less senior people are recruited to or remain in the communications specialisms that communications will be marginalised in the policy development process and could revert to the position pre-2000, where there was a preponderance of press officers employed to "deliver the message". However, in future this will include to the "virtual press" too.
- While there has been undoubted progress in the skills, knowledge and overall capabilities of the communications cadre, and while there are plans to continue that, without a champion at the senior level, a coordinated and coherent approach to recruitment, retention, capability development and career progression is less likely.
- Professional communicators could be susceptible to political direction by Special Advisers or others in the absence of a senior figure to enforce propriety.
- There will be an increase in support for marketing activities, given recent successes. As a result of marketing, this is likely to become more important and the balance of communication work could well shift from a primary duty to ensure that citizens are well-informed, to one where behaviour change programmes take greater prominence. There are clear dangers for the democratic process if the primary purpose of government information is viewed in this light by Government and citizens alike.

This may seem quite a bleak assessment of the future of Government Communications, but in coming to this view, the author is also comparing the pattern of Government Communications with the cycle of fortune of communications in other parts of the public and private sector. It was a crisis in Government Communications that led to the Phillis Report and the peak of communications came about as restorative action, as a result of the events that led up to that Report. It is not unreasonable to state that it took a crisis to position communications in government where it should have been since it was taken into the Cabinet Office in the 1950s. Now that the crisis has passed and the Government has other priorities the lessons learned appear to be in the process of being forgotten. It is a rueful

reflection that this is not unusual in other organisations. It appears to be the “fate” of communications that is doomed to an endless cycle of advancement and regression depending on the perception of risk that an organisation faces at any one time.

Conclusions

The beginning of first decade of the 21st-century in UK Government Communications was one of turmoil and uncertainty. The new Labour government had come into power in 1997 and found the Government Information Service wanting. A large number of Directors of Communications in Departments left and civil servant communicators became susceptible to political influence. The recruitment and selection process for professional communicators came under threat and the career pathway, development and professional respect for communicators followed suit. At the end of the first decade it appears that Government Communications has reverted to this position. What will happen in the next decade is speculation, but in light of the structural and operational paradoxes highlighted in the previous section and while decisions are made on the Permanent Secretary’s role and replacement, the author makes three pragmatic recommendations:

- That Special Advisers are not able to speak on government policy from within government. Any political pronouncements or defence of government policy that they make should be made from Political Party offices and clearly labelled as "political" statements. This would draw a clear line between the civil servant community and Special Advisor roles.
- That recommendation 146 made by the House of Lords (2008) be implemented as soon as possible. This recommendation recognised that the Professional Skills for Government programme included communication as a core skill for all senior civil servants and called on the Permanent Secretary Government Communications to facilitate a period of service in a departmental press office or in communications generally. The understanding gained from this experience would do two things: first it would educate senior civil servants about the professional skills required to undertake communications roles and the ethical and propriety issues inherent within it. Second, it would build a bridge between the communications community and other parts of the civil service who often regarded communication as a siloed activity, peopled by “those strange media people”, to be considered only when policy is to be communicated.
- That career civil servants in the communications role take responsibility for broadening their experience beyond the communications environment. Research

undertaken by Matt Tee's team (personally disclosed to the author) indicated that those who remain in the communications function reach a ceiling above which it is difficult to progress. However, it is their choice to remain in communications for the longer term. In other words the communication function is partly responsible itself for being regarded as being in a silo. If individuals were to move into different roles it would assist them with their understanding of the issues and responsibilities of other functional specialists and broaden their own experience and knowledge which would in turn assist them in their communications role. Furthermore, individual communicators would be regarded as part of the broader civil servant community with their particular skills and capabilities equipping them to undertake a variety of roles with prospects for more advancement. Increasing communication literacy at the higher levels of the civil service can only be helpful.

The overall conclusion of this paper is that Government Communications in the middle of the first decade of the 21st Century reached a peak in attention and recognition. The ardent hope is that the lessons learned will not be dissipated as the second decade progresses, but much depends on the leadership of the profession in the future.

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Conceptual evolution of situational theory as a generalized theory in public relations

Soojin Kim and Kelly Vibber
Department of Communication, Purdue University
West Lafayette, IN 47907-2098, USA
Email: kim1089@purdue.edu; kvibber@purdue.edu

The situational theory of publics (STP) was introduced in 1966 by J.E. Grunig, and has been used extensively in public relations research and practices (Grunig, 1997). Situational theory is a theory of publics and their communication behaviors. The theory (STP) was designed to predict the differential responses of publics to an issue. It helps predict when and why publics become active in their communication behaviors such as information seeking (Grunig, 1997). STP not only provides public relations professionals with a way to segment the masses into meaningful groups of publics, it also explains when communication aimed at publics is most likely to be effective (Grunig, 1997).

STP has continuously evolved and much of this growth has come through critical evaluation and application via scholars both in favor of and opposed to the theory. Despite its practicality as a theory for public relations practice, limitations have been noted in its conceptualization of independent variables (Sha and Lundy, 2005; Aldoory and Sha, 2007; Sha, 2006; Sriramesh, Moghan, and Wei, 2007; Kim, Ni, and Sha, 2008), dependent variables (Sha and Lundy, 2005; Aldoory and Sha, 2007; Kim and Grunig, 2011) and strategic publics (Hallahan, 2000; Kruckeberg and Vujnovic, 2010; Self, 2010).

In 1997 J.E. Grunig offered an overview of STP, in its then evolved state, including applications of the theory, and critiques of the research. Since then, there have been attempts to refine the theory by suggesting antecedents (Aldoory, 2001; Sha, 2006), new independent variables (Sha and Lundy, 2005) and applications (Aldoory, Kim and Tindall, 2010; Kim, Shen, and Morgan, 2011; Kim, Ni, and Sha, 2008). In addition to these attempts to refine the theory there have been critiques of STP or the notion of strategic publics since 1997. Now over a decade later, few have provided a comprehensive overview of those critiques or examined changes in the theory due to those critiques. The focus of this paper is to examine these critiques of STP since J.E. Grunig's (1997) overview and explore in what way, if any, the theory has responded to them. This will provide a better understanding of the challenges situational theory faces and what implications the new theory (STOPS) suggests not only to an academic community but also to industries.

The situational theory of publics, circa 1997

It seems both relevant and necessary to delimit the history of STP that will be considered here both to present the contemporarily relevant condition of the theory and to avoid recreating the work of other scholars on the theory. Because the theory came into being in 1966 and faced many changes from its birth to its status in 1997, a brief summary of the state of the theory 1997 is provided as groundwork for the exploration of the critiques and challenges it has faced since then.

In 1997, the situational theory of publics consisted of three independent variables (problem recognition, constraint recognition, and level of involvement) and two dependent variables (active and passive communication behavior, information seeking and information processing, respectively) (Grunig, 1997). Problem recognition was defined both by recognizing that something needs to be done about an issue and thinking about what that should be. Constraint recognition was the degree to which a person sees himself or herself as limited or unable to do anything about the problem. Level of involvement reflected the “extent to which people connect themselves with a situation” (p. 10). With respect to the dependent variables, information seeking was seen as both active and planned, or goal oriented, whereas information processing was passive and unplanned (Grunig, 1997).

The situational theory, based on economic theories, was intended to provide “a means of segmenting a general population into groups relevant to public relations practitioners” (Grunig, 1997, p. 8). In this way practitioners could determine things such as which publics might be the most receptive to information and who would be actively seeking that information. Thus in many ways the theory was developed in order to help practitioners streamline their efforts to communicate with the public by helping them target specific parts of the population that would be more attentive to and actively interested in the messages the practitioners were sending.

Publics for Grunig (1997) were plural not singular. He saw them as beginning “as disconnected systems of individuals experiencing common problems” which could then “evolve into organized and powerful activist groups” (p. 9). Therefore it was important both for practitioners to understand the concept of public and for the organizations to have and value public relations as their behaviors would undoubtedly cause problems that would result in the creation of publics (Grunig, 1997).

In addition to these views of communication behavior and publics, Grunig (1997) saw the theory being used to segment publics not only within an issue but also across issues with regard to the likelihood and type of their communication behavior. Across issues

segmentation does not take into account all issues in the environment but instead all issues that are raised, for example, in a survey or questionnaire. Across issue segmentation yields four types of publics: all-issue publics, apathetic publics, single-issue publics and hot-issue publics (Grunig, 1997). Here again all-issue publics are active on all the issues asked about in the questionnaire, not necessarily all issues in the environment. Apathetic publics are “inattentive to all of the problems” (p. 13). Single-issue publics are “active on one or a small subset of the problems that concerns only a small part of the population” (p.13). Last, hot-issue publics are “active only on a single problem that involves nearly everyone in the population and that has received extensive media coverage” (p. 13). These hot-issue publics usually only continue as long as the media coverage continues.

The segmentation for within an issue publics based on STP also yields four types of publics: active, aware, latent, and nonpublics. Although this form of segmentation is not clearly highlighted in the 1997 piece, it is used in research both before and after it and thus included here. This typology is based on the work of Grunig and Hunt (1984) and Dewey’s (1927) notion of a public. The latent public is defined as “a group of people who face a similar problem but do not detect the problem” (Kim, Ni, and Sha, 2008, p. 758). The aware public recognizes the problem and an active public “organizes to discuss and do something about the problem (Kim, Ni, and Sha, 2008, p. 758). Nonpublics then are groups of people who do not meet any condition of Dewey’s notion of publics (Kim, Inland Sha, 2008, p. 758). Based on individual responses or ratings on the independent variables of STP practitioners and researchers can segment individuals into these across-issue or within-issue publics.

Critiques on the concept of public

Several scholars have requested reconceptualization of what a public is or redefinition of the range of strategic publics (e.g. Hallahan, 2000; Kruckeberg and Vujnovic, 2010; Self, 2010). Kruckeberg and Vujnovic (2010) were opposed to Grunig and his colleagues’ notion of a strategic public (e.g. Dozier, Grunig, and Grunig, 1995; Grunig and Repper, 1992; Grunig and Hunt, 1984). While much PR literature has said that a general public does not exist, Kruckeberg and Vujnovic (2010) argue, “the only strategic public that can be identified with certainty is the general public” (p.117). They further contend that defining the general public as the strategic public is moral, ethical and utilitarian (Kruckeberg and Vujnovic, 2010). Vujnovic (2004) argued that Grunig and Hunt’s (1984) focus on the active public shows a lack of concern for social responsibility. She believes that an organization’s responsibility

should be to address general public or society at large, including nonpublics (Vujnovic, 2005). According to her, Grunig and Hunt are preoccupied with the threat of consequences for the organization. From this position Kruckeberg and Vujnovic (2010) see the focus on a strategic public as selfishly motivated to suit the needs of the organization, as opposed to the more egalitarian stance offered by a general public approach.

Kruckeberg and Vujnovic (2010) also express that the world has perhaps outgrown the usefulness of strategic publics. Based on globalization and technological advances they argue the following:

Perhaps in today's global environment that has compressed time and space and that has made the cost of communication inconsequently inexpensive to provide and to receive and upon which to immediately act, it has become meaningless to identify publics and to attempt to distinguish among a nonpublic, a latent public, an aware public and an active public (p. 124).

Citing similar technological advancements, Self (2010) argues that emergence of new communication technologies and their networking capabilities requires reconceptualization of "public as a process, a flow, rather than an essence or group" (p. 90). He argues that his vision of the public as an evolving process extends the notions of segmentation in the work of Grunig's STP by challenging Grunig's concept of publics as "a stable public operating as an essence within a public sphere" (p.90). He contends that the notion of public might have been better understood as a "constantly evolving flow of communication activity- assertion, rereading and reassertion of the universal aspiration of particulars – in a never-ending struggle for recognition" (p. 90).

Self extends a current look at the public as a process via Hegel (1977). This view embodies the public as a process that "flows across networks of dialog in an unending battle for universality" (p.89). According to this perspective, "Public is the unending process of struggle, not the fortuitous grouping of demographics, psychographics, or even issues. It is a view grounded in evolving networks that share vocabularies that create the perception of issues" (p. 89). Further, "the struggle itself—the evolving interplay of networks and circuits of influence—is an act of public" (p. 89).

Self offers additional critiques of traditional public relations via Habermas and Lippman. Via Habermas (1991, 2006), Self argues that "the professionalization of institutional manipulation of communication messages in mass media still violates the requirements of a truly deliberative public" (p. 80). Via Lippman (1922, 1930), Self presents

the idea that historically the “public was too easily misled by mass media that played to sensationalism and oversimplification of the issues to be involved in public policy” (p. 80). This voicing against mass media and manipulation seems to speak against targeting individuals and persuading them and given the context of the argument it would also seem to be against strategic publics.

Hallahan has also criticized J.E. Grunig and his colleagues’ focus on strategic publics. Hallahan (2000) argues that the importance of inactive publics is overlooked in recent public relations theory. Inactive publics refer to stakeholder groups that show low levels of knowledge and involvement in the organization or its products or services. Even though he acknowledges the reason why the field tends to focus on activism (potential consequences of activist groups on an organization), he brings a different set of assumptions from those of mainstream public relations theory. Specifically these assumptions of his counter viewpoint focus on the relationships between the organizations and publics with regard to the catalyst of these relationships and what is necessary and/or desirable for both parties.

First, it assumes that not all public relations activities necessarily revolve around issues, disputes, or conflicts. Indeed, many public relations programs today merely involve building positive relationships. In such cases, differences between organizational interests and public needs might not exist or might be minimal at best. Second, many organizational-public relationships can operate at an extremely low level, that is, rank-in-file members of a public have only minimal knowledge and involvement in the policies and practices of an organization. More important, this minimum-level relationship suffices both parties... Third, the prospect of establishing and maintaining minimal relationships with inactive publics pose a set of communication challenges that are quite different from interactions with highly active publics.....Such communications efforts require different strategies that public relations theorists must begin to address in a more coherent manner (p. 500).

Hallahan also found Grunig and Repper (1992) to be inconsistent in terms of differentiating stakeholders from publics because Grunig and Repper acknowledged that public relations is not limited to publics (active) alone but can be directed to passive stakeholders as well. He suggested defining all groups to which public relations efforts are directed as publics, but recognizing that they differ in their levels of activity-passivity. Based on this argument, he proposed that a public can be defined as “a group with which an organization wishes to establish and maintain a relationship” (pp.501-502). Hallahan found the concept of inactive publics very similar to Bulmer’s (1966) notion of a mass. He argued that members of a mass or an inactive public are brought together by some common interest

and can be considered a “symbolic community, a group of people who share a common set of symbols and experiences” (p. 502).

Critiques on the independent variables of STP

Vasquez and Taylor (2001) criticized the situational theory’s use of “social-psychological (situational) variables” (e.g. perception, cognition, attitude, motivation, etc.) to identify and segment publics. According to them, “a public as a situational state of consciousness lacks insight to processes and dynamics underlying public behavior” (p. 148). They criticized STP as not fully explaining the “general nature and role of communication” in dynamics of publics (pp.148-149).

To interrogate alternate viewpoints, Vasquez and Taylor (2001) introduced four perspectives for theory and research on a public: the mass perspective, the situational perspective, the agenda building perspective, and the homo barrens perspective. The mass perspective sees a public as “a single population of aggregate individuals with enduring characteristics” (p. 140). The situational perspective views a public as “a single collection of individuals that emerges in response to some problematic situation” (p.140) or “a situationally developing social entity that emerges through spontaneous argument, discussion, and collective opposition to some issue or problematic situation” (p. 142). Vasquez and Taylor (2001) argue that this perspective is deduced from several scholars including Blumer (1946), Dewey (1927), Grunig (1978, 1982, 1983a, 1983b), Grunig and Childers (1988) and Price (1992). Under the agenda building perspective, a public is seen as “an enduring state of political involvement”. Finally, the homo narrens perspective sees a public as “individuals that develop a group consciousness around a problematic situation and act to solve the problematic situation.” (Vasquez, 1993, p. 209, as cited in Vasquez and Taylor, 2001, p. 140)

Supporting the homo narrens perspective, Vasquez and Taylor (2001) argue that the mass and situational perspectives offer a limited view on individuals. They view situational perspective has not considered “meaning, emotion, or alternative sources of motivation” (p. 149). They believe that neither the mass perspective nor the situational perspective can fully explain the nature and influence of communication.

The view of a public as a permanent state of mind or as a collective consciousness has resulted in (a) conflicting generalizations and contradictory results (b) conceptual duplication of findings, (c) the negation of the individual, (d) the tautological conceptualization of individual and public, and (e) a view of communication that is outdated or out of touch with actual observations” (p. 150).

In contrast, they argue that a homo narrens perspective describes a public as “individuals with emotions and motivations engaged in a symbolic communication process to make sense of their world” (p. 149). From this perspective, “Attention is given to individual communication behaviors and effects as well as individual participation in the symbolic reality of a problematic situation. Moreover, this view of the individual may contribute to a fuller understanding of a public” (p. 149).

Sha and her colleagues have taken a more constructive criticism approach when criticizing STP (Sha and Lundy, 2005; Aldoory and Sha, 2007). Beyond listing the weaknesses of the situational theory, they attempted to offer a better model for the situational theory by proposing the addition of antecedents, new independent variables and the removal of part of the independent variables. In addition, they suggested that each independent variable of STP should be reconceptualized (Aldoory and Sha, 2007; Sha and Lundy, 2005).

Sha and Lundy (2005) proposed the integration of the elaboration likelihood model (ELM) with STP, as the Situational Processing Model (SPM), to better explain information processing behavior of publics. Drawing upon the differences in processing of persuasive messages in different involvement situations as defined in the elaboration likelihood model (ELM, Petty and Cacioppo, 1980, 1981, 1982), they argued that motivation to process in the ELM should be related to the level of involvement in the J.E. Grunig’s STP. In their SPM, they defined motivation to process as the primary independent variable of the situational theory and problem recognition, level of involvement and need for cognition as antecedents. Definitions of problem recognition and level of involvement were similar to the ones of the original STP. Interestingly, they added the third antecedent variable in the SPM, need for cognition, referring to “extent to which an individual feels more information about the issue is necessary” (Sha and Lundy, 2005, p. 15).

Work by Sha (2006) as well as Sriramesh, Moghan, and Wei (2007) argue for the reinstatement of referent criterion into the situational theory in order to account for the role of cultural factors. Sha (2006) argued that her finding of a connection between cultural identity and referent criterion supports the existence of this fourth independent variable (referent criterion). Based on the finding, she suggested that referent criterion should “either precede problem recognition, level of involvement, and constraint recognition, or operate with them to affect communicative behavior” (p. 60). Sriramesh, Moghan, and Wei (2007) also supported the resurrection of referent criterion to strengthen the power of STP. Sriramesh et al. (2007) tested the utility of the STP in the non-western context of consumer publics in Singapore and focused “on the theory more from the publics' perspective” than the

organization's (p. 308). Sriramesh et al. (2007) found that cultural factors played a significant role in behavior constraint. The overall conclusion of the authors was that the referent criterion that was originally included in situational theory in its early stages should be reinstated to help "include culture as an independent variable in the theory" (p. 307). They argue, "Because culture is often embedded in the subconscious, we believe that it is worth being considered as a referent criterion" (p. 325). This emphasis on testing the utility of theories in various cultures is of great significance as digitalization and globalization continue to build paths and shorten distances between cultures and countries.

Critiques on dependent variables

Sha and Lundy (2005) reconceptualized information processing in their Situational Processing Model (SPM) by using central and peripheral routes in the ELM: dedicated information processing and casual information processing. They argue that dedicated information processing occurs "when an individual is highly motivated to process information, due to high levels of problem recognition, level of involvement and cognition need" (p. 16). On the other hand, casual information processing occurs when individuals are not motivated to process information. However, they dropped information seeking in their model in favor of information processing. They found the use of the terms "information seeking" and "active communication" in public relations' academic community problematic. Positing that information seeking was translated into physical action among some public relations scholarship, they argued that there should be clarification and scrutiny over active communication and information seeking.

Aldoory and Sha (2007) argued that publics' information needs and behaviors should be reexamined based upon the changes in the global media environment and cultural landscape (p. 350). The reliance on the Internet for a variety of uses has created more sophisticated consumers and changed information processing. They requested "clearer articulations of active communication" (p. 351) and examination of the meanings of passive communication and information processing. "Because the nature of information seeking has changed with new and globalized technologies, scholars using STP should test operationalizations of information seeking that reflect the global media environment" (p. 348)

Continued evolution of situational theory

Kim and Grunig's (2011) situational theory of problem solving (STOPS) addresses some of critiques and limitations discussed above by revising and extending the original STP. Not all

of the criticisms are conceded to in this new more general theory but many adjustments are made.

The concept of public

The new situational theory does not seem to directly answer to the critiques on the notion of strategic public. Kim and Grunig (2011) seem to still support the concept of strategic public. They reiterate in this paper, “the theory of publics shows why blind pursuit of a maximum number of people in a *general public*—as opposed to *specific publics* as defined by the theory—fails” (p. 122, italics original). This seems to be a direct rebuff of critics who found the approach of strategic publics outdated (Kruckeberg and Vujnovic, 2010) as well as those who found ignoring the mass or inactive public to be unfair, problematic, or unegalitarian (Hallahan, 2000; Kruckeberg and Vujnovic, 2010). With respect to Vasquez and Taylor’s (2001) critique of the situational approach to publics versus the *homo narrens* some discrepancy still remains. In addition, the exact difference between Grunig’s (1997) view of a public that recognizes and organizes around a problem and then desists when the problem no longer exists and Self’s (2010) view of a public as fluid and dynamic remains a bit unclear.

It seems also relevant to note that the name of the theory no longer bears the word “public” but has been renamed the situational theory of problem solving. Kim and Grunig (2011) do note that part of this name change is in an effort to suggest a broader utility for the theory than just within the realm of public relations.

Independent and dependent variables

STOPS reconceptualization and/or introduction of independent and dependent variables may answer to the requests of considering antecedents and articulating active communication behaviors. In STOPS Kim and Grunig (2011) reintroduced referent criterion as the fourth independent variable/situational antecedent, responding to critiques from Sriramesh et al. (2007) and Sha (2006). Kim and Grunig (2011) did so as an effort to acknowledge the role of “available and applicable knowledge and inferential rules from one’s prior problem solving experiences” (p. 131). While not clearly emphasizing the role of culture as a referent criterion, it is still possible to see ways in which one’s applicable knowledge and inferential rules may be culturally based and thus the role of culture may be present in this variable. Kim and Grunig (2011) also added situational motivation in problem solving as a more immediate independent variable to communication behaviors, responding to Vasquez and Taylor’s

(2001) critique that the situational perspective has not considered “meaning, emotion, or alternative sources of motivation” (p. 149).

In response to critiques that the original communication behaviors of STP needed further explication (Sha and Lundy, 2005), Kim and Grunig (2011) utilized an expansion of the dependent variables into six communication behaviors. It is noteworthy that this new dependent variable, communicative action in problem solving (CAPS), itself is a new theory (Ni and Kim, 2009). It provides a more complete look at publics' information behaviors by offering four behavior specific subvariables (information forwarding, sharing, forefending, and permitting) – in addition to the two dependent variables of the situational theory of publics, (information seeking and information attending). These variables offer both a passive and an active behavior within each action (e.g. information forwarding—active vs. information sharing—passive), which allow for more types of communicative behavior to be acknowledged and accounted for within the theory. This expansion could help explain the changes of publics' information behaviors in the context of new communication technologies. For example the concept of information forwarding, in which an individual intentionally passes information on to others, could easily be studied within the context of new social media such as Facebook and Twitter where users often repost or retweet content to spread the information.

Looking forward

This new more broadly applicable situational theory can contribute to the development of public relations theory through its refined independent variables (problem recognition, constraint recognition, involvement recognition, and referent criterion), expanded dependent variable (communicative action in problem solving, CAPS), and new variable (situational motivation in problem solving). There are several possible applications of this new situational theory for public relations research and practices. These implications include extension of situational theory, reconceptualization of publics, better explanation of active communication behaviors and thus advancement in public relations research as well as providing a practical model for public relations practitioners when they design public relations strategies and programs.

Undoubtedly this new evolution of STP in STOPS will face its critics and will need to do so in order to continue to mature and maintain relevance as a theory. As noted the issue of addressing a mass public or the inclusion of and attention to inactive publics will likely remain a sticking point of some critics as it was not altered or clearly addressed in this

version of the theory. In addition it may become necessary based on new technology to segment publics in new ways such as by the media channels they use to seek information (see Lovari, Kim, Vibber, and Kim, in press). These changes or evolutions of the theory will be largely depending on the changing communication technologies. As mentioned, the referent criterion was reintroduced, though not specifically focused on culture. This variable will likely face further tests of its utility both generally and through more research in various cultures. Its cultural significance will also likely be influenced by an ever globalizing world of economies, consumers, and travelers.

The situational theory of publics, which began in 1966, has seen many changes and criticisms and will likely continue to see them if it is to survive as a theory. Through examining the more contemporary critiques and evolutions of this theory, a better understanding of its growth and its future challenges can be achieved.

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Senior practitioners' definitions of CSR and their impact on implementation of CSR initiatives

Rachel Kovacs, Adjunct Associate Professor, Department of Media Culture
College of Staten Island, CUNY, 2800 Victory Blvd., Staten Island, NY 10314
(Ph) 718-982-2541 (Fax) 718-982-2710; Rachel.Kovacs@csi.cuny.edu

This is the first stage of a working study of the ways in which senior communication professionals define and operationalize corporate social responsibility (CSR) and discuss the impact of their views on CSR initiatives. It explores the extent to which these definitions and understandings of CSR are shared by colleagues and other employees in their organization and how they may have changed over time, including adjustments for cultural norms and variance.

The author will briefly review how CSR, corporate responsibility (or CR, which is often substituted for CSR), and other related terms are defined in the scholarly literature of public relations and other fields. The focus will then shift to the methodology and breakdown of the sample. The results section will analyze interviewees' responses for their understandings of CSR, how their views may shape frameworks for corporate interactions and may catalyze initiatives with social or environmental impact.

Culturally-based variations in definitions and emphases for CSR can have significant impact on practices. Therefore, the author hopes to work with colleagues abroad to expand the initial study into a comparative one, varying interview protocols and samples, according to what is feasible in any given location. Such a study might help identify one or more viable, consensus-based definitions of CSR. It might also suggest that given cultural relativism, such definitions and associated norms may be impracticable for a "global" company working in "local" venues. If the former is true, then consensus-based, cross-culturally viable definitions might assist public relations professionals in their boundary spanning and environmental scanning functions.

Background to the study: A pedagogical problem

The impetus for this study was pedagogical; specifically, it was an outgrowth of the teaching of ethics and CSR to students of public relations and corporate communication at several universities over more than a decade. The author (2010) documented the processes and projects used to raise students' awareness of ethics and CSR. Students were exposed to principles and benchmarks for ethical and socially responsible communication behaviors, and

then applied these to case studies and campaigns that they undertook, primarily as part of their curricula.

The author (2005) had written that CSR should be a "push from within," woven into the very fabric of any organization, rather than externally driven by, for example, negative feedback from publics when there is corporate misdeed or a crisis. The difficulty the author experienced in trying to get students to define CSR was a prime motivator in undertaking this study. Most students could only identify CSR by its absence in a number of high-profile cases. They had a vague understanding of how individuals and organizations should have been socially responsible but they could not define either CSR or attendant behaviors.

The author's paper (2010), which documented these pedagogical problems, suggested that students, as future practitioners, needed to have a better grasp of CSR and ethical norms if they were to be expected to adhere to them in the workplace. In the discussion section, the author suggested that public relations and corporate communication educators needed to make such concepts concrete. Students could not be expected to implement what they did not understand.

At the same time, it was important to consult practitioners, who would hopefully better define CSR and ethics based on their own experiences. It was also important to set some parameters for CSR and ethical behavior accordingly, such that the accrued wisdom of senior communicators could guide graduates in making sound decisions for themselves and their organizations. In addition, who but practitioners would best be able to pinpoint the changing expectations and environmental variables that had an impact on how CSR has been defined and communicated to colleagues, clients, and other stakeholders?

Therefore, in the spring of 2010, the author created a set of questions that probed for definitions and norms for CSR. The questions also elicited communicators' feedback as to if and how those definitions and norms had an organizational impact. They were first posed to respondents in the UK in 2010 and then again in winter/spring of 2011. Prior to delving into the methodology, though, the author will explore CSR as it is reflected in the scholarly literatures.

Social science, management, and other perspectives on CSR

The perspectives on CSR from scholars are as just as divergent (or more so) than those of my interviewees. U.K. scholars, whose economy is based largely on social services state/public service norms, had a somewhat different set of expectations for CSR than those coming from a market-driven economy, such as the U.S. Moon (2005) related CSR to "societal

governance” and that it is “performed by government, social regulation, and markets” (p. 51). He discusses the transition from an implicit CSR (that grew out of business philanthropy) to the explicit CSR operating in the U.K. today, which he sees as a crisis in social governance. Moon relates current, explicit CSR, to new government regulation, social regulation, and market drivers, consistent with expectations for and monitoring of accountability, particularly in public sector institutions.

This reminded the author of the Conservatives' emphasis on "value for money" as reflected in *The Citizens Charter* (Prime Minister's Office, 1992) and broadcasting policy documents of the Thatcher era.

Robertson and Nicholson (1996), also British scholars, explored the CSR rhetoric that firms use in their publications. They studied whether the rhetoric was consistent with the firms' actions (whether they “walked the talk”) or if it was a substitute for action. Henderson (2001), a British economist, took yet another approach, which was to evaluate a corporation's contribution to sustainable development and engagement in “triple bottom line reporting” (p. 9). The latter approach focuses equally on financial, social, and environmental aspects of a corporation's performance. Stainer (2008) explored the role of CSR in making business decisions.

British scholarship (political science, management, etc., above) must be evaluated alongside that of scholars within primarily market-driven business environments (e.g., the U.S.), such as Carroll (2008), who offers a historical perspective on CSR, Bhattacharya, Korschun, & Sen (2009), who discuss the role of CSR initiatives, Ahmed and Machold (2004), who link quality and ethics in virtuous organizations, and Clarkson (1995), who evaluated corporate performance from the stakeholders' perspective. One may even turn to philosophers for the "imperative of responsibility," an axiom for Jonas (1979), as did Weitzman (2011), in his interview, below. Coming from a Latin American perspective, De Santos (2010) explores the institutionalization and legitimization of corporate social responsibility programs in Brazilian corporations.

One must also make reference to the role of local and global NGOs in catalyzing CSR efforts. The behaviors of many NGOS have confirmed what Castells (2000) suggested: When the nation-state fails to or is incapable of addressing certain issues, NGOs step in to fill the vacuum. Doh (2001) observed the rising power of NGOs. We have seen empirically, by merely watching the media, how NGOs have managed to make themselves part of the dialogue and policy decision-making process. The recent success of the Global Compact (2011) and the number of organizations that have voluntarily agreed to abide by the

Compact's Ten Principles of human rights, labor standards, and environmentally sustainable practices is a testament to the power of NGOs to "step in" and make a difference in the business world by triangulating with both business and government. NGOs' quest to increase targets' corporate social responsibility (CSR) can no longer be brushed aside. What follows is an account of how data were gathered.

Methods

The author created a flexible interview protocol consisting of 25 questions. Although not always grouped contiguously, questions roughly probed the following content areas: definitions of and synonyms for CSR, free association with other terms or synonyms that could signify CSR, and the author's prompting of terms sometimes associated with CSR, such as corporate citizenship, sustainability, and sustainable development. In addition, the author inquired about the relationship between the definitions of CSR and the implementation of CSR initiatives, the consistency of CSR definitions across organizations, minimum criteria for CSR, the question of making CSR practices mandatory, and monitoring, recording, and reporting of CSR initiatives.

From the outset, the author hoped to make this a global study. This protocol was initially used to conduct interviews in the UK. in spring 2010, to inquire about intra-national but also international and cultural differences and perceived nuances in CSR definition and implementation. The author therefore queried respondents as to their discussions with colleagues abroad in their own organizations and others as to CSR definitions and norms. The objective of these questions was to determine what, if any, differences emerged in CSR definitions that might constrain or facilitate a global application of CSR norms and initiatives. Finally, the author solicited respondents' feedback regarding any additional insights and "MOs" that concern CSR.

In June 2010, the author conducted "pilot" interviews of global corporate communicators and agency/consultancy executives based in the U.S., U.K., and Brazil. The author continued the interviews in the metropolitan New York area in winter and spring of 2011, with a broad cross-section of individuals. It was hoped that the data would lead to a revised, adaptable instrument for interviews with practitioners, in public relations agencies, research companies, and in-house departments across the globe. The breakdown of respondents is listed below.

Respondents

Those interviewed were senior communicators, executives, and former executives at public affairs, public relations and public relations research agencies, not-for-profit institutions, a New-York-based consulate, and a number of corporations. A total of 26 respondents from 24 institutions participated. There were three respondents from Ketchum; two West Coast senior communicators participated in conference call with the author. The other Ketchum interview took place in the New York office. There was an additional phone interview with a senior vice president at Siemens; all but three of the remaining interviews took place in respondents' offices.

Five senior communicators worked in not-for-profit institutions, two in international consultancies (one public affairs and one global business), eight in public relations agencies, two in public relations research organizations, one in the public affairs department of a New York-based foreign consulate, one in a global advertising agency, and seven in major corporations. For simplicity purposes, the advertising agency respondent was grouped with those in the public relations agencies. The respondents consisted of CEOs or former CEOs, presidents, senior vice presidents, partners, managing directors, directors of practices at public relations agencies and corporations, and other practitioners. At the end of this paper is a complete list of interviewees.

Results

The average length of the interview was one hour, although some were longer. All interviewees were highly articulate, eager, and expansive in responding to the protocol. Nevertheless, the author was startled on several occasions by responses. DeStefanis (2011) when asked about CSR, said that he did not think about it too much and that it was not really relevant to him. Yet, despite this protestation and a comment that sustainability was a buzzword, he referenced ethics, practices reflecting concern for employees, and principles reflecting CSR. Reinhard (2011) referred to CSR as an obsolete concept in need of radical thinking. He rejected "giving back" because, he maintained, corporations did not take anything. Despite this, support for corporate "social strategy" (below) appeared more an alternative to CSR than a denial of it.

The author was taken aback by the comments of Booth (2010): firms engage in CSR for ROI. "CSR ... the efforts of a company to give back... developing their reputation and adding equity to the brand." This was surprising inasmuch as the connection between giving back as CSR and yet engaging in it to optimize brand awareness seemed slightly paradoxical.

The author was also surprised by Walker's (2010) distinction between CSR and CR: "Non-Europeans need to know...in European terms, the "S" has been dropped. "S" means employees and trade unions." "S" issues are not part of CR, he said. The unions and social services take responsibility for this.

It was initially strange to this author that some respondents in public relations agencies and research firms said that they did not engage in CSR. They conceded that they advised their clients on CSR. On further reflection and after deeper probing, some of these respondents suggested that there was a CSR in the way that they functioned internally. They modified their definition of and criteria for CSR norms to embrace internal communication as well as organizational policies relating to environmental issues. So in sum, even though they may not have planned or implement CSR initiatives in the same sense as a corporation, employee relations and plant operations were managed through sustainable policies such as recycling and the use of energy-conserving technologies. In addition, their companies' ethos was embedded in practices that were transparent, and made extensive use of symmetrical communication, and relied on employee feedback. In the case of global public relations research organizations and agencies, responses indicated that the aforementioned practices were true on a global level.

The range of definitions and applications of CSR varied greatly. Some phrases that respondents used interchangeably with, as synonyms for, or instead of corporate social responsibility, included corporate responsibility, corporate citizenship, sustainability, and sustainable development. The exception was Reinhard, who stuck by the term "social strategy." When probed, respondents loosely defined alternate terms listed below and sometimes differentiated between them and CSR. In the discussion, the author will attempt to extrapolate any consensus among these definitions.

Across sectors, though, the most frequently used verbatim phrase associated with CSR was "giving back" (six responses). Suffice it to say here that the largest number of responses referred to concern for the environment, either explicitly or implicitly, through the word "sustainability." Another subgroup of responses pertained to ethics and behaving ethically. These including broad references to the "Golden Rule" and other dictums of subjective interest.

Although the author knew that definitions and applications of CSR would vary from respondent to respondent, she was clearly not prepared for Paluszek's (2011) assessment of the matter: "There are as many definitions of CSR as there are of public relations." The respondent sample for this study reflected that range of definitions. As for phrases that could

be substituted for or were synonymous with CSR, respondents used many phrases, including corporate responsibility, interchangeably with, as synonyms for, or instead of corporate social responsibility. Only Reinhard, who used the term, "social strategy" exclusively, was the exception. When probed, respondents loosely defined these alternate terms and where relevant, differentiated between them and CSR. Below, the author reviews these practitioners' definitions, grouping them together with similar terms and into categories that represent their emphases within CSR, providing direct quotes, and indicating the number of responses in parentheses.

Senior communicators' definition of CSR

Rockland commented that CSR is "One of the most poorly defined terms...intended to comprise an overview of how you do business." Although, as stated above, the most frequent phrase, verbatim, (6) was "giving back," the most frequent references were linked to environmentally sustainable behaviors (12). More generic/broader terms were "being a good neighbor" (2); "doing the right thing/o good" (2); "treat others as you would.../with respect" (2); "underlying drive/in fabric of corporation./community (2); "meeting needs of society/community" (10); and "programs for community/volunteerism (6).

The author considered the following terms more concrete, largely because one can find frameworks or subcategories to define them: "taking responsibility/meeting obligations" (10);

"being ethical" (4); and "corporate citizenship" (3). For instance, "being ethical," meant full transparency with employees; some respondents made this explicit to the author in an extended discussion of their organization's CSR practices. Respondents' use of synonyms follows.

Synonyms for CSR: Other terms/concepts for CSR (multiple terms per person)

The following terms and phrases were offered by respondents when they were asked to free associate for CSR. Where two or more people responded similarly, the numbers appear in brackets. Two respondents did not specify terms, for discrete reasons. Spangler (2010) said he intentionally doesn't use terms for CSR; CSR should be in the DNA and values of an organization; it doesn't warrant a label. Booth (2010) did not commit to any given term or group of terms because he felt that "Other terms for CSR depend on stakeholders...ROI... stakeholders look for this." Some articulated their views of CSR: "performance with a

purpose” (Pepsico, as quoted by Weiner); Walker (2010) “Do no harm, do your best, do what is sustainable;” Weitzman (2011) “general vocabulary of human rights--international issue;” Weldon (2011) “value system within the company;” and Laufer-Rottman (2011) tag line-”We are all connected.”

Terms and phrases offered included philanthropy (2); corporate giving; environment/(al) impact, sustainability, sustainable development (8); cause marketing; community/relations, service, commitment; sustainability of community (5); corporate citizen(ship) (2), good citizen, citizenship becomes volunteerism; public affairs (2); public responsibility; to be global; global outlook; social commitment; social awareness (2), social strategy; to do the right thing; whatever we do is right; treat people the way you want to be treated; be overly generous; ethical corporate behavior; being an example, being a leader in the non-profit world; giving back (3); corporate responsibility (2); being a good neighbor; setting up; organizing green impact; CSR is (an) “umbrella” term (2); and (backlash term) “greenwashing.” Here one can observe an emphasis on socially appropriate, community-minded activities and environmentally sustainable practices.

Respondents' definitions of corporate citizenship, sustainability, and sustainable development

Some respondents felt that "all three terms are (pretty) interchangeable (2)" but what follows is how the majority defined each of these three terms:

Corporate Citizenship: the following are direct quotes from respondents: “To be present and active in community; give back to it”; “Think of yourself as a citizen who has responsibility for conscious behavior toward people and institutions and the environment;” “Focus on citizen part of the community in which you are operating – get involved – be part of the community – teams, parades, etc; “ and “more than CSR.” The latter was broken down specifically into two categories. The first focused on playing by the rules, ethical practice and community service. The second emphasized contributing to a body of knowledge and best practices, being an industry leader, and enhancing the profession.

Sustainability: This was defined, variously, as “the triple bottom line: economic, environmental, social;” “operating in a way that respects human and natural resources;” “what you can do to conserve non-renewable resources;” and “doing the right things; environmentally friendly.” In contrast, Eisenmann (2011) pointed to a “big difference between service industry and manufacturing” when it comes to CSR. She made this

distinction on the basis of her understanding that service-related industries are focused on developing and retaining talent and in future thought leadership, whereas the manufacturing sector is far more concerned about what industry will bring in terms of materials and processes (e.g., Coke bottles) and their sustainability.

Sustainable development: This concept was much more difficult for respondents to define and distinguish from sustainability; in fact, many could not do so. Here are some of the responses:

“business is growing with this sensitivity (the respondent was referring to sustainability);” and “using resources responsibly for growth.” Another respondent elaborated on this: “Every company is growth oriented-if growth is development, sustainable practices should be implemented from the start.”

Given that there was some ambiguity about what sustainable development is and does, the author referred to the Brundtland Report (1987), which had been cited by Paluszek (2011, p. 6), "Sustainable development meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" According to the Report itself, it embraces two main concepts: "the concept of 'needs', in particular the essential needs of the world's poor, to which overriding priority should be given; and "the idea of limitations imposed by the state of technology and social organization on the environment's ability to meet present and future needs." This statement strongly suggests that there is a likely conflict of interest between the "greater good" and a technologically-driven society, which compromises the environment.

Extent to which respondents' views were consistent with those of others in their organizations

All but two respondents said there was a consistent view of CSR among colleagues in their organization, although employees sometimes engaged with CSR in varying ways and degrees of enthusiasm (e.g., Ricca, 2011); In addition, a few in agencies and one consultant said their views at times diverged from (or they needed to represent those of) their clients. A few said that their CSR involvement was limited to advising their clients on how to handle CSR matters, but when questioned, most practitioners in agencies/consultancies, or research organizations implemented CSR measures to increase transparency and improve internal communication and feedback.

The discussion then moved to baseline organizational norms for CSR practices.

Baseline norms for CSR

The author probed for the minimum commitment to increasing CSR that should be made by a senior manager, public relations practitioner, or employee. This question was misunderstood by a number of respondents. Therefore, prior to recording interviewees' answers, the author carefully emphasized that the question was not implying, "What is the minimum CSR with which one can get away?" Rather, the question was designed to establish a baseline for good practices. The author put it in terms of, "If you had to set a bar, as baseline for CSR, what could you not live without? The most succinctly put response was "Do no harm" (2). These responses will be broken down in terms of sector.

Public relations agencies, research organizations and consultancies stressed environmental measures, ethics, transparency on internal and external levels, employee input on initiatives and communication processes and use of work space and employee opportunities for volunteerism. As Weldon (2011) put it: "People are remembered for two things—You did something that exceeds their expectations ...OR...you tried to pull a fast one...Teach those lessons to those who come on board."

On the corporate level, respondents emphasized the importance of executive volunteerism and donations, as well as continuing education in ethics training. For a public corporation, transparency and equal opportunity were the most essential CSR norms. A few, though, would not commit to a particular norm or set of norms. One respondent said that an artificial mandate was impractical and that any baseline for CSR would depend on what organization was trying to achieve. Another reinforced the need for the head of CSR head to have a seat at the table with senior management. Yet another emphasized the need to involve people with high potential.

In the not-for-profit realm, the bar for CSR was expressed in terms of how one relates to staff, in the way that one conducts business dealings, in the sense of being a good global citizen, in how one behaves in a professional environment. It was also important that be an organization's actions be consistent with its mission statement, that one must speak the truth and speak out when warranted, and that staff and senior management have all information they need.

The government baseline should focus on the environment and the little things people can do to improve things. The caveat, though, it that it also depends on organization's type and size.

Should CSR practices be made mandatory?

To this question, only 7 out of 26 respondents replied positively. Among those 7 supporters of mandatory measures, 1 clearly felt that it was infeasible to enforce such measures. A number of those who believed CSR practices should not be made mandatory were concerned about the extent of government regulation and possible excesses in that regard. Four respondents were unsure if CSR should be mandated. The remaining 15 respondents included one who could not comment because the interview was incomplete, and 14 respondents were against imposition of such mandates.

Further respondent insights into CSR

Monitoring, recording, reporting CSR activities

Almost all respondents engaged in some type of CSR monitoring, recording, and reporting. The reporting was often both in-agency, for internal uses, and for external stakeholders (e.g., annual reports). Respondents were not of one mind regarding the value of this activity to the organization. Spangler (2011) questioned the value, motivations, and expense of such reporting to “prove a point.” He said it was more important to live that commitment than to report it. Yet regardless of if and how each organization monitored, recorded, and reported its activities, it put its own “personal stamp” on how CSR initiatives were chosen and implemented.

The relationship between definitions of CSR and the initiatives chosen

There appeared to be a direct correlation between the ways in which senior communicators defined and framed CSR (including synonyms and alternative phraseology provided above) and the types of CSR initiatives chosen. That is, the CSR initiatives were a direct reflection of those definitions and core priorities areas. Organizations that defined CSR primarily in terms of the environment, would adopt measures to maximize energy-saving measures; where respondents prioritized the community, various options for volunteerism were given high priority. Where the respondents expressed a concern for global literacy, then CSR took the form of literacy programs (*Room to Read*; Kinch, 2011). In those agencies where internal communication satisfaction was a priority, then feedback forms, organization-wide global conferences, and other vehicles for employee input were instituted. This is not to imply that the respondents were single-minded. For almost all the organizations, there were multiple interests and initiatives operating at any given time and multi-dimensional programs for each interest. For instance, Verizon fostered increased community technological capabilities by

providing technology (hardware and software), matching grants for specific projects of its employees' choice, and community volunteerism (Ricca, 2011).

Cross-cultural knowledge and initiatives

In a joint interview with Kinch, Fitzgerald (2011, referring to Ketchum, regionally/globally) said: "Commitment to act responsibly in different societies is interpreted differently." This comment could be linked to the discussion of cross-cultural variance in CSR norms that transpired further into the interviews. Some respondents said their CSR views differed from those of colleagues in other organizations, which could be related to variations in industry-wide expectations and norms or might also have been attributable to cross-cultural differences.

Many of the respondents had some sense that cultural variations might affect CSR and/or they engaged in dialogue with colleagues about these variations; Some communicators' knowledge, though, was only second-hand or nominal. Surprisingly, approximately one-third of all respondents had little or no dialogue about, knowledge of, or experience in dealing with global CSR issues. The author's initial reaction was that a lack of cross-cultural savoir faire is an organizational liability. On the one hand, this may be considered a personal bias that fails to give credit where credit is due—in other words, organizations may, for valid, strategic reasons, choose to put intercultural dialogue and research on the back burner rather than engage in the more mainstream "Think global, act local" MO. Nevertheless, the fact that approximately two-thirds of the respondents did engage in intercultural dialogue that had relevance to their CSR choices seems an acknowledgement of being inter-culturally savvy has undisputed value to an organization and its senior communicators and policy makers.

How sincere are senior communicators about CSR and its implementation?

Finally, despite what the author perceived as most respondents' sincere interest in and efforts on behalf of CSR, one must not forget that many observers and some practitioners are rather circumspect, if not cynical, about the value of and motivations behind CSR initiatives. The author recalls Crooks' (2005) assertion that for most companies, CSR was "little more than a cosmetic treatment." Booth (2011) was straightforward, not cynical, when he maintained that "Many companies see CSR as very self-serving. Many clients have implemented CSR initiatives...colleagues promote CSR so that stakeholders and consumers are aware of the company."

One has to assume that credible practitioners have credible reasons to assume that some organizations use CSR as a sort of "window dressing" for less-than-altruistic purposes. Nevertheless, if one is to make some general observations about the particular set of responses that emerged from the interviews, it may be said that the "economic" third of the "triple bottom line" for CSR took a back seat to environmental and social/community concerns. One can never be too sure, but during an average one to one-and-a-half hour interview per person, the author never doubted the sincerity of the respondents' commitment to CSR. Altruism is hard to judge but it appeared that ROI was not their front-of-mind motivator.

Further, although levels of commitment and consistency of CSR definitions varied somewhat laterally and horizontally across some levels of corporations, upper management and executives were generally of one mind as to CSR. Their CSR definitions/concepts were clearly reflected in how they prioritized initiatives undertaken. In choosing CSR programs, community relations, literacy, and humanitarian initiatives placed high on the agenda. In terms of the environment, respondents genuinely engaged in multiple sustainability measures. Some companies concentrated on preferred initiatives (e.g., going paperless) but all developed some measures for conserving energy.

In addition to any community and environmental measures, public relations agencies, consultancies, and research firms and a few corporations put a premium on their internal relations and their responsibilities to their employees. They created multiple vehicles for employee feedback and emphasized the need for transparency and ethical behaviors across their organizations, globally. These values and this organizational ethos were also espoused by respondents in not-for profit organizations. It will be interesting to see if respondent data in the next set of interviews processed in summer 2011 will yield consistent data. So far the interview data gathered in the UK in June/July 2011 suggests that senior communicators take their CSR obligations as, if not more, seriously than the original respondents and like the latter, do not see CSR as an "add-on" but as an integral part of their mandate and part of the organizational fabric.

Discussion

This study, as constructed and executed, has its limitations. The sample, while yielding important data, is not large or representative enough to speak to the CSR intentions and "walk" of any one sector or all of them combined. In addition, any continuation of this study should involve an in-depth look at the written communications that represent organizational

concepts of CSR and resultant initiatives. This would include annual reports, press materials, and any non-proprietary official or unofficial publication or Web document germane to CSR.

It should also include parallel, cross-cultural interviews with senior communicators, managers, and executives abroad. Colleagues on several continents have signed on to continue the project in their home countries. Thus, this effort launches a longitudinal, global research study to track those whose definitions set the bar for CSR and are the basis for implementing programs benefitting communities, the environment, and internal publics. The role of new technologies in CSR discussions, the development of CSR initiatives, and the dissemination of CSR information is another, related avenue of communication research that has not been part of the current research agenda or interview protocol. It should be included in future iterations and would be important area of respondent feedback. This is not only because of the impact of stakeholder activism but is also due to the ways in which hand-held devices and applications have become "mainstream" in business.

Finally, it would be helpful to revisit the original respondents in two to three years to know if their experiences or other variables have changed their views and priorities. The author has already completed a second interview with one U.K. respondent who had been interviewed in 2010. The interview clarified and reinforced everything this individual had previously said.

Aside from an obvious, candid look at the study's limitations, it is important to see this work in the context of a historical perspective, which should be further developed in ongoing studies of senior communicators and CSR. Such a perspective would minimally start with the birth of the U.S. consumer movement and hopefully go back as far as or further than the social welfare systems of the U.K. and Europe. A comprehensive study that is based on both in-depth interview data and archival data would assist both scholars and practitioners, many of whom bear direct responsibility for communicating CSR to both internal and external publics in their professional roles.

Given burgeoning stakeholder activism and a global focus on sustainability and human rights concerns, shedding light on CSR is both timely and universally pertinent. There is always the potential for boycotts and more aggressive activist tactics, yet today those wanting to change corporate policies may do so by investing only in those companies that are socially responsible, and moreover, by casting their votes at shareholder meetings and through proxy ballots. Investment options now include "social choice" portfolios. Corporate behaviors are clearly under more careful scrutiny than ever before.

Although it has not been not a primary focus of this seminal study, countries' voluntary or less voluntary compliance with CSR, conventional wisdom tells us that CSR norms may be rooted in diverging views and degrees of prioritization of CSR. Culture-specific factors may create differences in the way CSR is defined, interpreted, and implemented from nation to nation or even within a nation (One example might be the somewhat devolved but non-independent U.K. countries of Scotland and Wales, for example.).

Therefore it is of concern to this author and probably to others that a significant number of the practitioners interviewed had little or no first-hand knowledge of cross-cultural definitions of CSR or cultural variables that might cause CSR norms and values to diverge from Anglo-American CSR frameworks. Fewer still had direct contact with a cultural interpreter in a host country. One would hope that in the increasingly globalized marketplace, some "anthology" or database of culturally-nuanced standards or frameworks for CSR and ethics would be cross-referenced for applicability according to province, country, region, or other relevant basis.

To come full circle, this study began as a way to help students better define and understand the scope of CSR. The idea was that armed with this knowledge, they would be better prepared for the social responsibility and ethical challenges that are likely to confront them as novice workplace practitioners. This study has not identified "the last word" in CSR but has hopefully been a starting point for recognition of senior communicators' CSR thinking and the impact that it has on organizational initiatives. To be continued, as the expression goes.

Interviewees (In Order of Interviews)

U.K.—June 2010

Jim Spangler, Vice President for Global Communication, Tenneco
Norman Booth, Vice President, Coyne Public Relations
Mario Mendes-Neto, Planning and Research Team, Petrobras, Brazil (Incomplete Interview)
Peter Walker, Executive Chairman, Pielle Consulting Group

U.S.—February-April 2011

Mark Weiner, President and CEO, Prime Research Group
Charlene Haykel, President, The Haykel Group
Dan Soulis, Managing Director, Echo Research, U.S.
David Rockland, Partner, CEO, Ketchum Public Relations
Tim Jones, Vice President for Healthcare, Makovsky and Company
Marianne Eisenmann, Head of Determinus, Chico Chandler Agency
Al Atkinson, Former VP for Sales and Marketing, Verizon
Sean Fitzgerald, Partner and Managing Director, Ketchum West, Corporate Responsibility Practice, (Phone Interview)
Melissa Kinch, Senior Vice President/Group Manager, Ketchum West, Leader, Corporate Reputation for Ketchum California (Phone Interview)
Francis Walton, Vice President, RF Binder
Rick Ricca, Director of Public Relations, Verizon
Hannah Laufer-Rottman, Executive Director, Palms for Life Fund
Mark Weitzman, Director of Government Relations, Simon Wiesenthal Center, New York
Ari Fishkind, Director of Public Affairs, Corporate Social Responsibility, IBM
Jim Siegel, Director of Marketing and Communications, Healthcare Chaplaincy
James Weldon, Partner, Strategic Directions (Global)
Keith Reinhard, Chairman Emeritus, DDB Worldwide
Ray Shepherd, CEO, American Red Cross, Northern NJ Chapter
Neil Heyman, Executive Director, Southern New York Associates
Alexandra Peard, Director of Media Relations, Australian Consulate, New York
Carl de Stefanis, President, IVI International
Jack Whaley, Senior Vice President for Marketing and Communication, Siemens USA

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From yearly to daily press meetings The development of the government press conference in Sweden

Larsåke Larsson
Örebro University
Email: larsake.larsson@oru.se

Press relations can be regarded as the most important aspect of governmental PR, and press conferences are a significant component of these relations. This paper presents the historical development of Swedish governmental press relations in terms of the use and form of meetings with the press with a focus on press conferences. These sessions can reasonably be regarded as the most standardized form of group contact a government has with the media. Historically the press conference has been the almost exclusive form of government-press relations, alongside the circulation of press releases.

The article, part of a research project about the Swedish government's press conferences past and present, aims to ascertain the significance of these conferences for the government and its communication process. Questions of interest are: What changes and developments can be identified and what differences can be noted between the terms of office of different governments? How are the conferences conducted over the years? What are the subjects/ topics of the conferences?

In Sweden, governmental press conferences first emerged as a notable phenomenon at the beginning of the Second World War, though the occasional meetings had been arranged earlier in the 1930s. Internationally, this new type of government relations arose late in Sweden; in Germany and the US, regular meetings with the assembled press began prior to the First World War (Puchan 2006; Kumar 2007). However, both began in connection with war, in line with Mattelart's (1994: xiii) thesis that war is an essential component of the history of international communication.

Literature review: International overview

The relationship between media and government is described and analysed in a number of studies, both generally and in terms of the forms and methods of this relationship. Government press conferences per se, however, have been studied to a rather limited extent, with the exception of Kumar's extensive studies of the president's conferences in the US.

In Germany, as early as the 1870s, a press bureau was installed at the Foreign Ministry and press conferences were introduced as a new form of contact with (selected) media representatives. With the outbreak of war in 1914, the government established a press

office, mostly producing information and propaganda concerning the war. In the Weimar period, the state as well as the private sector seems to have allocated considerable resources for press relations and to have undertaken extensive press contacts. But the circumstances changed drastically in 1933 when the Nazis took power, with media being shut down, censored, or transformed into a state propaganda apparatus (Nessman 2000; Puchan 2006; Bentele and Wehmeier 2009).

In some British journalism studies from the 1970s, government press conferences are briefly depicted. Tunstall (1971) found that Whitehall journalists spent nine percent of their time at “communal meetings (e.g. press conf.)” while face-to-face interviews with politicians and officials were the most prevalent form of contact. Half of the interviewed correspondents spent 1–4 hours a week at press conferences, while the rest spent 5–9 hours a week, or in some cases even more, at those sessions. Briefings, however, were a more frequent format than press conferences; such sessions were held every weekday at 10 Downing Street in the morning and at Whitehall in the afternoon, the morning meetings sometimes being led by the prime minister himself, but mostly by a press secretary (Tunstall 1970; Cockerell et al. 1984).

Government press meetings on US soil, in the sense of presidential press conferences, were initiated a century ago by Theodore Roosevelt (president 1901–09), who invited the press to meet him, though only smaller selected groups. Regular press conferences began with President Wilson just prior to the First World War. In the subsequent years, press conferences were used to highly varying degrees at the White House. Franklin Roosevelt gave a total of over 1,000 conferences (1933–45), on average 84 conferences per year, though many were short. From the 1950s onward (Eisenhower followed by Kennedy) most American presidents arranged 20–30 conferences per year, among them the three latest, Clinton, G.W. Bush, and Obama with around 25 conferences each per year (Kumar 2007). Notable exceptions are Nixon and Reagan, with 6–7 meetings per year.

The history of the American press conference has, according to Kumar (2007), passed through four phases. In the first period the meetings were off-the-record, with the president answering questions without agreeing to be quoted. In the second period, Roosevelt held conferences where he gave more information and presented his policies, often in seminar-like meetings, though still off-the-record. A new phase began with Eisenhower, with the press conferences being televised and the president standing at a podium instead of sitting at a table with the reporters. In the latest period, starting in the 1980s, the conferences were remodelled in several ways (French 1982; Kumar 2005).

One such development is that alongside the solo conferences that used to be the norm, so-called joint conferences are also held, mostly together with foreign leaders. Another change is that presidents choose to hold short question-and-answer sessions with a smaller pool of journalists instead of traditional conferences with a range of questions from a large body of reporters. These changes were intended to reduce the potential negative impact of these events if the presidents stood alone confronted by many questions of a problematic nature (Kumar 2007).

According to Grossman and Kumar (1979), during a presidency the relationship between the president and the press passes through three phases: alliance, competition, and detachment. The alliance phase is marked by a partnership in which the media look for interesting stories and personalities around the new administration and in which the president dominates the agenda. The second phase, in full swing by the end of the first year, has a more adversarial style with reporters looking for problems and conflicts, and the chief executive attempting to steer the media. In the third period, often starting when a president announces intent to run for re-election, the relationship is managed in a more controlled and structured manner with the aim of achieving massive exposure for the president.

Some presidents favour press conferences as an instrument to express policy, while others avoid them, disliking the media or preferring other means of communicating (e.g. Kennedy in the first case and Nixon and Ford in the other). Carolyn Smith, defining the press conference as “a semi-institutional, quasi-spontaneous, inherently adversarial public encounter,” argues in line with this that the exchanges between the presidents and the press are based on a fundamentally adversarial relationship. The level of conflict has, not surprisingly, differed between presidents over the years, and has also changed during the same presidency, with Reagan as one example (Smith 1990, see also Eshbaugh-Soha 2003).

Methodology

This study, as part of the research project *Press Conferences as a Public Arena* (The Swedish Research Council), is based on three types of sources. One is archival material (from the National Archive, the Central Government Archive, and the Social Democratic Party Archive). A second type is diaries, memoirs, and biographies (ca. 25) by/about a number of ministers and some other politicians, among them the extensive, almost daily, diary of Tage Erlander, prime minister for the long period of 23 years (1946–1969). The third source consists of interviews with former prime ministers, state secretaries, and press officers, as

well as journalists with lengthy experience of reporting on parliamentary and governmental affairs.

Findings

The story of governmental press conferences

During the first three decades of the 20th century the contacts between the government and the press were very limited. Individual contact, however, did occur when a reporter happened to meet a minister in parliament, but no group press meetings were organized, except on some rare occasions, as when the prime minister had to resign in 1932 after having received economic support from the finance magnate Kreuger whose business empire crashed that year. The government was scarcely interested in organizing media contacts (though several prime ministers had been journalists and editors before entering government). Politicians informed the citizens not via the media but by giving general speeches at party and public meetings, while the political news reporting for the press mostly consisted of summarizing such speeches. On the whole, national politics was of little interest for the news media in these decades.

Government-press relations changed considerably when WWII broke out in 1939. The interest in meeting was strengthened on both sides. Shortly after the war began, the government summoned the media to provide information about its war response, but above all to warn the press concerning how to write about the belligerents, or more precisely, to be careful in expressing opinions about the German and Soviet rulers. Relations with Nazi Germany were extremely delicate, and it was feared that Sweden would be drawn into the war. These admonitions did not however stop all newspapers' criticisms, which soon resulted in a number of sanctions being imposed by the state authorities, among them indictments of editors, transport prohibition of newspapers, and threats of censorship (though censorship was never implemented).

World War II and the extensive international media presence in Stockholm

During the war, Stockholm became a rallying-point for international war correspondents. Up to 140 correspondents used the Swedish capital as an observation post for reporting on the war, the British and American ones looking into Central and East Europe and the German ones looking west. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs established a press room at the Grand Hotel, where most of the correspondents lived. The press room was staffed by a secretary

from the ministry who dealt with accreditations and assisted the journalists with identity and ration cards, travel tickets, translators, and housing.

For these reporters (and for the Swedish press corps) the foreign ministry arranged more or less regular press conferences, with separate sessions for reporters from the allied and axis countries. The same procedure was used for study trips organized by the ministry.

The media environment in Stockholm became highly internationalized by all these visitors and the foreign correspondents became a distinctive feature of the social and cultural life of the city. Some obviously had a dual role, also being involved in “underground diplomacy” and the intelligence activities that characterized the city during this period. Among the reporters were not only legendary war correspondents but also resistance refugees like Willy Brandt and Bruno Kreisky, future prime ministers of Germany and Austria. Some reporters remained in Sweden for a long time after the war, and the press room continued operating for a year and a half after the armistice, not closing until late autumn 1946.

Shortly after the war began, the government established a special Information Bureau for domestic “propaganda” purposes. With Sweden isolated and lacking imports of foodstuffs, not least coffee, as well as important raw materials like rubber for producing tyres, one of the tasks of the bureau was to inform people about how to manage their lives in times of scarcity. A second task was to warn the public about spies and not to speak with strangers about military matters like troop transports and defence installations. A special logo, “A Swede keeps quiet” in the form of a tiger (as the words for “keeping quiet” and “tiger” are the same in Swedish), was launched, and it still remains in the mind of the people today. While not involving formal censorship, a third task was to monitor the press and prevent it from revealing military secrets. The very first public relations professionals in Sweden were recruited to the Information Bureau as press officers.

The post-war period

After the war, the government continued to arrange press conferences for the domestic press (and for the international correspondents staying in Sweden). Such conferences were normally held monthly or sometimes twice a month, and during the first peace years they mostly dealt with post-war matters such as how to handle all the refugees from especially the Baltic countries and what to do with German assets left in Sweden.

In autumn 1946, just as the press room service for the international correspondents was being shut down, the Swedish prime minister of 14 years, Per Albin Hansson, collapsed and died on a tram on his way home from work. To replace him as cabinet leader, the rather

unknown minister of education, Tage Erlander (a Social Democrat, like Hansson), was appointed, and he held the office for the next 23 years. He initially held one, or during some periods two press conferences a month, often together with the foreign minister, mostly for a limited number of invited chief political editors. These conferences come to an end after the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1948, to prevent the communist press from gleaning any insights into the governmental affairs surrounding this international crisis. After a three-year hiatus, the press conferences were resumed.

Erlander's conferences in the 1950s were often off-the-record with the character of briefings (called "confidential" in the invitation), or when meeting the editors of his "own" press (the Social Democratic press), could also have a conversational and deliberative character (Erlander 2001–2010).

In 1953 he recruited a young man to perform all kinds of secretarial duties, among them handling press contacts – Olof Palme. These two men, representing two generations and two different backgrounds, soon become a close team relying on and stimulating each other. They alone constituted the prime minister's chancellery, apart from a female typist and a porter. Journalists had no problem directly phoning the PM or his secretary, or knocking on the porter's door to be let in to see the PM.

Ten years later (1963) the first press officer was appointed. He introduced a new form of press conference inspired by how President Kennedy conducted his press contacts. At these "gala" conferences, arranged four times a year, the agenda was free and the press could ask the prime minister and a couple of other ministers whatever questions they wished. On the first occasion, 59 Swedish and 34 foreign newspapermen (all were male), crowded the MPs' meeting room, but unlike the American model, radio and television were not admitted. These governmental "show programs" (as the headline of a major newspaper dubbed the conference the next day) did not, however, work well from either the arranger's or the media's perspective. The press found them boring and unwieldy. After three years, and reduced to one conference a year, they were replaced by the previous format with the prime minister briefing smaller groups of editors and political reporters, normally once a month. At the last "gala" conference, radio and television were allowed to record the session.

These grand press conferences were something new for Sweden; previously Erlander had only invited selected chief editors, mostly from the own party press /.../ All questions were allowed, and several ministers attended to answer them, in Swedish, so those foreign reporters who did not speak the language had interpreters. They were very polite and respectful meetings, but took a long time because of all the presentations by the ministers (Interview Lars Bergqvist, the first press officer, 2010-06-10).

Olof Palme and the modern press conference

When Palme became prime minister in 1969, the press contacts changed considerably in form and frequency, both the organized group contacts as well as the more individual ones. He was press minded – interested in having press contacts and enjoying them. He regularly, and on an almost daily basis, met with journalists, often personally or by telephone, and often he himself made the call. In a sense he lived with the press. Journalists lined up to interview him. He appeared practically every day in newspapers, radio, and television (Björk 2008).

With Palme, the modern press conference first appears in Sweden, with the prime minister calling for meetings with the press to deal with a specific political issue or deliver a statement, and with the gathered press, now mostly news reporters rather than political editors, responding with questions and interviews. He also began to have informal occasional meetings with the press corps after meetings and parliamentary sessions:

He was very informal. After meetings he'd stand there talking to the journalists, which so to speak was a kind of press conference. The more formal press conferences were connected to larger political events and questions and to problems of different kinds. Another type was formalized contacts with the Social Democratic press and its editors, of a more political character (Berit Rollén, Palme's press secretary 1969–74)

Like his predecessor, Palme had a great deal of contact with the press on his travels around Sweden to meet and talk with local party members; this contact took the form of meetings with local reporters from the (few) local newspapers, local radio, and regional television. These press meetings could be planned by the local party chapter, but at the same time were natural and regular features of his visits around the country.

Palme was very internationally oriented. He travelled extensively abroad, not least to the third world, and was visited by many foreign leaders, especially those representing left-wing and developing countries. In his period as prime minister, joint press conferences with foreign statesmen were thereby introduced (Östberg 2011).

The first non-socialist government

The Swedish political playing field changed completely in 1976 when the Social Democratic Party and Olof Palme lost the election, making way for a non-socialist government for the first time since 1932. The new government was formed by the Conservative Party, Liberal Party, and Centre Party, the last being the dominant coalition partner and its leader Fälldin becoming the new prime minister.

For the new cabinet leader, the relations with the press were more cautious and strained compared to his predecessor. Fälldin was less outgoing, called for fewer press conferences, and initiated few contacts with individual reporters. He also appeared to be more reluctant to talk with the press informally after meetings etc. He was uncomfortable with being in the television spotlight. Compared to the previous term, fewer press sessions with an international agenda were arranged, due to his focus on domestic politics (Fälldin 1998).

Some of Fälldin's conferences, however, did make history. At his very first press meeting as the new prime minister, he declared that the other parties in the government coalition had forced him to open a new nuclear power plant, violating his most important electoral promise. The other came when he resigned, again over the nuclear power issue (For a short period a Liberal party minority government replaced him and his party). The third and perhaps most serious press conference ever for a Swedish prime minister took place during his second mandate period, when a nuclear-armed Soviet submarine ran aground close to shore right in the main Swedish naval port; some minutes before the conference he had ordered the supreme commander "to hold the border" when other Soviet ships were approaching:

The pressroom was crowded with people and I started by saying we were fairly certain that the submarine had nuclear weapons. They (the journalists) were on pins and needles and went totally quiet. It was such a shock, the atomic weapons, and they didn't get to ask any questions. /.../ But one reporter in the back rows understood the news value and took off. Then the others recovered and left to file their reports. /.../ It was, without exception, the most tense situation I have ever experienced (Interview Torbjörn Fälldin 2009-06-24).

Social Democrats back in business

In the 1982 election a new political shift occurred, reinstating Palme as prime minister. In this later period of his career, group contacts in the form of press conferences increased compared to previously, as the demands from journalists for individual interviews became too burdensome (Björk 2008).

When Palme was murdered in 1986, Ingvar Carlsson, another of "Erlander's boys", was elected the new leader of the Social Democratic Party and prime minister. He was more restrictive with his press relations, not in terms of the number of conferences, but in closeness to the press. On the other side, informal and spontaneous meetings with the press corps after e.g. parliamentary sessions became more and more common, alongside the ordinary press conferences in the government's press room:

We held /ordinary/ press conferences when there was some important issue, when we presented an important bill, when there were cabinet changes, when we had party leader negotiations, or when we were visited by foreign statesmen /.../ But one could say that we had impromptu press meetings, as the press gathered before me wherever I appeared, constant “standing” press conferences actually (Interview Ingvar Carlsson 2010-05-10).

From the latter part of the 1980s it thus became ever more common for there to be occasional meetings with the assembled press corps when the prime minister attended different events or appeared in parliament. The usual routine here was for the journalists to catch up with the prime minister in the hall just outside the chamber after a debate or information session, stand close to him with their microphones, and ask questions both about what was discussed in the chamber but also – and often most important for them – other relevant issues of the day.

The last 20 years 1991–2010 – Shifting governments

In the last twenty years Sweden has passed through five governmental mandate terms with four prime ministers (1991–1994, 1994–1998, 1998–2002, 2002–2006, 2006–2010). Two of these governments were social democratic and two centre-right with one of the social democratic prime ministers holding power during two terms (or, more precisely, two-and-a-half terms, as there was a leadership shift during the 1994–1998 term).

In 1991 the Social Democratic Party again lost the election, and was replaced by a conservative-led centre-right government headed by Carl Bildt. Prime Minister Bildt had the same international focus as Palme, but faced several severe domestic problems, among them economic ones. He also turned out to be as press minded as Palme, liking to meet and deal with journalists, and not hesitating to correct and reprimand them.

In the next election the political landscape switched again, reinstating the Social Democratic Party in government with Ingvar Carlsson as prime minister. However, after two years he decided to resign, leaving the post to Göran Persson who then continued as prime minister for ten years. Like some of his predecessors, he maintained close relations with the press through ongoing press contacts, though he took no contact by himself. The system of impromptu press meetings wherever he showed up had now become almost a daily scenario.

For me press conferences were very pleasant /events/, and they belonged to the everyday life of a prime minister /.../ Not only the planned and organized ones in the controlled environment at Rosenbad /PM’s ministry/ but also, and mostly, the casual and spontaneous ones, for example standing outside the parliamentary chamber with the press after a debate or question session (Interview Göran Persson 2011-02-16).

After the Conservatives, together with the other three non-socialist parties, once again took power in 2006, a partly new style of press relations was introduced. Besides the traditional conferences at Rosenbad, the four party leaders /ministers regularly held press conferences together at different locations such as factories, schools, and railway stations, or even in the gardens of their private homes, to present and promote current political issues concerning schools, etc. Furthermore, the departmental ministries altogether arranged many more press conferences than in previous terms, especially the educational and social ministries, perhaps because of the need of the four parties and their ministers to attract their own media attention and publicity.

A closer look at the last twenty years

For the last 20 years, from 1991/92 onwards, the Swedish government's press conferences have been registered at the government archive and later archived at the Swedish National Archive; previously no such records were kept. The records/web lists contain data about dates, places, topics, and participants.

To start with the context, the entire government (all ministries) have arranged in total 2,450 press conferences. Most of these have been carried out by its foreign, justice, finance, education, and social ministers with over 300 conferences each. One third of the conferences consist of presentations of reports and investigations, while another third deal with information about decisions and new bills, or briefings about different items of business being dealt with in the ministries.

Narrowing the scope to the central ministry, 410 press conferences were arranged at the Prime Minister's Office 1992–2010, an average of 22 conferences per year. The frequency of these conferences varies considerably over the years, from around 10 meetings/year for a few years in the 1990s to over 40 meetings in 2001 and 2009. The beginning of each mandate period, as well as the last year of each (election years), shows a higher frequency of conferences than the years in between. Not surprisingly, more conferences are arranged when the Swedish prime minister are European Union chairman.

The number of press conferences differs between governments and governmental terms. In the first period (1991/92–94), the centre-right government gave close to two conferences a month. In the following three terms (1994–2006) with social democratic governments the interest in press meetings was somewhat lower. In the last period (2006–2010) the centre-right government has arranged more than two sessions per month. More precisely, the first centre-right government held 1.9 press conferences per month on average,

and the current one held 2.4 conferences per month, while the social democratic governments in the intervening period stand for 1.7 conferences per month. If the years when Sweden has chaired the EU are excluded (2001 and 2009), we find that the Social Democrats held 1.5 conferences per month while the last and current centre-right government held 2.0 conferences on average per month. A tendency toward more extensive press relations can thus be seen for centre-right governments.

Governmental press conferences differ in character and type. Most frequent are conferences held together with visiting foreign leaders. Briefings are the second most frequent type, in most cases concerning EU matters, for example informing the media about how the government will deal with questions in the EU machinery. Third come presentations of reports and findings of commissions, mostly concerning domestic questions. A fourth type is information on decisions taken, also mostly about domestic questions and the economy, together with strategy declarations on how to deal with parliamentary issues. Lastly, crisis issues, statements (brief reactions to important, mostly international, events) and press meetings in connection with governmental seminars are three less frequent types representing every twentieth case each.

Most of the sessions with foreign dignitaries are joint conferences – sessions held together with a visiting foreign president/prime minister or UN/EU/OECD-leader etc. They display a less adversarial character than many other press conferences, like the situation in the US (cf. Marta Kumar 2007; Banning and Billingsley 2007).

Sessions to address crises are primarily connected with major international and domestic crises, e.g. the Estonia shipwreck (1994), the Gothenburg fire (1996), the terror attacks in the US (2001) and Europe (2003–4), the murder of the Swedish foreign minister (2003), and the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami (2004/05).

What do the press conferences deal with and what topics are brought up at these sessions? Two thirds of the total number of conferences are about foreign policy and EU-topics, most of them conducted with foreign leaders on visit. Domestic political and economic issues, including administrative items have been the topic of one out of six conferences. Except for some twenty industrial, infrastructural, and environmental cases, the central government hardly ever calls the press for sectoral matters. Accordingly, very few sessions at the prime ministry deal with educational, social, and cultural questions; these are mostly matters for the responsible government departments and their ministers. Other less frequent topics are issues of migration, gender/equality, and IT/telecom. 70 of 410 press conferences had two or more subjects on the agenda, mostly combinations of EU affairs and

environmental/global-warming questions. A predominant number of the briefings, as well as, not surprisingly, visits by foreign leaders occur in 2001 and 2009, the years when Sweden held the chairmanship of the EU (Larsson 2010).

1920–2010 summarized

The history of the Swedish government’s press meetings reveals a development from there being some very few meetings, probably informal and not planned, to an ongoing government-media relationship with up to 40 press conferences being arranged at the Prime Minister’s Office every year, plus a number of impromptu meetings with the press corps when the national leader shows up at different events, etc. The development of the government’s press meetings can be summed up in Table 1.

Table 1. The Swedish prime minister’s press contacts 1920–2010.

Period	Government	Prime Minister	Frequency Conf./year	Type of press conferences, participants
1920–32	Changing, 1–2 year mandate periods	10 names	0–1	Political crises, scandals, with individual media leaders
1932–39	Social Democratic	P-A Hansson	1–2	Major political/social questions, with a limited no. of media leaders
1936–39	with Centre party			
1939–46	Coalition all parties except Communists	P-A Hansson	5–8	War issues, domestic consequences, media leaders + international reporters
1946–69	Social Democratic	Tage Erlander	8–10	Presenting/discussing current matters, with selected chief editors
1963–66	Do	Do	1-4	“Gala” conferences with all media including international correspondents
1969–76	Social Democratic	Olof Palme	10–15	Promoting current government matters, with news media and radio/TV
1976–82	Centre-liberal-cons	Torbjörn Fälldin	8–10	Frequent informal press conferences Irregular press conferences, among them several concerning governmental crises
1982–86	Social Democratic	Olof Palme	10–15	Promoting political items and proposals, Intense individual contacts besides conf. Conferences with visiting foreign leaders.
1986–1991	Social Democratic (plus 1994–1996)	Ingvar Carlsson	10–15	Domestic issues/“affairs”: economy/taxes, government changes.
1991–1994	Conservative-centre-liberal government	Carl Bildt	10–20	Increasing number of conferences with foreign leaders.
1996–2006	Social Democratic	Göran Persson	10–40	Increasing informal press conferences Frequent conferences as EU chairman
2006–2010	Conservative-centre-liberal government	Fredrik Reinfeldt	15–40	Four-party-leader press conferences. Large increase in departmental press conferences

Conclusions

Press conferences are a very important way for governments to communicate with the public and to be held accountable via the media. These sessions “have come to be regarded as part of the foundation of democratic government,” with officials being “expected to show that they are responsible to the public by explaining their policies” (Kumar 2007:255). This judgement, made in the context of the US political system, can also be valid for most other liberal democracies, Sweden included.

In Sweden, organized government press conferences are a rather late phenomenon, at least compared to the US. Before WWII the prime ministers arranged, or were forced to hold, a very small number of press meetings. During the war, Stockholm became a centre for international journalists reporting on the war, resulting in recurrent press conferences from the government’s side as well as its organizing trips for the correspondents in Sweden. A press room was installed at the hotel where many correspondents lived (for long periods), providing different forms of service.

In the post-war period, the prime minister (the same for 23 years) gave approximately 10 conferences a year, most with selected editors-in-chief, with an informational character and presenting current government affairs. With Olof Palme, who took over the office in 1969, the modern press conference came to consist of conferences for news reporters where the prime minister (or another minister) introduces a political question or is held to account for some current issue.

Turning to the last decades the Prime Minister and his office conducted 410 press conferences between 1992 and 2010, representing 14 percent of all government (all ministries) press conferences during this period. Significant differences can be noted, with rather few sessions being arranged in the “middle” years of the governmental terms, while ca 40 sessions were arranged in the years when the Swedish prime minister held the EU chairmanship.

A comparison with Kumar’s extensive studies of US presidential press conferences shows similarities in frequency but also in some format aspects (Kumar 2005; 2007). President Clinton and G.W. Bush, as well as Obama 2009-2011 (Kumar 2011), thus gave on average around 25 conferences per year, which is close to the Swedish average of 22 sessions per year.

Another similarity is the design of holding joint conferences with visiting top politicians. These are, however, more frequent in the US. While 72 percent of the US

sessions are joint sessions, the corresponding figure for Sweden is just under 40 percent. Kumar claims that such sessions should be seen as a strategy to reduce the president's vulnerability at his meetings with the press and soften the aggressive climate. The same can not that easily be said for Sweden, where the reason for joint sessions is the necessity to inform the press when foreign leaders are visiting the country. These sessions can, however, be expected to have a less critical and questioning character than other sessions, resembling the situation in the US (cf. Banning and Billingsley 2007).

The Swedish government's press conferences mostly are arranged to deal with a specific theme and the announcement takes up a defined question; there are few general sessions where all kinds of questions may be discussed (apart from single questions from individual reporters after a session).

Concerning the agenda for the conferences, foreign affairs, together with EU matters, are highly predominant; two thirds of all sessions deal with these themes. When foreign/state and UN/EU leaders visit the country, the prime minister hosts the sessions, not the foreign minister (though he participates at several of these sessions). Domestic questions including the economy and defence, stand for one fifth of the sessions.

Governmental press conferences are of several types. Apart from those held with foreign visitors, one in five sessions can be characterized as "fact giving" (for instance providing information about decisions and bills, and presenting reports) and one in five can be characterized as "ongoing" questions (like briefings and declarations on how to deal with issues in parliament). Reports and inquiries are mostly presented by officials, and briefings are often conducted by political or press secretaries, as is also the custom at 10 Downing Street (cf. Cockerell et al. 1984).

If we only look at the government's organized press conferences (Larsson 2010), we find the same number of and level of interest for such contacts since the 1970s, with the exception of EU-chairmanship years and the personal factor that at least one prime minister was less press minded (the former resulting in more conferences and the latter fewer). But when we also consider the development of more informal and occasional meetings (revealed by a interview study) the conclusion is that the relationship between the government and the media has grown increasingly since the late 1980s.

Altogether, the contacts with the assembled press have increased during the last two full decades, taking into account that the contacts take other forms than merely the organised ones. Prime ministers talk to journalists in informal and spontaneous meetings in different situations: in parliament after debates, at conferences, and when travelling – meetings that are

not planned but are nevertheless expected by both sides and therefore must be regarded as press conferences. The result is that the head of state sees the press almost every day. This variegated system of meetings also entails that the organized conferences have diminished in importance to some extent, as the media is also supplied with information in other ways.

A central theme in political communication research is the growing medialization or mediaization of politics and power (see e.g. Bennett and Entman 2001; Davis 2007; Meyer 2002). As a final conclusion, this study finds a similar trend, in the meaning that the government's contacts with the media have increased during the last two decades, especially in the sense that the more informal contacts in particular have grown in frequency to the point where politicians and the press meet almost every day in one form or another.

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**From admiration to critical approach:
The historical evolution of post-socialist/communist pr scholarship**

Ryszard Lawniczak
Poznan University, Poznan, Poland
r.lawniczak@ue.poznan.pl

Abstract

The public relations/communication research and education around the world is dominated by American mainstream theory. The author's main purpose is to explain why it is taking so long for original, alternative and/or critical mainstream theory research to develop in former communist countries.

The paper consists of three parts: In the first part the following three stages of the changing attitude of transition countries' scholars towards American mainstream theory can be distinguished: admiration and multiplication; slowly growing scepticism and the first original concepts, and the first examples of critical research are quoted. Also the reasons for the rather slow and delayed critical research in the PS/CC are given, such as: the economic barrier, the technological barrier, the efficiency of American PR for mainstream PR, the language barrier, and "*the review process discriminating against international manuscripts*" (Lauf, 2005).

In the second part, the names and contributions to the public relations body of knowledge of the first (and besides Vercic not yet so well known) scholars from post-socialist/communist countries will be presented.

In the third part, the author also challenges some basic assumptions and dominant paradigms of mainstream theory, confronting them with the realities of the post-socialist/communist public relations environment.

Keywords: mainstream public relations theory, dominant paradigms, transitional public relations, post-communist countries.

Introduction

Two special issues of *Public Relations Review* and *Public Relations Research* from 2005 demonstrated not only the US, but also the wider Anglophone dominance in public relations research. The alternative research perspective from countries of the post-socialist/communist margin, an area of 1.7 billion people and larger than that of the United States, Canada and Western Europe, was still missing at that stage. Countries of the former Soviet Union, Central and Eastern Europe, Yugoslavia, China, Vietnam and Cuba started a transition from the so-called “real socialism” (or communism as it is referred to in Anglo-Saxon literature) politically dominated by the ruling communist party and based on a centrally-planned economy, to capitalism/ market economy and a pluralistic multiparty type of democracy in 1989. From the early 1990s modern public relations systems were launched in countries such as Poland, Hungary and Slovenia, since the transition could not proceed smoothly and efficiently without effective communication helping the public absorb new value systems, overcome fears and prejudices and learn about new economics.

A main purpose of this paper is not to blame anyone for the very limited presence of the post-socialists/communist authors in the world public relations/communication literature and journals, but to explain why it is so, and try to confront some “commandments” (basic assumptions and dominant paradigms) of American mainstream theory with the realities of the post socialist/communist countries in transition. As a further step the roots of the transitional public relations approach, better tailored to the post-communist realities, have been envisaged.

Stages of attitude change towards American mainstream PR theory

How and why is the public relations environment different on the post socialist/communist “periphery”?

The nature and range of public relations practices in developed market economies, such as those of the United States and the countries of the European Union, differ markedly from what can be labelled as “transitional public relations” – that is, public relations performed in the transition economies of Central and East European countries and independent states of the former Soviet Union (Ławniczak 2001, 2003) There are three main features distinguishing those types of public relations:

- the burden represented by the legacy of the former system retained in the minds of the people and in the basic economic conditions in which transition economies operate;

- the additional “transitional “ role (function or dimension on top of managerial, technical, reflective and educational) (van Ruler 2000) which public relations assumes in transition economies, not observed in developed market economies (Ławniczak 2001);
- the necessity to give careful attention to the “breaking up” and “coming together” (Culbertson 2004) trends as a result of the collapse of the Soviet Union, Yugoslavia and Czechoslovakia where in effect new and competing independent states emerged on the political map of Europe.

To this day, after two decades of transition, the legacy of “socialist democracy” and central planning manifests itself in many areas of social life, including the practice of public relations, in almost all the transition countries of CEE and the former Soviet Union. It still remains visible, among other things, in the following areas:

- 1) the common perception of public relations as suspicious propaganda; this view stems from the historic role that censorship used to play in the mass media, the subjugation of all such media to a single doctrine (Hiebert 1992b) and the resulting stereotypical conviction that “the press lies”;
- 2) failure to understand the point of marketing and promoting products and businesses, and building the images of companies and their executives; this problem originates from the fact that, at a time of severe shortages, all goods manufactured in the socialist economy were readily sold;
- 3) the belief that companies, their owners and/or their successes are better left unprompted, as high profiles may bring on additional tax sanctions; this view stems from the fact that, for ideological reasons, all privately owned operations were considered suspicious and subject to ad hoc taxation (Ławniczak 2003);
- 4) concern about the ‘negative externalities’ (Grunig and Grunig 2003) of the privatisation process and resistance to it.

Additionally, the above mentioned “breaking up” and “coming together” trends have created demand for the following transitional functions of international public relations (Szondi 2008):

- to distance the countries from the old (economic and/or political) system that operated before transition;

- to change negative or false stereotypes or reinforce some positive ones associated with the country in transition and its people;
 - to position the country as a reliable and eligible member of the new system for which the transition is aiming or that of an international community;
 - to position the country as the centre of the region and the leader of transition.
- Public relations can also facilitate (re-)defining and (re-)constructing national identities as identity also changes during transition. Reputation management can boost self-confidence and can be an expression of pride of the achievements of transition.

A slow change of attitudes towards US-mainstream scholarship

The development of public relations research in Central and Eastern Europe has been influenced mainly by American public relations scholars and practitioners. However, depending on the country involved and even region, also some British, German and Austrian assistance can be traced. For example, when Hungarian public relations was originating in the second half of 1980s, the founders of the Hungarian PR Association turned to IPRA and the Public Relations Society of America for professional help and support in establishing the profession but “.. the basic theory of (American) public relations entered Hungary through the work of Austrian and German scholars, who adopted and further developed these theories” (Szondi 2004, p.192). In Russia, the first university-based degree program established in 1993 at the Electrotechnical University of St. Petersburg was modelled after the undergraduate degree program at Towson University in the US (McElreath and Azarova, 1995).

The following three stages of the attitude of transition countries scholars towards the American mainstream theory can be distinguished:

1. admiration and multiplication,
2. slowly growing scepticism and the first original concepts
3. critical research – expected to come.

Stages of attitudes change

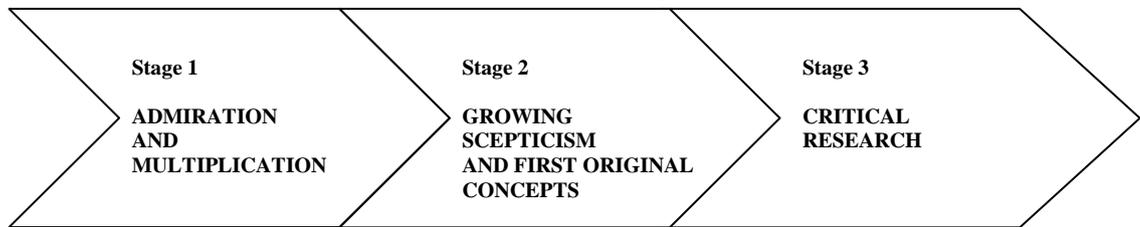


Fig.1 The slow change of attitudes towards American mainstream scholarship

Source: author's own

It is, however, necessary to underline that the different post-socialist/communist countries are at different stages of their transition towards market economy and pluralistic democratic political systems. Poland, Slovenia, the Baltic countries, Hungary are the leaders of the transition, whilst Belarus North Korea, Moldova and Cuba are the latecomers in the process. That is why the beginning and duration of each of the above-mentioned stages are different for each transition country. The stage of original research with the 'transition flavour' could be observed earliest in Slovenia, Poland and Estonia (since mid-1990) and followed by the first efforts to formulate the "...unique Russian perspective on public relations" (Tsetsura 2004; Krylov 2003) or "socialist public relations with Chinese features" (Chen 2008).

In most remaining post-socialist/communist countries the admiration and multiplication stage is still in progress. Scholars are still digesting Western theories and multiplying their main concepts in textbooks written by locals. It will take some time before critical research develops. The reasons for this rather slow development of the original, alternative and/or critical research in the post-socialist/communist periphery are:

- the economic barrier
- the technological barrier
- the efficiency of the American PR for mainstream PR
- the language barrier.

The economic barrier

This is strictly related to the lower level of economic development and the GDP ratio in the transition countries compared with the United States and the European Union member countries. Such a situation has limited the availability of Western public relations literature and journals, opportunities to attend international conferences and learn from discussion with foreign colleagues or cover the costs of translating papers from national languages to English. Universities' budgets have been very short of foreign currency while conference fees for gatherings of prominent world PR scholars tend to be high.

Most recently, taking into consideration the fact that retrieving an article from *Public Relations Review* costs about \$30 and a monthly salary of a university lecturer at a Ukrainian university amounts to about \$400, upgrading one's level of knowledge at the cost of the family budget might prove rather discouraging. Ultimately, only textbooks, lectures of visiting US scholars, translations of mainly American textbooks offered free of charge or subsidised by Western programs promoting civil society and market economy reach public relations scholars and practitioners in the transition countries. Not surprisingly, most of them present the mainstream theories and "commandments".

The technical barrier

This may be attributed to the lower level of economic development or, to be more exact, to the availability of internet services. Nowadays in order to follow world literature in any field one can simply resort to Google browser as long as the university, student or scholar has free access to internet services.

The efficiency of the American PR for mainstream PR and economic neo-liberal theories

This results from the American public diplomacy efforts and programmes to promote their own standards of civil society, democracy and market economy (Lawniczak 2007). Although millions of dollars of American taxpayers have been spent for that purpose (Wedel 2001) particularly since the launch of the US "war on terror", those efforts seem to be less and less efficient.

The language barrier

This is obvious. Someone who *does* not publish in English does not exist in world literature.

“Eastern” contribution to “Western” PR body of knowledge

One could distinguish two groups of scholars from former socialist/communist European countries who have already managed to get some recognition by publishing in English in professional PR magazines such as *Public Relations Review*, chapters in recognized textbooks like *Global Public Relations Handbook*, presenting papers at international conferences and also publishing their own books in English. The first group represents scholars still living and being active in their own post-socialist/communist countries (D. Vercic, R. Lawniczak and A. Rogojinarju). The other group (K. Tampere, G. Szondi and K. Tsetsura) could be labelled as “export products” from former socialist/communist countries, living, teaching and doing research in the Western world, respectively Finland, the United Kingdom and the United States. (Tampere has now returned Estonia).

Contribution of scholars from European post-socialist/communist countries

Dejan Verčič is undoubtedly the most prominent and well known scholar among them. As a founding partner in Pristop, a communication management consultancy based in Ljubljana, Slovenia, he combines practice with theory acting also as Associate Professor for Public Relations at the University of Ljubljana. He has published over 200 articles, books, chapters, papers, and reports. He co-edited the book which received the PRIDE Award for the Best Book in Public Relations for 2003 (*The Global Public Relations Handbook: Theory, Research, and Practice*, with K. Sriramesh); He was president of the EUPRERA (The European Public Relations Education and Research Association). Since 1994, he has been able to attract the most prominent public relations scholars from almost all continents to arrive in Bled (Slovenia) and not San Diego or Florida, to share their knowledge by participating in the annual International Public Relations Research Symposium – BledCom.

Dejan Vercic enriched the mainstream public relations theory by his contribution to international/global public relation and strategic communication and by underlining the reflectivity as a distinguishing characteristic of European public relations and communication management research (van Ruler and Vercic, 2004).

Ryszard Lawniczak, former Head of the Department of Economic Journalism and Public Relations (until 2010) at the Poznan University of Economics (Poland) contributed to the public relations body of knowledge by his notion of *transitional public relations*. (Lawniczak 2001; van Ruler and Vercic 2004) and by promoting the more econocentric approach to international public relations (Lawniczak 2009). He has been mentioned by the

Another important postulate says that Western public relations theory and practice need to accommodate the unique realities of countries in transition. Indiscriminate copying of Western concepts and methods, based on the experience and tailored to the needs of developed market economies may bring disappointing results.

Adela Rogojinaru is a Reader in the University of Bucharest, Romania and current Head of the Department of Communication and Public Relations Studies of the Faculty of Letters as well Director of the Centre for Interdisciplinary Research in Communication Sciences and Public Relations. She is also a member of professional associations in the field of Communications Sciences such as EUPRERA (European Public Relations Education and Research Association), ECREA (European Communication Research and Education Association), IAMCA (International Association for Media and Communication Research), and IABC (International Association for Business Communication) She was newly elected as the Executive Director of EUPRERA for the term starting on January 1st, 2011. She regularly presents papers at the international EUPRERA conferences, contributed a chapter on public relations in Romania in the second edition of *The Global Public Relations Handbook* (Sriramesh and Vercic, 2009) and acted as a consultant for the European Communication Monitor of 2009, 2010, 2011 (Zerfass, Tench, Verhoeven, Vercic and Moreno (2009, 2010)

Contribution of scholars who emigrated from post-socialist/communist countries

Kaja Tampere, born in Estonia, was for a period, a professor at the Jyväskylä University (Finland). She specializes her research in corporate communication in transition and changing societies and relations between PR and propaganda, broadening and enriching Lawniczak's concept of *transitional public relations*. She regularly presents papers at international conferences, has published articles in internationally recognized PR journals and published three books, among them one in English (Tampere, 2003)

Gyorgi Szondi is at present Senior Lecturer and Course Leader for MA International Communication at Leeds Metropolitan University. He has a truly international background and expertise. Among others, he was lecturing in Estonia, worked for Hill and Knowlton, the international PR consultancy in Budapest, Hungary and in its international headquarters in London. He has conducted several workshops on PR for companies and governmental organizations in the UK, Hungary, Poland, Estonia and Latvia. Szondi has published several book chapters, journal articles and conference papers in English, Hungarian and Polish on international public relations, public diplomacy, nation branding, reputation management, PR evaluation, risk and crises communication.

Katerina Tsetsura is an Associate Professor at the Gaylord College of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Oklahoma (USA). She received her Diploma from Voronezh State University, Russia, and her PhD from Purdue University. Her interests include international and global strategic communication, global media and public relations ethics, and public affairs and issue management in countries with transitional economies.

Dr. Tsetsura has authored and co-authored more than 30 peer-reviewed publications. Her research has appeared in internationally recognized journals, books (such as Sriramesh and Vercic's *Handbook of Global Public Relations*, Heath's *Handbook of Public Relations*, and Merrill's *Global Journalism*), annuals and online research centres (e.g. Institute for Public Relations) published on three continents. She also has two other books under contract: *Social Construction of the Field of Public Relations* (single author) and *Global and International Public Relations* (together with Dr. Dean Kruckeberg, UNC-Charlotte and David Gallagher, CEO, Ketchum Pleon).

The beginning of the critical research in the transition economies

It took almost 20 years until the first criticism of American mainstream PR theory articles appeared in the post-socialist/communist countries (Lawniczak 2009, Wojcik 2011). The authors have challenged some basic assumptions and dominant paradigms (Pieczka 1996b, 2006c, L'Etang 2008) of the mainstream theory, confronting them with realities of the transition countries of Europe.

The two-way symmetry model of excellence

The two-way symmetry model of excellence is based on the assumption of equality and not asymmetric hierarchy (Munshi and Kurian 2005) of public/partners and their bargaining position (power). Symmetry assumes also equality of chances, for example in negotiations and communicating arguments. From the perspective of the post-socialist/communist periphery, one can observe the "centrality of the dominant organizational core" (Munshi and Kurian 2005) as illustrated by global public relations firms representing the interests of the predominantly Western shareholders.

The first case of overestimation of the countervailing power of post-socialist/communist publics may be best observed in the privatization process, crucial for the transformation of an economy towards a market economy. Imagine global players - international PR agencies like Burson-Marsteller, Hill and Knowlton or Fleishmann-Hillard acting on behalf of clients such as multinational corporations and confronting trade unions,

managers of bankrupt “socialist” state-owned companies or an amateur lobby of some industries where privatisation was enforced: shipyards, fishing fleet, textiles, armament industry (e.g. the Polish Industrial Lobby – Polskie Lobby Przemysłowe). Even Grunig has to admit that ‘the weaker side’ - the post-socialist/communist publics are confronted with a situation where “many organisations are tempted to use public relations to try to asymmetrically impose the idea of change on the publics that are affected by the change” (Grunig and Grunig 2005, p.5).

The point is that those ‘many organizations’ are not only ‘tempted’ but simply have too often misused their bargaining power and in effect “ .. Publics in Eastern and Central European countries have tended to suffer the effects of externalities” (ibid, p.7) such as layoffs, reduced pensions and benefits and selling public enterprises for a minimal value. As a result of such activity by Burson-Marsteller in Russia, in its capacity of prime communication adviser to the Russian Ministry of Privatization under Yeltsin, “there was no organised national backlash to the privatisation program” (McElreath et al, 2001, p 668). It was delayed until President Putin took over.

Another case of asymmetry of power relations in transition economies is strictly related to the concept of communicative inequality asymmetry (Fawkes and Moloney 2007) and may be best illustrated by the media landscape of Poland in transition. Like other Central and Eastern European countries, in the 1990s Poland saw sweeping changes affecting both media structures and the rules governing media operations. The state was deprived of its exclusive control over the press, and a number of new private broadcasting companies emerged to compete with public radio and television. The lion’s share of Polish media has been purchased by and therefore also controlled by foreign capital. Although Western investors have unanimously denied representing the interests of their home countries, parent companies or other political groups a strong case can be made to prove that this is exactly what they do. As a result, the examples of negative externalities or ‘transition failures’ in the privatisation process practically stand no chance of being covered by Polish media.

The third case illustrating the asymmetry of power and bargaining position of Western corporate and political interest may be illustrated by the competition between Western public diplomacy efforts to ‘sell’ its own socio-economic model of development to the different countries in transition (Lawniczak 2007). The superiority of American persuasive, one-way asymmetrical communication type public diplomacy and think tank efforts, supported by billions of dollars for promoting the American economic and

democratic model resulted in the majority of the transition economies of central and eastern Europe, and Russia in the Yeltsin period adopting the neo-liberal model of development.

The idealistic concept of dominant coalition

The dominant coalition paradigm seems to be based on a rather idealised assumption of highest stage/level of development of public relations practice and corporate communications standards. Even in the developed Western democracies these standards seem to be a moving target. In transition countries where modern public relations is less than 20 years old, the present stage can be referred to as a press-agency model or manipulative public relations, essentially one-way, in favour of the organization. This is a stage when only very few open-minded managers appreciate the role of public relations. In the instances when the communication directors are asked for advice it is in the form of consultations. Poland has witnessed so far only three cases of Western banks communication directors being accepted as members of the 'inner circle'.

The issue of organisational culture and internal communication

The next important assumption in the excellence theory is based on the conviction that "the two-way symmetrical philosophy will be reflected in the organizational culture and in internal communication worldwide. The management respects all employees as important contributors to organizational success and implements methods that foster participation and two-way communication among all of its employees throughout the world" (Delphi Study I: 1).

The problem is that from the author's own observations, based on experience of supervisory board members of leading Polish and multinational corporations, in most cases the management does not behave like that and does not keep textbook standards. Why not in Poland and other transition economies even in the case of leading multinationals? It is my impression that it is too often connected with ignorance and arrogance. Ignorance comes from staff lacking international experience and education, command of local languages, sensitivity to the local culture. Arrogance comes from an ill-grounded conviction that when entering a market of a former communist country they simply "know better", as the market economy (capitalism) has proved its superiority over the defeated communism. The multinationals acting in the post-socialist/communist territory act like conquerors of colonies that do not need to worry about two-way symmetrical communication; they simply give orders, fire people, and expect results.

The convenient normative approach and the issue of ethics

One of the features of the dominant paradigm is that “in addition to excellence ... it has developed a strong focus on relationship building, ethical persuasion” (L’Etang, 2008, p.252). At first glance the standard declaration dominating in mainstream PR literature that the author has adopted in the normative theory approach (which refers to the ideal of how a profession such as public relations/communication management should be practised) was accepted by ‘Eastern scholars’ with no comments. At a later stage, after confronting the theory with the practice of leading international consultancies, a reflection followed that it was quite a convenient excuse for not commenting on many not quite ethical or morally justified examples of far from “excellent” examples of public relations practice.

Also major public relations textbooks available to post-communist scholars (Cutlip, Center and Broom 2000, Seitel 1998, Heath 2001) strongly underlined that “ethical professional practice requires placing public service and social responsibility over personal and private special interests”(Cutlip, Center and Broom, 2000, p.148). The “eager pupils” from the emerging transitional democracies were convinced, for a very long time that this was the way public relations was practiced in Western developed democracies.. Moreover, it was extremely difficult for them to find the opposite. Only at a later stage did they learn that “The best PR is never noticed, so says the proud unwritten slogan of the trade” (Stauber and Rampton. 1995, p.2). Besides, the Internet as a new “communication window” became an eye-opener, enabling users to learn of some rather infamous cases of PR practice. Let us just mention the campaign orchestrated by Hill and Knowlton’s Nayirah testimony and other similar cases of corporate public relations and government public diplomacy. They are published by Stauber and Rampton (1995), “PR Watch”, and most recently in the book “What happened” (McClellan 2008). These types of rather unethical practice are rarely revealed owing to the above mentioned normative approach.

Conclusion

A fresh, alternative perspective, “from the margin” of post-socialist/communist countries, underlines the significance of formerly underestimated differences in the economic systems for public relations practices and research. It is based on the methodological contribution of comparative economics.

The transitional public relations approach provides additional support for the previously formulated basic thesis of critical research underlying “a refusal in mainstream

public relations literature to acknowledge the diversity of publics and the inequitable distribution of power among them” (Munshi and Kurian 2005, p.514).

The following points are clear at this stage of development of a market economy and political democracy, even in the case of “leaders of transition”:

- the mainstream’s theory two-way symmetrical model, emphasizing power shared with stake- holders seems to be idealistic. The management style as adopted by multinationals leads to a conclusion that only a few of them feel a need for dialogue, collaboration in negotiations and relationship building with post-communist stakeholders. Too many of them still practice a “we know best” approach, give orders and expect results;
- the dominant coalition concept, confronted with daily practice of the remaining domestic organizations (state owned, mixed and private companies and public institutions) cannot be confirmed because communication directors are seldom accepted as members of the “inner circle”. Another reason is the fact that only a small minority of managers understand and appreciate the role of public relations;
- public relations professionals of different activist groups have already confirmed that although they may play the role of “powerful social actors” (Berger 2005) in the civil society grass-roots movements (so called “colour revolutions”), coached and financed by Western advisors, which does not yet hold true for the business world.

Confronted with some unethical practices of the biggest and most powerful Western PR consultancies, multinational corporations as well as some governments, the mainstream textbooks “commandments” topped with the convenient normative theory/framework, may allow a conclusion that the “Western public relations mentors” do not always practice what they preach”. That’s why the “eager Eastern “acolytes may get the impression that double standards are being applied.

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**Exploring lobbying in the UK through parliamentary and journalistic references,
1800-1950**

Dr Conor McGrath
Independent Scholar
10 Newbridge Avenue, Sandymount, Dublin 4, Ireland
Tel: +353 87 2518486
Email: conor.p.mcgrath@gmail.com

Please note that this paper presents a summary of some of the findings detailed more extensively in a larger project. Copies of the full paper are available on request.

We see daily evidence of the centrality of interest groups in British policymaking, and lobbying is now a sophisticated and powerful industry. We lack, however, a detailed understanding of how this industry originated and evolved historically. It has been asserted that, ‘Lobbying is as old as government, and in England industrial lobbying was well developed before the beginning of the eighteenth century’ (Norris, 1958: 450). While such a claim seems superficially plausible, it is true only to a point. Prior to the 1800s, there were relatively few trade associations which were actively lobbying government on a regular basis, lobbying techniques were often fairly crude, and the process of attempting to influence government was not yet even known as ‘lobbying’. It is possible to point to isolated examples of industries or causes successfully persuading government of their particular policy preferences, yet it could not be said that an organised interest group system had been established. In the course of a novel population analysis of United Kingdom (UK) associations, Jordan and Greenan (2009) examine the number of bodies in existence in 2006 and note and that around 300 of these were formed prior to 1900. We speak too easily of periods of ‘explosion’ in interest group activity as each new generation of scholars discovers and maps the field, but it does seem clear that the nineteenth century must have witnessed something of a transformation in the sheer scale of organisations communicating with policymakers. It further seems reasonable to assume that this rise in activity was most likely accompanied by a corresponding shift in professionalism or effectiveness. But who were these groups, and how did they lobby? The data presented here offers some evidence that lobbying emerged during the 1800s as a systematic and national practice, that it was

undertaken by a wide range of interests which were increasingly organised, and that it exhibited many of the characteristics of the major industry it has become. This paper traces usage of the words 'lobbying' and 'lobbyist' in journalistic and parliamentary discourse between 1800 and 1950 to shed new light on the early phases of policy influence by socio-economic interests in Britain.

Political science research reveals much about the nature, activities and effectiveness of contemporary interest groups, particularly in the United States (US) but increasingly around the world. What it does not offer in an extensive or systematic manner, however, is an insight into the early development of organised interests. Nor does it tend to draw on newspaper coverage as source material. There is one academic and professional field which is related to lobbying, which takes a keen interest in its history, and which finds utility in approaching its history through the analysis of news articles: public relations (PR). The subset of all PR scholars who work on its historical evolution is both substantial in number and significant in academic reputation. Journal articles on PR history are common, often authored by the most senior of the professoriate; an international conference on PR history is now an annual event. Among the most stimulating and relevant findings from this body of work are that media coverage of PR in the 1920s was largely positive (Penning, 2008); that auto/biographical material as well as newspaper and magazine articles can say much about the nature of the relationships between journalists and PR practitioners in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (DeLorme and Fedler, 2003); that the understanding of key descriptive phrases shifts over time but not always in a straightforward linear progression (Gower, 2008); and that US newspaper coverage from 1865 to 1904 contextualises PR activity by revealing deeper changes in public and governmental expectations of business (Russell and Bishop, 2009).

The most extensive analysis of the early days of British lobbying is that offered by Wootton (1975) who traces pressure groups from 1720 to 1970, supplemented by reproductions of 101 original documents by or about significant organised interests. His essay on the development of lobbying is detailed and thoughtful. Just as striking, though, is the fact that of the 101 documents produced over a 250 year period, the word 'lobbying' appears in none. The only use of the word 'lobbyist' in them occurs in an extract from the National Farmers' Union Yearbook in 1913 recording the appointment of Charles Weller Kent as its first 'parliamentary lobbyist' – indeed, a recent paper (McGrath, 2010) argues that Charles Weller Kent was in fact the first person in Britain to have 'parliamentary lobbyist' as a formal job title, and that he can therefore be regarded as the founding father of lobbying

professionalization. Wootton provides copious examples of organised interests seeking to influence government policy throughout the eighteenth century and into the first half of the nineteenth centuries; however, as noted above, this activity was not then defined or understood as ‘lobbying’. Another prominent interest group scholar notes that although some powerful groups existed in Britain even before Parliament, nonetheless it was not until the nineteenth century that ‘the politics of groups’ came to the fore (Roberts, 1970: 83). In the second half of that century, we see a definite transformation – from purely local or regional interests to national bodies; from *ad hoc* and uncoordinated advocacy to structured and systematic lobbying; from individual to associational mobilisation; and from commercial interests to wider sectional and cause interests. This happens not in a vacuum but as a direct response to changes in the socio-economic environment, in the nature of political parties and electoral competition, in the relationship between the various institutional components of the policymaking process (Alderman, 1984; Beer, 1965). As we move towards – and beyond – the period considered in this study, works by Stewart (1958) and Finer (1966) offer a clear overview of the extent and diversity of interest representation from the 1940s to the 1960s, a period in which group politics became absolutely central to the political and governmental process.

Methodology

Given the exploratory nature of this project, my research question is quite straightforward and open-ended: How was lobbying (in the sense of influencing public policy) in Britain understood and discussed by journalists and parliamentarians between 1800 and 1950? The starting date for this study has two rationales, one conceptual and the other pragmatic. Although groups were certainly engaged in attempts to influence public policy prior to 1800, those efforts were not thought of or labelled as ‘lobbying’ at the time. The earliest recorded use in the US of the term ‘lobbying’ in the sense of influencing policy is thought to have occurred in a 1 April 1820 article titled ‘Slavery’ in the *New Hampshire Sentinel*: ‘Other letters from Washington affirm, that members of the Senate, when the compromise question was to be taken in the House, were not only “lobbying about the Representatives’ Chamber”, but were active in endeavouring to intimidate certain weak representatives by insulting threats to dissolve the Union’ (quoted in Gelak, 2008: 8). As we see below, the first reference to ‘lobbying’ in a British newspaper appears to come later, thus searching for the term from 1800 should be sufficient to ensure that we capture the very earliest discussions of the topic. On a practical level, two of the databases examined here start at or just after 1800 and the

other two do not start substantially prior to 1800. The end point of 1950 was chosen because that research period of 150 years allows both for a manageable yet sufficiently large number of relevant items to be analysed and for a picture to emerge of an activity developing and evolving over time.

This study draws upon material gathered from four journalistic and parliamentary online archives:

- *Hansard*, 1803-1950: The Official Report of parliamentary debates from 1803 to 2005 has been digitised by the House of Commons and House of Lords as part of a project which renders the text searchable. This archive can be found at:
<http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/>
- British Library, *British Newspapers 1800-1900*: This archive, launched in 2009, allows researchers to access the full content of close to two million pages from 49 national and regional newspaper titles from the nineteenth century (see Shaw, 2005). It can be found at: <http://newspapers.bl.uk/blcs/>
- *The Times*, 1800-1950: This archive, which begins in 1875 (although no relevant items were identified between then and 1800) and ends in 1985, consists of the full text of every issue of the paper published during its first 200 years. It can be found at: <http://archive.timesonline.co.uk/tol/archive/>
- *Guardian/Observer*, 1800-1950: This database begins in 1791 (for the *Observer*) and 1821 (for the *Guardian*), though no relevant items were identified prior to 1800. It extends for both newspapers to 2000, and contains over one million pages representing the complete contents of both papers. It can be found at: <http://archive.guardian.co.uk>

All searches were undertaken in March 2011. A three-step process was employed to gather the source material. First, each of the four archives was searched using a range of keywords associated with lobbying. Here there is an immediate difficulty in using search engines to gather source material: the words we use when discussing lobbying – lobby, lobbies, interests, pressure, influence, and so on – tend to be used more frequently in everyday meanings which are not pertinent to the concept of organised interests seeking to affect public policy. Thus, searching for them will produce huge numbers of results, most of

which are not relevant. Table 1 lists the keywords which were used in this study, alongside the number of ‘hits’ for each descriptor in each archive.

[TABLE 1 ABOUT HERE]

That initial trawl revealed a total of 1,691 items. Second, each of these was then printed, read and sorted according to the descriptor which had been searched for. Given that we are interested here in lobbying practice (in terms of influencing public policy) as it evolved in Britain during this period, some items were immediately discarded as not being relevant to the research question. Third, when the rejected items had been discarded, those which remained were put into chronological order and at that stage any duplicates (such as articles which occurred under multiple keyword searches) were also removed so that the material which was then to be analysed consisted of unique items.¹ The net result of this process is displayed in Table 2 which shows the number of references which were discarded alongside the criteria by which exclusions were made. In total, of the 1,691 individual items some 1,014 were removed.

[TABLE 2 ABOUT HERE]

British lobbying, 1800-1950: An overview

To recap, the initial identification of newspaper articles and parliamentary speeches using the keywords which were searched for produced a total of 1,691 references over the period from 1800 to 1950. Of these, 1,014 were excluded from analysis for the reasons given above; conversely, though, a dozen articles were considered to make significant reference to both British lobbying and one of the excluded categories (mostly articles which discuss both British and American lobbying) and so were added back into the dataset.² We are thus left with a total of 689 unique items relating to lobbying in Britain. The distribution of these

¹ By ‘unique items’, I mean those which provide new information. It was common, for instance, in the nineteenth century for newspapers to provide very detailed extracts from parliamentary debates: if an entire statement about lobbying from a parliamentary speech was reproduced in a newspaper, the article would be discarded and the speech included as a unique item; if the article included other information which placed the speech into context, both would be regarded as unique items. In addition, newspaper reports would frequently describe the same speech but attributing different language to the parliamentarian – each such report would be a unique item.

² Generally, though, each item was placed into only one category, according to the specific context of the reference to lobbying – for example, a brief mention of US lobbying in a longer but more general article about UK politics would be excluded from this study.

references over the research period is shown in Table 3. The break in Table 3 indicates the two different periods of coverage within this study: in the top half of the table, from 1800-1900, source material comes from all four archives including the British Library series of nineteenth century newspapers; while in the lower half of the table, items have come only from the *Hansard*, *Times* and *Guardian/Observer* archives.

[TABLE 3 ABOUT HERE]

It is clear that, after a slow start, there was a sustained – albeit somewhat uneven – increase in the amount of attention paid to ‘lobbying’ and ‘lobbyists’ in British journalistic and parliamentary discourse. Over the period 1860-1900, the pattern is one of progressive increases each decade, although at a relatively low level until the 1890s when 173 items are recorded (close to one and a half times the cumulative total of the previous 50 years). After 1900 the number of references is at a generally higher level each decade although in a less linear pattern. It is noticeable that over the 60 years before 1900 there are a total of 296 items based upon a larger dataset (since it includes the British Library’s archive of 49 newspapers), while in the 50 years after 1900 there are 393 items from a smaller dataset. Newspaper and parliamentary coverage of the search terms was clearly more frequent in the first half of the twentieth century than previously, but it was also more erratic. The two decades in this period which have the fewest references – the 1910s and 1940s – were, not coincidentally, periods of global conflict. During the Second World War, for instance, paper was rationed to the point where at the end of the war newspapers received only about a quarter of their pre-war paper quantities. Thus, papers were shorter, space within each issue was more limited, fewer articles overall were published and a very high proportion of each newspaper issue was given over to war-related stories. Naturally, we would expect there to be fewer articles about lobbying during the two World Wars, and this is indeed what we see from Table 3.

Once the 689 unique references which form the relevant source material were collated, a scheme was developed by which they could be condensed into a series of categories which would yield descriptive and theoretical insights to the material. Finally, the individual items were examined and coded, that is placed in the various categories which had been chosen both inductively (as interesting comments and patterns were observed during the initial sorting of the material described above) and deductively (according to features taken from the existing literature). It is important to note explicitly that a single item could be assigned multiple codes, according to its content. For instance, the tone of each item was

coded, and here ‘neutral’ is taken to indicate that an item simply recorded some event with the speaker or author adopting no attitude towards it, rather than that it contained both negative and positive attitudes which are deemed to cancel themselves out. In fact, if a single item revealed both positive and negative opinions (such as suggesting that while business lobbying was excessive, it was useful to see workers beginning to represent their views to government; or that while lobbying in the US was based upon corrupt practices, it was undertaken in the UK in a more legitimate manner), it was coded as both positive and negative. Similarly, if a single item specified several lobbying activities or organised interests, each was coded separately. Table 4 presents an overview of the coding process against the category scheme: from the 689 items scored against 84 individual coding units which were broken down into 19 general categories, a total of 5,297 codes were derived (or an average of 7.6879 codes per item). Table 4 groups the 19 broad categories into seven thematic areas, only three of which are discussed in detail below.

[TABLE 4 ABOUT HERE]

How lobbying was understood

This first set of coding categories, represented in Table 5, deals with the fundamental question of what journalists and politicians understood by ‘lobbying’. The tone of the articles and speeches analysed is instructive at this basic level – of the 685 total positive, negative or neutral references to lobbying, only 24 (3.5%) were positive, while 367 (53.6%) were negative and 294 (42.9%) were neutral in that they expressed no explicit view of lobbying. No positive reference to lobbying was identified earlier than March 1888 when James Bryce (then the Liberal MP for South Aberdeen, and author of the classic work on *The American Commonwealth*) suggested that lobbying MPs to support particular Bills was ‘a most legitimate thing to do’ (‘Procedure’, *The Times*, 1 March 1888, p. 6). Almost of all those positive mentions noted that interests had a right to be heard or to articulate their positions – an example of such a comment appeared in a report of a speech made by J.G.A. Baird MP, who asserted that:

“Log-rolling” did not prevail here to the same extent that it did in America. There was, however, a certain amount of lobbying and “log-rolling”. But he thought it was of a legitimate character. For instance, constituents and Corporations like that of Glasgow visited members in the lobby, and tried to bring influence to bear on them. He looked on this as legitimate influence,

and not at all to be compared with the corrupt system which prevailed in America. It was entirely in the way of benefiting the public at large, and the constituency concerned in particular. It had not for its object the benefiting of private individuals ('St. Andrew's Day', *Glasgow Herald*, 2 December 1889, p. 8).

A significant number of the negative references expressed disapproval on one of three particular grounds – that lobbying was associated with outright bribery or corruption (52 items), that it subverted or undermined the democratic process (88 items) or that it was so extensively practiced that the parliamentary system was being overloaded with demands from organised interests (20 items). While the first and third of these complaints are fairly self-explanatory, the second perhaps requires some further elucidation. The idea that lobbying was undemocratic can be found in the notion that it operates furtively and covertly: for instance, when the government amended a Bill following discussions between a Treasury minister and the National Telephone Company in 1899, one report condemned the move 'not as the result of fair argument in open debate, but as the effect of lobbying and back-stairs influence. Interviews between Mr Hanbury and the representatives of the Company, canvassing and solicitation by circulars, are proceedings to be deprecated if the good name of the House of Commons is to be preserved' ('This Morning's News in Brief', *Liverpool Mercury*, 30 June 1899, pp. 6-7). Another element of the disapproval rests on the ability of organised interests to influence policy by targeting small groups of MPs rather than the House as a whole. Indeed, many of this group of items relate to the role which lobbying by external interests played in the specific parliamentary process of Private Bills which affect only small groups of people or often just a single company. While often overlooked in the literature (in part because they are much less common today than in the past), throughout the nineteenth century there were approximately twice as many Private Bills enacted than public legislation. A great many Private Bills in that period were promoted – by parliamentary agents, lawyers who drafted the Bills and worked to secure their passage, often in a way which is not dissimilar to the role of lobbyists (Rydz, 1979) – on behalf of railway companies. In practice, because Private Bills do not affect the general mass of the public, few MPs tended to pay much attention to them, and thus those who served on the standing committee which considered a Private Bill could exercise substantial influence over their passage without receiving much publicity; in turn, those few MPs could be greatly influenced by lobbying on behalf of the company promoting a Private Bill.

[TABLE 5 ABOUT HERE]

Over the whole time period covered here, coverage of lobbying becomes somewhat less negative. In the decades from 1840s to 1900s, there are a total of 219 negative items, 162 neutral items and 12 positive references – thus, there were 45 more negative items than the neutral and positive items combined. This gap narrows significantly from the 1910s to the 1940s, with 148 negative items and 144 neutral and positive items combined. While the tone overall cannot be said to become more positive, it certainly seems to become less negative and more neutral over time. Another noticeable feature is that between 1840 and 1910 there were 67 items which compared lobbying in Britain to lobbying in the United States, but only 12 such items from 1910 to 1950. This trend suggests the possibility that in the earlier part of the period, lobbying was relatively unknown in Britain and so journalists found it necessary to explain it through comparison with how it operated then in Washington, but that by the middle of the twentieth century the word and activity were more widely recognised in Britain and so could be discussed without first explaining what it meant in the US. Certainly, this is borne out by the coverage. Early comparisons tended to define lobbying as an American practice – for instance one report rather sanctimoniously averred that, ‘The system of “lobbying” is an American institution which we do not care to see transplanted to this country’ (‘Occasional Notes’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 11 March 1870, p. 3). Later examples were more likely to accept that lobbying was a feature of British politics which owed much to British political culture rather than a foreign curiosity. Indeed, some even suggested that interest representation was no better, or worse, in Britain than in America:

The obstructive discussion on the Budget makes it quite clear that we must prepare to grapple with the monstrous drink monopoly which has grown up in this country. Three-fourths of the public-houses of the kingdom are in the hands of a few disreputable brewers. The publican is no longer “mine host”; he is the mere agent of a loathsome capitalist who has made a fabulous sum out of the degradation of his fellow countrymen. Some of these vile men are members of the House of Lords; some of the House of Commons. Yet they have the indecency to vote on questions affecting their private interests. Shall we have the impudence to talk of American lobbying in face of facts so disgraceful? (‘The Whiskey Party’, *Reynold’s Newspaper*, 13 May 1894, p. 4).

The ways in which lobbying was defined over the period – and the values associated with it described – are somewhat revealing as to how it was commonly perceived. Several

examples are fairly representative of these articles. One article discussed ‘the new Parliamentary terror known as lobbying’ (‘Political Items, *Reynold’s Newspaper*, 20 April 1890, p. 1); another objected to the ‘pernicious system of lobbying which cannot fail in the long run to have a degrading effect upon Parliamentary methods and manners’ (‘Registration and Trade Status’, *Guardian*, 13 October 1903, p. 10); while a third deplored ‘the distasteful business of lobbying in the House of Commons’ (‘Mrs Swanwick at Knutsford’, *Guardian*, 10 January 1913, p. 5). For many people, our perception as to whether is a lobbyist may depend in part on whether we agree with their policy position: a US Senator, for instance, once opined that, ‘A lobbyist is anyone who opposes legislation I want. A patriot is someone who supports me’ (quoted in Schrifgiesser, 1951: ix). In a similar vein, a letter-writer contrasted different forms of lobbying – ‘The representatives of friendly societies were content to put their case quietly and in a dignified manner before the Government and Parliament; the excessive lobbying, misrepresentation and pressure upon individual members of the House to which the medical profession descended, are not the methods of friendly societies, and so they suffered in consequence’ (‘The Public Health’, *The Times*, 10 August 1911, p. 2). Lobbyists are often reluctant to use that word to describe themselves and instead find other formulations they believe will be more acceptable: thus, in one report, the Governor of Western Australia was quoted as saying that a delegation should be sent to Westminster as ‘special personal advocacy’ was needed in order to press the case for legislation affecting the colony. The journalist who reported this found the expression curious – ‘(What an elegant euphemism for “lobbying!”)’ (‘Our Kith and Kin’, *Pall Mall Gazette*, 16 December 1889, p. 1).

Lobbying tactics

While ‘lobbying tactics’ was the fourth highest category overall (with 561 total references), a more detailed coding of these articles was less illustrative than may have been expected. There were 384 mentions of interests meeting policymakers (68.44% of this total) – of these, 126 references indicated that one or several interest representatives met or were meeting with policymakers, and 106 referred to a larger delegation while 152 were very general mentions from which no indication of the type of meeting could be inferred. When other forms of tactics were searched for, relatively few specific references were identified (see Table 6). Of the 559 total items, the next highest scoring tactic after meetings was petitions/circulars being sent to MPs, which accounted for only 6.77% of the total with 38 items. Among the subjects of such communications were: setting an eight hour working day for miners, the closing

times for licensed premises, nationalisation of the telephone system, support for religious primary schools, defence expenditure, and the right of women to retain British nationality if they married a foreigner. Letters to policymakers received only 23 mentions (4.09%), as did references to interests influencing public opinion through media relations. Some 15 items (2.67%) spoke of mass lobbies or demonstration, including by Lancashire miners in 1903, demobilised soldiers who had failed to find post-war employment in 1919, suffragists demanding the vote for women under 30 years of age in 1927, anti-rearmament protesters in 1935, workers in the film industry in 1938, and both spinsters and housewives in separate demonstrations in 1947. Only 7 references (1.24%) were found to organised interests having an explicit legislative programme – what we might today call their manifesto – which they were asking MPs to support: these groups included the United Kingdom Alliance (a temperance body), the Trades Union Congress, and the Miners' Federation. The financing of parliamentary candidates or MPs was noted in 13 articles (2.31%), all of which related to unions. And while 21 articles (3.74%) discussed organised interests participating in an official consultation process (almost all of which referred to the official machinery for setting tariffs on foreign imports), none indicated that groups testified before parliamentary committees – a practice which has long been regarded both in the US and UK as among the most common of lobbying tactics.

[TABLE 6 ABOUT HERE]

One Washington lobbyist has told the author that there are ‘three legs [on] the lobbying stool – direct contact with Capitol Hill, building coalitions, and public outreach’. We have seen that meeting with policymakers was far and away the most frequent tactic mentioned in these articles and speeches. However, the evidence of this database is that the other two were very uncommon across the whole period. Coalitions were noted in only 15 items (2.67%), and they tended to involve very similar groups working together with little evidence of cross-sectoral alliances. So, for instance, the Liverpool and Manchester chambers of commerce worked together on the supply of cotton from Africa, and all the unions which included former servicemen who were given temporary civil service jobs lobbied to improve their conditions of employment. With one or two exceptions, we do not find employers and unions in an industry forming a coalition, or a diverse range of interests from various sectors combining on a specific policy topic. Concrete instances of grassroots lobbying were only slightly more frequent, with 19 mentions (3.38%). Among the examples of interest

organisations stimulating grassroots communications were: the Miners' Federation, the Trades Union Congress, the railway companies, Catholic clubs in Lancashire, the Licensed Victuallers' Association, the co-operative societies, working men's clubs, and shipyard workers. One report noted that greyhound racing was actively working on a Betting and Lotteries Bill in 1934:

As befits the most modern of industries, it is even refining the art of lobbying and turning the models of the Orient to good Western use. A constituent who enjoys corresponding with a member can avail himself of a variety of specimen letters. He can approach the legislator in the best heart-to-heart style either as a citizen anxious for the honour of the dog-turf, as a man-in-the-street who likes a night's racing now and then, as an employee, or even as a women elector ('The Commons and Betting', *The Times*, 27 June 1934, p. 17).

Interestingly, across the entire 150 year period, only three articles (0.53%) were found which discussed 'astroturf lobbying', or manufactured grassroots. In 1890 the temperance movement was criticised for inundating MPs with 'letters and telegrams conveying expostulations and threats.... Something ought to be done to put a stop to this nuisance, especially as the agitation is well known to be purely mechanical, all the resolutions and many of the speeches being dictated by the central association in London, and simply re-echoed from the provinces' ('Notes of the Week', *Western Mail*, 19 May 1890, p. 2). Four years later, an MP complained that the drinks industry had sent him 100 telegrams each signed with a different name but all of them, he suspected, written by the same person ('Encamped in the House', *Freeman's Journal and Daily Commercial Advertiser*, 11 May 1894, p. 5). By contrast this dubious tactic has attracted more comment historically in the US, presumably in part at least because it occurred more frequently there. For instance, in 1935 power companies were discovered to have unsuccessfully campaigned against the Public Utility Holding Company Bill by means of flooding Congress with telegrams – up to 4,000 an hour – using the names of people (without their knowledge) taken from phone directories; thus, 'the great flood of protest, supposedly spontaneous from a citizenry suddenly aroused to the socialistic dangers of the New Deal, was in reality a wholly false and malicious propaganda drive by the utilities' (Schriftgiesser, 1951: 71).

Also noteworthy is the apparent disparity between the negative tone of much coverage of lobbying (see Table 5) and the fact that relatively few articles actually pointed to the use by lobbyists of corrupt tactics – only 26 items referred explicitly to lobbyists bribing

policymakers (such as that Standard Oil was alleged to have bribed MPs over a Petroleum Bill in 1899) and only 10 noted inappropriate gifts or hospitality offered by lobbyists. While we know from the literature that Washington lobbyists on occasion used both sexual favours and gambling contests to influence members of Congress, neither activity received a single mention in British newspapers or parliamentary debate.

Organised interests

Each of the three categories included under this theme had significant numbers of results. In the first of these categories, a total of 663 references to particular organised interests were identified (see Table 7). One striking finding is that while railways were certainly a significant interest – with 60 items (or 9.04% of the total counts in this category) – it does not appear to be anything like as dominant as the literature might lead us to expect, with the consensus view summarised thus: ‘Of all the nineteenth-century interest groups, the railway interest was the most infamous’ (Alderman, 1973: 224). Indeed, of these 60 articles even fewer – just 50 – explicitly refer to railway employers as a lobbying interest. This dataset thus suggests that railway companies have perhaps received disproportionate attention from scholars in the past. Conversely, local government as an organised interest receives 73 mentions (11.01%), although it is largely ignored as an interest in the literature on historical lobbying in Britain. Easily the most prominent interest found in this source material was what has been classified here as manufacturers (107 items, or 16.13%). This is explained in part at least by a relatively high number of articles from the 1910s to the 1930s on the question of tariff reform, in which manufacturers were heavily involved. Another relatively frequent mentioned interest was the trade unions – here, 54 items (8.14%) are recorded. However, to this we could add many of the 6 references to railway workers and of the 33 references to miners: most of these items were about unions in those industries, but were coded separately from references to other unions. If we assume that all these items refer to those workers lobbying through their unions, the total count for all unions would be 93 items (14.02%). Incidentally, these results seem to indicate that the miners were more heavily unionised and more politically active than were the railway workers – there are only 6 references to railway workers against 50 to railway employers, compared to 33 items on miners and 11 on mining employers.

[TABLE 7 ABOUT HERE]

Other organised interests which featured relatively significantly in this dataset included both the alcohol industry (20 items, 3.01%) and the temperance movement (16 items, 2.41%), religious bodies (31 items, 4.67%), financial companies (18 items, 2.71%), shipping companies (14 items, 2.11%), trading/colonial firms (26 items, 3.92%), and the female suffrage movement (19 items, 2.85%). We perhaps have evidence here of the increasing spread of lobbying by a wide range of interest organisations in the 168 items (or 25.33%) which are classified as ‘others’ – these are interests which were mentioned in one or several articles but not sufficient to justify an additional code. Thus, there seem to have been quite a number of relatively small interests which lobbied only infrequently, but which cumulatively account for significant lobbying activity. In terms of the ideological basis of the lobbying observed in this dataset, 472 articles in total were considered to relate to either right wing interests (business/industry/professions) or to left wing interests (unions/workers/students). Some 329 items (or 69.7%) were classed as right wing, and 143 items (30.3%) as left wing. No left wing references were noted until the 1880s.

Articles and speeches which referred to the question of tariff reform were coded; of the 111 total items, 99 (89.18%) expressed an anti-tariff opinion (ie, they criticised the pro-tariff lobbying which was being undertaken, often by manufacturers). The relationship between a system of tariffs and lobbying by manufacturers is often discussed in strong terms. The classic expression of this antagonism, which would be quoted repeatedly in later articles analysed in this dataset, was first offered by Arthur Chamberlain (brother of Joseph Chamberlain – who was himself the driving force in the crusade against free trade – and uncle of Austen and Neville) who declared that:

Protection would change the entire course of business. With the possibility of getting a duty put on the things that are necessary to your competitors and the possibility of keeping a duty off the things that are necessary to you, “lobbying” would become more important to the manufacturer than the slow processes of the factory. I could make more money in an evening in the House of Commons by arranging for the taxation of my opponent’s necessities and for the maintenance of a free market for myself than I could make by honest industry in a month.... Under Protection it would be more important to have on a board of directors men who did “lobbying” in Parliament than men who attended to the best methods of manufacturing (‘A Talk with Mr Arthur Chamberlain’, *Guardian*, 8 September 1903, p. 12).

These remarks set the tone for the clear distaste which many felt for any system of tariff reform aimed at replacing free trade with import duties on materials and products. The

articles coded here indicate extensive lobbying for tariffs by manufacturers, but the vast majority of these items are critical of those efforts, seeing tariffs as akin to legalised corruption. When an Import Duties Advisory Committee was established in the 1930s to make recommendations to government about the goods which should be subject to tariffs and the rates which should be imposed, the theory was that vesting these deliberations in an independent committee would prevent the worst excesses of lobbying which had occurred in other countries. Neville Chamberlain (then Chancellor of the Exchequer) argued this position: ‘He claimed that the creation of the Committee had avoided the “curse of tariffs” – the lobbying of legislators by interested parties’ (‘Commons and Tariffs’, *The Times*, 5 May 1932, p. 14). It appears from this dataset that this was at best only partially true – tariff reform was responsible for substantial levels of industrial lobbying over several decades, some of which was certainly directed towards Whitehall rather than Westminster, but it would be foolish to insist that this effort did not colour political debate.

This dataset hints at rather than definitively states the size of the lobbying community in Britain over the period. Acton Ayrton MP is quoted in one article on the extent of lobbying on one issue: ‘It was most desirable that the subject should be at once proceeded with, for there was going on in connexion with it a great deal of what in another country was called “lobbying.” (Hear, hear, and a laugh.) An hon. Member could hardly step out of the house without somebody touching his elbow, and asking him if he did not sympathise with one or other of these corrupt places? That kind of thing would no doubt continue until the clause was disposed of’ (‘Imperial Parliament,’ *Daily News*, 31 May 1867, p. 2). While that view was contested a decade later – ‘Lobbying, at all events on anything like a large scale, is as yet unknown to the House of Commons, but if the House as a body is to be asked to pronounce on measures promoted by private persons for private objects, it is quite impossible that it should long remain unknown’ (‘Lobbying,’ *Pall Mall Gazette*, 8 July 1876, p. 1) – most contemporaneous observers would have agreed with the idea that lobbying ‘has recently grown to alarming dimensions’ (Notes of the Week,’ *Western Mail*, 18 June 1888, p. 2). Certainly, significant lobbying expenditure seems to have been incurred by the end of the nineteenth century. The Trades Union Congress was spending £1,000 a year on the salaries and expenses of its Parliamentary Committee in 1899 (‘The Labour World’, *Manchester Times*, 4 August 1899, p. 8), while one report of lobbying by railways and other companies asserted that, ‘Men were got into the lobby at 100 guineas a day to button-hole MPs and secure their support [for Private Bills] or the reverse of their support. On one measure it is said £15,000 was “lobbied” away in ten days’ (Up To Date’, *Reynold’s Newspaper*, 27

August 1899, p. 1). An even more extreme example was provided by Samuel Smith MP who discussed a Private Bill relating to the Manchester Ship canal: 'There was an enterprise dealing with £8,000,000 of money; it was promoted as determinedly on the one side as it was opposed on the other, and each side spent some £100,000 or more in Parliamentary expenses' (debate on 'The Payment of Members of Parliament', *House of Commons Hansard*, 29 March 1889, col. 1215).

One of the most urgent dichotomies around interest groups over recent decades is the question of representational bias: does our interest group system signify a pluralist diversity which is to be encouraged, or is it reflective of the already dominant power of vested elites? This debate is not found explicitly in the period analysed in this research, though there are a very few foretastes of it. The pluralist position was expressed by Maurice Hely-Hutchinson MP, during a debate on excise duty on methylated spirits: 'For my part, I invited one of the vested interests on one side to have a drink with me, and I invited one of the vested interests on the other side to have luncheon with me. As a result of what I learned, I came to the conclusion that there was no justification for the removal of the duty now proposed' (Finance Bill Committee Stage, *House of Commons Hansard*, 22 June 1938, col. 1187). This battle of ideas was graphically stated in an early article: 'Let any one go down to the lobby of the House of Commons between four and five o'clock, and he will find members and parliamentary agents in close conference. Mr Roebuck last evening drew a comic picture of Mr Crawford with the agent for the Corporation tugging at one tail of his coat and the agent for the gas companies pulling the other' ('Commerce in the House of Commons,' *Pall Mall Gazette*, 7 March 1866, p. 10). On the other hand, the interest group choir has long had an upper-class accent:

The *Telegraph* accepts Mr Lowe's challenge to point out any defects of the present House of Commons. He claims for it immunity from certain American sins of "wire-pulling" and "lobbying." The *Telegraph* could not at once point to any member of the House of Commons who has sold his vote for money; but probably Mr Lowe knows as well as anyone that there are members whom it is idle to class as Liberals, Conservatives, or "Independents," because they represent merely some "financial" undertaking – the adjective is strong, almost libellous, but one can't help it – some bank, insurance company, or some money-making clique.... Mr Lowe also knows very well that class interests have enormous strength in the present House – that railway reform is obstructed because directors are too powerful for common sense; that poor law reform is delayed because the large landlords have too much weight; and that army and navy reforms are all but hopeless while those holding commissions in one or other of the services can, with

their friends, be counted in the House by hundreds ('Epitome of Opinion in the Morning Journals,' *Pall Mall Gazette*, 20 December 1866, p. 2).

Conclusion

This research has thrown up some useful and interesting insights into the historical development and evolution of lobbying practice in the United Kingdom. What it has not done – indeed, what would require a much larger project – is to produce a definitive analysis of how lobbying has been understood from 1800 to 1950. The approach adopted here is only possible because of recent technological advances which have allowed newspaper and parliamentary archives to be digitised and searched relatively easily. However, the technology is not yet ideal – it is reasonable to assume that there are relevant mentions of 'lobbying' in parliamentary debate during this period but because the search engine in the *Hansard* database is unable to distinguish between 'lobbying' and 'lobby' or 'lobbies', it produces 13,662 records, almost of all which are not germane to this study. More fundamentally, the terminology of lobbying creates difficulties. There is some evidence from the US, for instance, that 'lobbying' and 'lobbyist' are terms which were created in response to the even earlier usage of the word 'lobby' as a noun (ie, the 'railroad lobby', the 'textile lobby', the 'speculators who gathered in the Senate lobby') and then as a verb ('they came to Washington to lobby'). Presumably the same is true in the UK. But precisely because of the range of everyday meanings of the word 'lobby', it is problematic to use a simple automated keyword search in an archive to restrict results only to those instances which refer to organised interests lobbying politicians and officials. Thus, this study cannot conclusively identify the first recorded use of 'lobby' in the UK in the sense of an effort to influence public policy. It does not trace how language shifted from 'lobby' to 'lobbying' and 'lobbyist'. Nonetheless, while acknowledging these limitations, what this study does offer is some empirical evidence of how 'lobbying' and 'lobbyist' have been used in parliamentary and journalistic discourse over a 150 year period in Britain. In doing so, it sheds light on the early history of an important activity and adds a more detailed context to our existing knowledge of lobbying. The findings presented in this article contribute fresh nuances and insights to how we think of the emergence of professionalised lobbying in Britain, and can inform future studies (both descriptive and hypotheses-testing) which utilise different source material.

Finally, while this dataset offers much rich detail on the substance of lobbying in Britain, one cannot avoid noticing that it is bookended by two articles which paint a picture

of lobbying that practitioners would find both familiar and dispiriting. The earliest article recorded in the archives on which this research is based defines lobbying as it was practiced in the United States as revolving around social hospitality rather than evidence-based policy information:

There is extensive jobbing and treating relative to private bills, or bills for the establishment of public companies. The parties who apply for the bill, or their agents, come to Harrisburg while the legislature is in session, and, under pretence of explaining the subject to the members, flatter them, give them suppers, and open their understandings by means of plentiful libations of wine. Many of the representatives are men from country districts, of little education and humble fortune, but of unquestionable integrity, who would reject with indignation a money bribe, but who unconsciously fall before personal flatteries and champagne. The technical name for these practices is “lobbying” (‘Legislature of Pennsylvania,’ *Guardian*, 7 April 1841, p. 4).

The last article in this dataset quotes an MP complaining about the conduct of Christopher Powell who asserted that Powell:

ran a lobbying agency in the House on the American principle, and that his activities ought to be investigated, particularly the facilities he had as secretary of the Inter-Parliamentary Union. There was considerable anxiety in the House that the matter had apparently been allowed to go by default (‘The Case of Mr Powell’, *The Times*, 13 December 1949, p. 6).

Together, these items reflect the reputational perceptions which professional lobbying has struggled to counter throughout its history. From its emergence as a recognised activity; through its development into a significant, national and professional interest group system; to the present day’s powerful and substantial industry – lobbying in Britain has failed to achieve widespread public understanding and support. The data presented in this study reveals a number of important developments and changes over time, but this fundamental lack of acceptance and legitimacy remains as pressing a challenge to today’s lobbyists as it was to their predecessors in the 1840s. Writing about the history of public relations, L’Etang asserts (2008: 333) that, ‘PR practice in the UK is not particularly good at remembering and celebrating its innovators’. Similarly, lobbyists in Britain should have greater regard for their predecessors and their professional heritage: that in turn requires academics to offer practitioners a more nuanced and detailed portrait of early lobbying and interest group behaviour than we currently have.

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1. Incidence of search terms by archive

Descriptor	<i>Hansard</i> 1803-1950	British Library 1800-1900	<i>The Times</i> 1800-1950	<i>Guardian/ Observer</i> 1800-1950
"lobbyist"	10	148	52	43
"lobbying"	—	434	335	481
"lobbyer"	1	3	1	1
"lobbier"	1	9	4	1
"lobby-agent"	2	4	3	0
"lobby agent"	2	4	3	1
"lobby-member"	61	6	0	0
"lobby member"	61	6	0	2
"professional lobbyist"	1	3	1	0
"professional lobbying"	0	0	1	0
"contract lobbyist"	0	0	0	0
"contract lobbying"	1	0	0	0
"commercial lobbyist"	1	0	0	0
"commercial lobbying"	0	0	0	2
"in-house lobbyist"	0	0	0	0
"in-house lobbying"	0	2	0	0

Note: A dash indicates that the term has been searched for but the results are not included in this analysis because the particular archive's search capability is not sufficiently well calibrated to deliver an accurate count of that term. Thus, *Hansard* includes 13,662 counts of "lobbying" but an initial examination reveals that almost all of these are general references to the parliamentary voting lobbies, and so they have been excluded from this analysis since the time it would take to identify the relatively few relevant items specific to lobbying would be excessive.

2. Number of discarded items by search term

Category	“Lobbyist”	“Lobbying”	All Other Descriptors	TOTAL
Reprints of original articles	33	61	91	185
Lobby journalists	84	26	1	111
US lobbying	67	223	14	304
Non-US foreign lobbying	10	100	0	110
Lobbying by parliamentarians	8	59	1	68
Inter-governmental lobbying	5	58	1	64
Intra-organisational lobbying	0	27	1	28
Character recognition errors	2	35	55	92
Reviews of books/fictional works	5	17	0	22
Contents pages/indexes	2	9	0	11
Tennis	0	5	0	5
Miscellaneous	2	12	0	14

3. References in unique items to UK lobbying by date

Period	Number of Items	Cumulative Total
1800-1840	0	0
1840-1850	3	3
1850-1860	3	6
1860-1870	20	26
1870-1880	43	69
1880-1890	54	123
1890-1900	173	296
1900-1910	96	392
1910-1920	61	453
1920-1930	85	538
1930-1940	108	646
1940-1950	43	689

4. Overview of general categories coded

	1840s	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	1910s	1920s	1930s	1940s	TOTAL
Tone	3	3	20	43	55	167	102	60	83	106	43	685
Comparisons with United States	2	3	10	10	13	17	12	4	2	3	3	79
Use of associated terms	2	1	9	8	13	29	15	5	1	6	3	92
Lobbying tactics	3	1	11	15	31	134	63	55	68	125	55	561
Corrupt tactics	2	0	8	7	6	4	4	0	1	2	2	36
Lobbying on general issues	1	0	7	1	5	22	49	30	38	77	36	266
Lobbying on specific legislation	2	1	9	15	25	124	44	29	43	29	7	328
Private sector lobbying	1	3	9	18	18	80	65	40	53	68	16	371
Public sector lobbying	0	0	0	6	5	51	17	6	12	21	4	122
Local/regional interests	0	0	4	18	22	52	30	8	10	18	4	166
National interests	0	0	2	1	13	99	59	54	72	92	31	423
Lobbying venues	3	5	20	35	47	182	85	68	70	115	59	689
Organised interests	3	3	19	33	46	191	88	62	78	102	38	663
Tariff reform	0	0	0	0	3	0	33	17	18	39	1	111
Ideology	2	3	11	20	29	123	75	49	62	78	20	472
Lobbyists	5	0	12	9	25	37	19	6	9	8	22	152
Female lobbyists	0	0	1	0	2	11	1	0	7	7	6	35
Petitioning for personal claims	1	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	0	0	0	8
Regulation/reform	0	0	1	4	12	8	3	0	1	1	10	40

5. How lobbying was understood

	1840s	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	1910s	1920s	1930s	1940s	TOTAL
Tone												
Positive	0	0	0	0	3	6	3	3	2	3	4	24
(Right to be heard/ interest articulation)	0	0	0	0	3	4	3	3	2	3	3	21
Negative	3	3	15	26	39	71	62	30	41	59	18	367
(Bribery/corruption)	0	0	8	6	6	5	13	5	1	5	3	52
(Subverting democracy)	3	3	4	7	8	29	5	8	4	9	8	88
(System overloaded by demands)	0	0	1	1	6	2	6	0	2	1	1	20
Neutral	0	0	5	17	13	90	37	27	40	44	21	294
Comparisons with United States	2	3	10	10	13	17	12	4	2	3	3	79
Use of associated terms												
Interest group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Organised interest	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Pressure group	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Influence	2	1	6	6	3	15	9	2	1	0	1	46
Persuasion	0	0	1	0	3	1	0	0	0	1	0	6
Log-rolling	0	0	0	0	4	9	3	3	0	3	0	22
Advocacy	0	0	2	2	3	4	2	0	0	2	1	16

7. Organised interests

	1840s	1850s	1860s	1870s	1880s	1890s	1900s	1910s	1920s	1930s	1940s	TOTAL
Organised interests												
Brewers/alcohol industry	0	0	0	1	2	7	3	2	2	3	0	20
Prohibition lobby	0	0	0	1	1	10	3	0	1	0	0	16
Railways	1	1	8	4	14	17	8	2	4	0	1	60
(Employers)	1	1	8	4	8	16	6	2	3	0	1	50
(Workers)	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	0	1	0	0	6
Local government	0	0	0	6	5	38	12	1	2	7	2	73
Mining	0	0	0	0	0	20	10	3	3	6	0	42
(Employers)	0	0	0	0	0	3	1	1	0	6	0	11
(Workers)	0	0	0	0	0	18	9	2	3	1	0	33
Teachers	0	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	4	2	0	8
Agriculture	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Doctors	0	0	0	1	3	0	0	1	0	0	0	5
Religion	0	0	1	2	1	12	5	3	4	1	2	31
Financial/City	1	0	1	6	1	2	1	2	2	2	0	18
Shipping/canals	0	0	0	1	4	4	0	2	3	0	0	14
Manufacturers	0	0	0	0	0	2	9	19	28	39	10	107
Trading/Colonial	1	0	2	7	3	4	6	2	1	0	0	26
Female suffrage	0	0	1	0	2	6	2	3	5	0	0	19
Trade unions	0	0	0	0	2	21	12	6	3	5	5	54
Others	0	2	6	4	8	46	17	16	15	36	18	168
Tariff reform												
Pro tariff references	0	0	0	0	2	0	7	0	0	3	0	12
Anti tariff references	0	0	0	0	1	0	26	17	18	36	1	99
Ideology												
Right wing interests:												
Business/industry/professions	2	3	11	20	27	68	50	35	43	58	12	329
Left wing interests:												
Unions/workers/students	0	0	0	0	2	55	25	14	19	20	8	143

**The essence of crisis action:
Tracking the defining moments of crisis process and practice**

Amisha Mehta and Robina Xavier
School of Advertising, Marketing and Public Relations, QUT Business School,
Brisbane, Australia
Email: a.mehta@qut.edu.au; r.xavier@qut.edu.au

Abstract

Crisis holds the potential for profound change in organisations and industries. The past 50 years of crisis management highlight key shifts in crisis practice, creating opportunities for multiple theories and research tracks. This study aims to capture the essence of crisis action by examining how defining moments have influenced the domain of practice. By studying the evolution of crisis practice, this study aims to reflect on the emergence of and suggest issues and opportunities for the next stage of development in the field of crisis communication.

Defining crises such as Tylenol, Exxon Valdez, and September 11 terrorist attacks have influenced or challenged the principles of best practice of crisis communication in public relations and other business disciplines. To examine the essence of crisis action, we study how crisis practice has changed over time. We study crisis in order to consider how factors such as management theories or practices have enabled, constrained, or influenced crisis practice.

This study draws data from the plethora of crisis research in public relations. We trace the development of crisis practice by identifying the shifts in crisis research and models, and examining the rationales for such change. We map the development of the discipline against key management theories and practices. This study builds on existing historical studies of crisis to develop a model of crisis action over time.

Literature review

Understanding the defining moments of crisis practice and research is an essential component to directing future work in this area. Over the past 50 years, and more noticeably since the 1990s, crisis researchers have established a strong theoretical and practical foundation for the discipline. This study aims to build on existing historical reviews in the literature by examining the changing focus in crisis research over time and by introducing a management framework to historical research.

The 1962 Cuban missile crisis was a significant event for crisis management and communication, providing management theorists with the opportunity to study decision-making in order to prevent or encourage a particular course of action (Allison 1971; Allison and Zelikow 1999; Fishman 1999). Decades later, in the 1980s, crises like those experienced by Johnson & Johnson and Exxon established crisis communication as an essential functional tool in public relations decision-making. Our discipline's fascination with crisis has since been demonstrated by the prolific growth in the literature and the sizeable number of continuing professional development sessions run each year by professional associations around the world. Yet, despite this ground-breaking introduction, much of the past 50 years of crisis research shows incremental changes in the field. If our past determines our future, this paper aims to examine the path of change in order to provide some insight into the future of crisis practice. This study builds on the existing historical reviews of the literature by considering the link between crisis and management trends across a broader range of cases than previously analysed in the literature. In doing so, this study puts forward management theory and practice as an axis for the evolution of crisis practice.

Recent historical studies of crisis communication examine the evolution of crisis based on theoretical and practical axes (Jaques 2009; Kim, Avery and Lariscy, 2009; Avery, Lariscy, Kim, and Hocke, 2010; Coombs, Frandsen, Holladay and Johansen, 2010). These studies aim to map the field of crisis communication by reviewing the development of theory (Coombs et al. 2010) or identifying key methods and findings and also identify gaps in popular research (Kim et al. 2009; Avery et al. 2010).

From a theoretical perspective, existing historical reviews demonstrate the ongoing extension and refinement of key theories and recognise the strong influence of crisis communication on public relations research agendas (Kim et al. 2009; Avery et al. 2010). For example, Avery et al.'s (2010) analysis of Coombs' and Benoit's crisis theories identifies the strong imprint of this research, spanning 18 years and more than 60 articles. At the same time, the paper's sample selection of image restoration and situational crisis communication theory provides only a partial description of crisis history. This collection of papers concludes by calling for future research to consider context and diversity in methodological and theoretical frameworks (Kim, Avery et al. 2009; Avery, Lariscy et al. 2010).

Other papers offer theoretical reflections to the field as part of introductions to special issues in journal papers. In reviewing the impact of corporate apologia on communication, Coombs et al. (2010) review the conceptual introduction of apologia to the field, its role in crafting message design, and the key authors using this theory. As part of this reflection, these

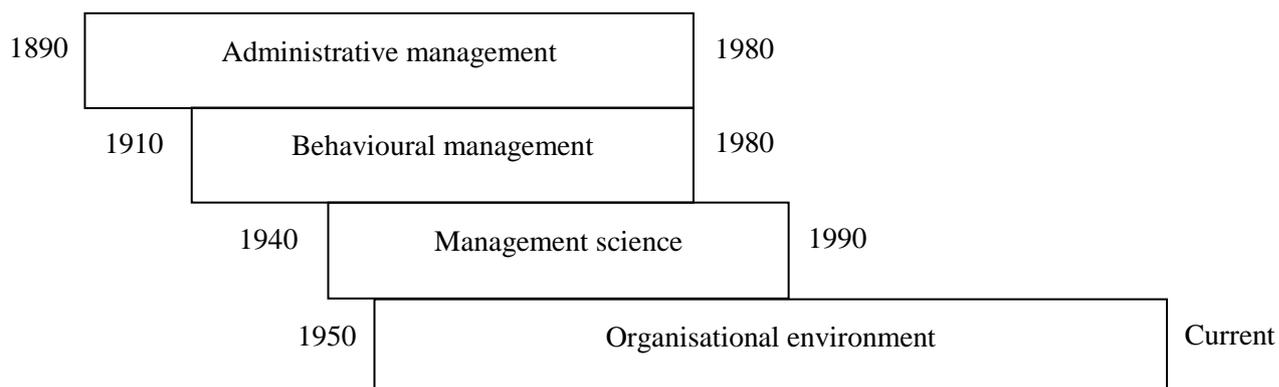
authors also recognise the gap between existing research and the practical implications of increasingly global crises and the role of emotions in crisis communication (Coombs et al. 2010). In response, the authors suggest future research examine emotions and the influence of the international context with existing papers providing some direction (Coombs and Holladay 2007).

From a practical perspective, historical reviews of crisis and reviews of popular crisis text books emphasise the double-edged sword of organisational learning (Jaques 2009), and the importance of crisis preparation (Ihlen 2010), respectively. In order to learn from past crises, Jaques (2009) reviewed case studies about organisations involved in iconic crises that subsequently faced a similar incident. Drawing on Johnson & Johnson's two crises in 1982 and 1986, Jaques (2009) suggests that success in crisis management may sabotage the handling of subsequent crises. This notion of success is supported by other authors in the field (Sellnow and Seeger 2001). In reviewing crisis text books including Coombs' *Ongoing Crisis Communication*, and Regester and Larkin's *Risk, Issues and Crisis Management in Public Relations*, Ihlen (2010, 109) both commends the diversity and range of learning opportunities for practitioners and calls for the field to adopt "even wider cultural perspectives and further strengthen its engagement with theories that go against the simplified modernist view of risk and crisis".

Focusing on the crisis communication research as a whole, a range of perspectives about crisis has been historically embedded in the public relations discipline. Authors have recognised that the potential for growth in the field by looking outward and understanding the influence of changes in business practice (Rosenthal, 't Hart and Charles, 1989; Barton 1993), and looking inwards to grow the discipline area. Despite this recognition, the bulk of crisis work approaching the 1990s focused on examining the behaviours and actions of key crisis actors and the influence of communication and bargaining patterns on this process (Rosenthal et al. 1989). Ten years later, at the turn of the century in 1999, the crisis communication literature was categorised as being in the evaluation and development stage of construct conceptualisation where theoretical concepts are blended and extended and interdisciplinary work is used to test validity (Fishman 1999). Some of the recurring concepts and theories that were introduced in this phase include: attribution theory, reputation, legitimacy, discourse theory, chaos theory, and complexity theory. To explore what is next for crisis communication research, this paper examines the degree of alignment between the development of crisis communication research and that of management practice.

Change and innovation have been key features of management theories and practice. Like their public relations counterparts, the majority of management reviews provide insight into the historical theories and practices that inform the management discipline today. This section provides a descriptive review of both the theoretical and practical influences on management, summarised in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Mapping management theory



Waddell, Devine, Jones and George (2007) suggest that management theory has been influenced by four main classical theories spanning the 1890s to current day. The first theory prevalent from the 1890s to the 1980s is *administrative management theory*. It selects organisational structure as a way to achieve efficiency and effectiveness (Waddell et al. 2007). Influenced by Weber and Fayol, this perspective emphasised the roles of bureaucracy, authority, rules, norms and standard operating procedures that still feature in today's environment. The second theory to emerge from the 1910s to 1980s is *behavioural management theory*. This theory emerged concurrently in the US because authors were yet unaware of Weber and Fayol's work in Europe. Behavioural management theory was a perspective that examined how managerial behaviour could influence employee performance and productivity and the achievement of organisational goals (Waddell et al. 2007; Davidson, Simon et al. 2009). Key theorists included Follett, Trist, and Mayo. The behavioural management approach contained a number of studies including the Hawthorne studies and the human relations movement where managerial concern for employees influenced satisfaction which influenced performance (Davidson, Simon, Woods and Griffin, 2009).

The third theory spanning the 1940s to the 1990s is *management science theory*, which emerged to focus decision-making on quantitative techniques for understanding and using organisational resources (Waddell et al. 2007; Davidson et al. 2009). Under this

perspective, systems including operations management, total quality management, and management information systems emerged to provide data about organisational systems and processes and improve decision-making. The fourth theory to emerge in 1950 and remain current is *organisational environment theory*. This theory was a natural evolution, growing out of management theories that were largely focused inward on intra-organisational relationships. Organisational environment theory draws on systems theory and contingency theories to examine how environmental factors influence a manager's ability to acquire and use resources (Waddell et al. 2007). These theoretical perspectives have influenced a range of management innovations and external issues including globalisation, total quality management systems, transformative leadership, political change, consumerism, workplace diversity, and sustainability (Barton 1993; Robbins, Bergman, Stagg and Coulter, 2006; Davidson et al. 2009; Samson and Daft 2009).

In order to build on existing historical reviews of crisis, this study uses management theory and practice as an axis for the evolution of crisis practice. Public relations, the discipline home of crisis communication research, has long been accepted as a management function in the literature (Cutlip, Center and Broom 2000). As a result, the research question guiding this study is: To what extent do the past 50 years of crisis communication research and practice link to the evolution of management theory and practice?

Material and methods

This study adopts a longitudinal and qualitative approach to examine historical change in crisis communication research. The data represents a 50 year period, capturing crisis events and research from the 1960s to 2010. This time frame is required in order to extend existing research in historical crisis research that spans approximately 20 years (Kim et al. 2009; Avery et al. 2010). The primary data sources for this study are international public relations and communication journals. These sources were selected in order to examine crisis case studies and conceptual papers on crisis communication theories.

The journals were identified based on existing registers of public relations journals with a focus on journals published and edited in the US, Europe, and Asia Pacific. Twenty journals were selected. Journal articles were collected using a combination of searches through each journal's home page as well as Google Scholar. The search terms used included crisis or crises, crisis communication, public relations crises, and crisis management. The search revealed a total of 148 articles. Articles were categorised based on whether they

reported on a crisis event, that is a crisis case study such as the Tylenol tampering crisis or September 11 terrorist attacks, or a theoretical paper, that is a journal article that provided conceptual or empirical study into a key theory or model in crisis communication.

Data were analysed to explore, reduce, and interpret the data in order to develop a research story (Hesse-Biber and Leavy 2006). Three analytical steps were taken. Firstly, time-ordered displays of data were created using tables that outlined the date of the crisis event or theoretical paper, summary of article and contribution, crisis organisation, location of crisis, and reference material. The summary of the article was the most critical component of this table, providing information about the nature of the crisis, the theoretical concepts, and the management-related aspects of the case. Secondly, data were analysed to build an understanding of the scope of change. Drawing on Street and Gallupe (2009), the scope of change was examined based on the key contribution of the article and its relationship to existing content in the literature. In this way, scope can be defined as convergent where refinements are made to existing material or radical where new content, theories or processes are introduced (Street and Gallupe 2009). In this step, data were grouped into macro categories or domains that were determined based on the essence of crisis action and research. Crisis domains were established based on the following criteria: 1) degree of contribution to field, 2) degree of critical mass in the literature, and 3) ability to influence a range of studies in the literature. Thirdly, data were compared to categories of management theories spanning the past 50 years. This step was undertaken in order to provide evidence to determine the extent of alignment between historical crisis communication research and trends in management theory and practice.

Several limitations based on sampling decisions are acknowledged. Firstly, as with any study, a range of written artefacts could have been considered including journal articles, text books and industry case studies. This paper selects journal articles as a site to best witness focused crisis activity. Another related limitation is the potential for delay on publications of journal articles. That is, though journal content related to crisis events or practices may be timely, the peer review process may cause a publication delay.

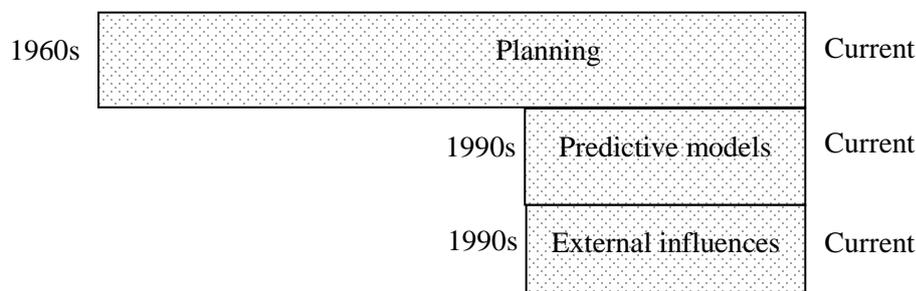
Results

Change in crisis practice

Measuring and reporting the scope of change in crisis practice is based on the introduction and recurrence of themes, concepts and theories across the past 50 years of research. Change in crisis practice is summarised into three overlapping domains: 1) crisis planning, 2) building

and testing predictive models, and 3) mapping and measuring external environmental influences. These perspectives are summarised in Figure 2 below.

Figure 2 Mapping crisis domains



Crises from the 1960s and 1970s emphasise the importance of *crisis planning*. For the public relations literature, Johnson & Johnson's Tylenol tampering case was a defining moment in crisis both because it was successfully managed and the organisation had no crisis management protocols in place (Snyder 1983). During this phase, the role and process of crisis planning grew in popularity, coupled with the influence of issues management. From early contingency models designed to manage a range of crises (Egelhoff and Sen 1992), the literature grew to consider how the placement of public relations in organisational decision-making influenced crisis management (Guth 1995), to recent work related to crisis phases and cycles as tools for crisis management (Wahlberg 2004; Howell and Miller 2006). Crisis planning is now an established part of crisis practice with the majority of practitioners developing written crisis plans (Cloudman and Hallahan 2006). At the same time, the literature also recognises how culture and autonomy as compared to crisis preparedness can predict success in crisis management (Marra 1998). The rationale for this domain was the establishment of crisis protocols to guide practitioner processes to prevent or be prepared for crisis.

In the 1990s, on the basis of strong support for crisis management processes, *building and testing predictive models* emerged to provide practitioners with decision-making guidelines to determine the most effective way to manage crises. These predictive models were based on studies of crisis message strategy including corporate apologia (Ice 1991; Hearit 1994) and image restoration theory (Benoit 1997). Coombs and Holladay provided a tested and universal approach to crisis management (Coombs 1995; Coombs and Holladay 1996). Coombs' work has grown to examine decision-making guidelines, the role of compassion, the influence of a relationship history on crisis, and integrated methodological

diversity by testing both print and video messages on stakeholder perceptions (Coombs and Holladay 2009). Further, the work of Coombs and colleagues influences other researchers in the field (Stephens and Malone 2009; Oyer 2010). At the same time, predictive models have also been used to evaluate Benoit's image restoration theory with studies aiming to provide an empirical test of the theory (Dardis and Haigh 2009), and test how each strategy impacts relationships and corporate social responsibility (Haigh and Brubaker 2010). The rationale for this domain was to provide a specific message-based technique to guide a crisis manager's decision-making and achieve the best outcome for the organisation.

From the late 1990s, *mapping and measuring external environmental influences* on crisis practice emerged to challenge traditional approaches to crisis management. In this study, external influences include intercultural variability, social responsibility, and social media. From the late 1990s, crisis research started to report on crises occurring outside of the USA. This work provided insight into the influence of intercultural values and political systems on crisis management. A related extension to this work also comes from the testing of theories and concepts using international data sets (Lee 2004). Stakeholder expectations of social responsibility also emerged as a theoretical influence on crisis communication (Ulmer and Sellnow 1997; Martinelli and Briggs 1998). More recent research shows some equivocality in the literature with empirical studies suggesting that CSR provides only limited protection for company prior to crisis (Kim, Kim and Cameron 2009). Studies from the late 1990s moved on to examine the influence of the internet on stakeholder behaviour (Hearit 1999). Since that time, studies have explored how company websites to communicate simultaneous information to publics (Greer and Moreland 2003), the mass media's use of consumer generated media over organisational sources (Wigley and Fontenot 2010), and organisational engagement in corporate blogs (Jin and Liu 2010). There is no doubt that intercultural variables, social responsibility, and social media have and will continue to influence the ways organisations communicate and stakeholders respond during crisis. The rationale for this crisis domain was the recognition of the strong influence of the environment over crisis management approaches, offering ways to both constrain and enable crisis management and access to resources.

Comparing crisis and management practices

This section considers how management theory offers an additional axis for analysing the evolution of crisis practice. This is facilitated by mapping the four classical management theories with the three crisis domains established earlier in this paper. The three domains of

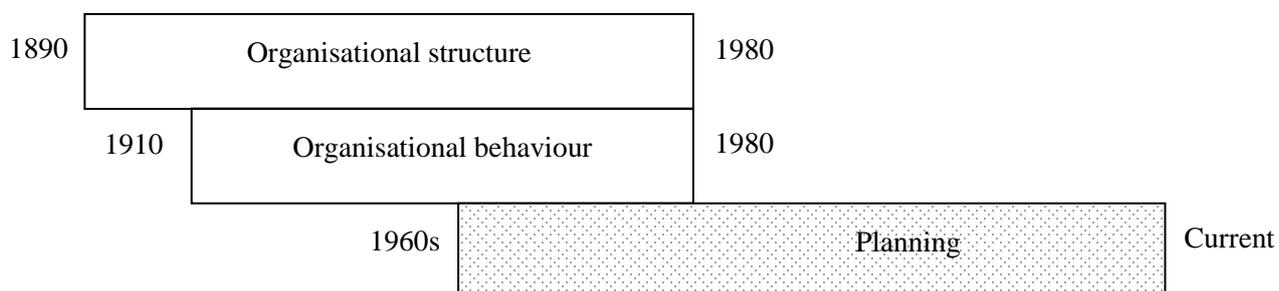
crisis practice align to management theories in the following groupings: 1) administrative management (organisational structure) and behavioural management (organisational behaviour) align to crisis planning, 2) management science (quantitative methods) align to predictive models, and 3) organisational-environment aligns to external environmental influences.

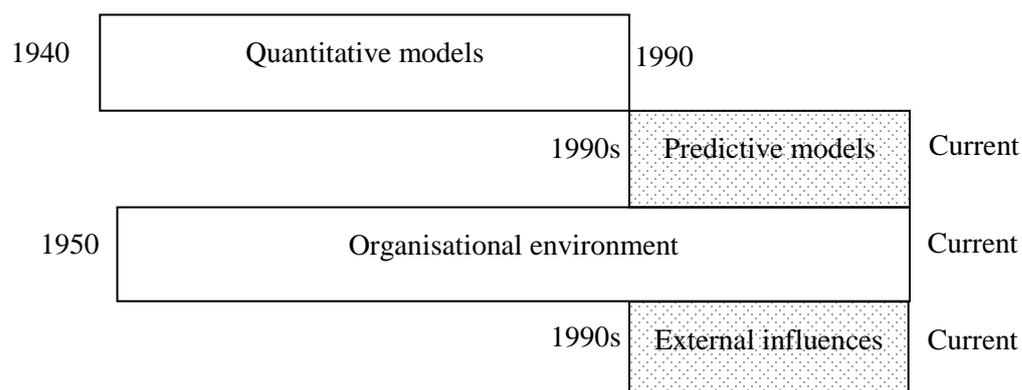
The first grouping aligns two management theories with the domain of crisis planning. Management theory focuses simultaneously on organisational structure and behaviour because European and North American authors knew little of each others' research areas (Waddell et al. 2007). Although these theories are based on different inputs, they focus on achieving similar outputs for organisations in terms of efficiency, effectiveness, and performance. These theories and their focus on the internal environment align to the domain of crisis planning, which offered practitioners a process for preparing for crisis in order to achieve effective outcomes for the organisation, and at the same time, establish the right culture to improve the performance of public relations practitioners.

The second pairing links management science with the crisis domain of predictive models. This grouping is based on the development of quantitative techniques and systems designed to maximise the use of organisational resources. This theory considers both internal and external environments. In the same way, the crisis domain of predictive models includes empirical work that provides guidelines to direct decision-making and restore reputation and image.

The third pairing links organisational environment theory with the crisis domain of external environmental influences. This grouping is based on a shared perspective around organisational management of relationships with the external environment and an organisation's ability to gain resources from the external environment. The crisis domain of external environmental influences draws together the range of influences on organisational-environment relationships. Figure 3 illustrates the mapping of management theory and crisis practice.

Figure 3 Mapping of management theory and crisis domains





Discussion

By introducing management theory and practice as an additional axis for crisis practice, this study contributes new perspectives to existing research on the historical development of crisis communication. Although this study does not aim to provide a definitive review of crisis history, it does seek to use management theory and practice as an explanatory device for past and future crisis practice. In order to explore this goal, this section discusses the findings of the study and draws implications for future research and practice.

The findings of this study shed light on a new path for crisis practice by showing content-based alignment between evolving crisis domains and key management theories. Specifically, the crisis domains of crisis planning, building and testing predictive models, and mapping and measuring external environmental influences can be matched to the development of management theory. This finding builds on existing historical studies that focus primarily on describing the development of crisis history as a series of ongoing refinements of theories in the literature. However, although crisis practice has mirrored management theory, there is a time lag in the alignment. That is, crisis domains track a step behind management theory and practice. These findings pose new questions relating to future crisis practice: Is the lag between management theory and crisis domains sustainable if crisis practice is to remain effective in answering business needs? Given the ongoing influences of globalisation, increased calls for social responsibility, new technologies and current challenges around transformative change (Davidson et al. 2009; Ramo 2009), is it feasible to study crisis one step out of pace with management theory? Future research should examine not only the scope of change but draw on the techniques of Street and Gallupe (2009) to measure and compare the pace of change in management theory and crisis literatures.

At the same time, the future development of crisis practice must also come from within. Although a limited number of researchers have introduced recent management theories into the literature, these approaches are yet to receive widespread adoption thereby affecting their ability to be recognised as a discrete crisis domain. Instead, the literature suggests that many crisis communication researchers choose to extend knowledge by refining existing work in the literature. Although this strengthens the predominant crisis domains, it may ultimately affect the future development and growth of the literature.

Conclusion

The primary contribution of this study relates to the introduction of management theory as an additional axis to theory development in crisis communication. In doing so, the study shows alignment but also a time lag between management theory and practice and domains of crisis practice. If the environment is changing so quickly now, we need to find ways to narrow the time gap in our research. Doing so will ensure crisis communication theory and practice achieves organisational goals, secures access to environmental resources, and meets stakeholder expectations.

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Ideals and realities: renaissance state communication in More's *Utopia* and Machiavelli's *The Prince*.

Simon Moore
Associate Professor
Information Design and Corporate Communication
Bentley University
Waltham, MA, USA
smoore@bentley.edu

The Prince (1513) by Niccolo Machiavelli (1469-1527) and *Utopia* (1516) by Sir Thomas More (1478-1535) are among the most influential books of the last 500 years. The relationship between Communication and Power mattered to both men. What were the reasons for this? What part does it play in their books?

The authors, Renaissance contemporaries, have left us not just ideas about government, but powerful words with emotive communication equity. "Machiavellian" and "Utopian" have long since entered the dictionary as adjectives and nouns, and a simple glance at the internet confirms their continued popularity. There are of course other motivations for re-examining both books from the perspective of communication. One is that the historical perspective coincides with present conditions. Today, communication's relationship to power cannot be ignored. The generation of policy, the passage of legislation, the self-promotion of politicians and the management of public perception are interdependent and inseparable. Much the same could be said of the Renaissance, where European oligarchies, dynasties and tyrannies sought to establish their authority as God-given, or at the very least popular and secure, even when they were not.

More and Machiavelli recognized public political communication mattered, but had divergent views about it. Their contrasting fortunes may have had something to do with that, and indeed with the wider tone and content of their books. *Utopia* was written while its author was rising; confidently coping with the demands of law practice, state policy and a close-knit family life, apologizing for *Utopia's* late completion to his real-life friend Peter Giles: "I leave to myself, I mean to my book, no time." (More, 1516, p. 9) Machiavelli wrote *The Prince* after his fall, with ample time on his hands. More ascended, but Machiavelli languished; exiled from Florence; living within sight of his city but without office or any political responsibilities. He too had been a diplomat, scholar and civil servant, but far less restrained than More in private life: pursuing drink, mistresses and prostitutes as well as power, while his devoted wife lingered at home. Perhaps his frequent surrenders to

temptation had as much influence on his views on people and affairs as his studies, his diplomatic duties and dismissal after the Medici returned to Florence, overturned the city's oligarchy-Republic, and exiled Machiavelli after some investigative torture. *The Prince* could not be a more direct contrast to More's imagined world:

But, it being my intention to write a thing which shall be useful to him who apprehends it, it appears to me more appropriate to follow up the real truth of a matter than the imagination of it; for many have pictured republics and principalities which in fact have never been known or seen (Machiavelli, 1513, p. 70).

I propose that More and Machiavelli's different accounts of government also stem from their less well-known attitudes to what we today prosaically might describe as strategic communication with key target audiences. What follows attempts to explore those attitudes.

The Prince

Machiavelli expressed ideas about political power, public life and public office which to some are appalling, to others bracingly realistic, or both appalling and realistic. He certainly wrote with a frankness arguably surpassed only by Luther's Ninety-Five Theses in 1517, but which was possibly unmatched in secular politics until Samuel Pepys' private diaries 150 years later, which were in any case forgotten and unpublished for two centuries after that. In his main political books, *The Prince* and later *The Discourses* (1517), Machiavelli drew much from classical history and politics, trying to distil the experiences of Rome and Greece into practical advice for rulers in his own time and place. It would have been inconsistent for so attentive a practitioner and student of political reality to neglect communication, and the ways rulers used it to project, increase or hold onto power, and his work directly and indirectly reveals how he saw this activity. His view was shaped, not just by his times or his humanist studies of the classical world, but by his career as a senior civil servant and diplomat for Florence, by his exile, his personal character, his reading of philosophy, history and government, and how communication was already being used as a tool of governance.

To understand Machiavelli's perspective on communication we must first understand his view of the influence of Fate, irrationality and conservatism on human nature. People are driven by their nature to desire, take and wield power over others and this notion was amply confirmed to him by events in his life and in Italian politics, which also made it plain to him that government cannot be disentangled from communication. In divided Italy, where ruling families or republics rapidly rose, fell and rose again, the prime task of politics was to ensure

personal survival and security. Rulers were obliged to move fast to construct even a veneer of legitimacy. This pressing need confronted the virtuous as much as the unscrupulous, the cultivated as well as the brutish: it confronted the oligarchs of the Florentine Republic, educated aristocrats with cultural leanings like the Duke of Urbino and his courtiers famously recalled by Castiglione in *The Book of the Courtier* (Castiglione, 1507), and savage sadists like the Baglioni of Perugia, or Giovanni Bentivoglio of Bologna.

Cultivated diplomats in this milieu knew that for any State to survive, difficult realities of geography, alliances and military muscle must be faced. Their prosperous but tiny polities were legion: fragile from within and without. To forestall rivals Republican Florence might need to cut cards with the devil: with rulers like the Baglioni or more sophisticated but ruthlessly pragmatic dynasties like the Sforzas of Milan. It is unsurprising then that councils and princes supplemented their financial and military resources by exerting personal and state communication assets. Also unsurprising then, that in *The Prince*, this approach was not neglected as communication was integral to successful government. Successful government meant effective, accepted, assertive, durable and above all stable government. Successful government did not need to mean kind government. Isaiah Berlin reminds us that for Machiavelli, effective rule required:

The pagan virtues of courage, vitality, self assertion and, in the case of rulers, a capacity for ruthless, unscrupulous and cruel action where this was called for by the needs of the state (1959, p. 31).

This was the reality political communication worked with and so *The Prince* – unlike *Utopia* – is not steeped in worthy nostrums. Machiavelli’s humanism was altogether different, and reflected the Italian humanist neo-Roman celebration of power and glory. (Nelson, 2006) He preferred to draw from events in political and military history – and especially ancient Rome - that seemed to shed light on what was practically possible. Perfection was impossible, because institutions and polities were as flawed as the humanity which created them. “Men are unable to master their own natures,” he advised, in a letter on governance to the son of Florence’s leading official. (King, 2007, p. 88) It was also difficult, if not entirely impossible, to escape Fortune’s blows. References to Fortune appear often in *The Prince*. Fortuna inevitably turns her wheel, and a ruler topples, defeated by his stubborn nature, lack of laws, legitimacy or arms. Part of Machiavelli’s purpose was to show Italy’s princes how best to survive the turning wheel; another was to show how he himself was

trapped under it. His opening dedication to Duke Lorenzo di Piero de Medici ends with an appeal for pity that reveals the underlying purpose of the book.

In “Chapter Twenty-Five: What Fortune can effect in human affairs, and how best to withstand her”, Machiavelli confesses to almost giving in to the opinion that Fortune governs all, but recovers himself:

Nevertheless, not to extinguish our free will, I hold it to be true that Fortune is the arbiter of one-half of our actions, but that she leaves us to direct the other half, or perhaps a little less (Machiavelli, 1513, p.114).

His uncomfortable argument that reason is mastered by instinct, that fortune’s “raging river” (p. 114) often overpowers reasoning humanity, is the basis for his attitude to public communication, and sits in a long lineage that cannot be dismissed. Proponents have included highly gifted persons in art, music, literature, philosophy, economics and politics. Among them we find the kingly author of Ecclesiastes – “that which is crooked cannot be made straight: and that which is wanting cannot be numbered” (Ecclesiastes, 1:15); Machiavelli and Shakespeare in the Renaissance; David Hume in the Enlightenment – “it is impossible for us to *think* of anything, which we have not antecedently *felt*” (1748, p. 318); Edmund Burke’s powerful philippic against the French Revolution: “Reason can furnish nothing to reconcile inconsistency.” (1790, p. 290) Joseph de Maistre, the great Catholic sage of Reaction and exalter of irrationality, took Burke’s reflections to their limit: “no great human institution results from deliberation.” (1796, p. 57). We see these themes in the work of the Romantics: Beethoven’s and Wagner’s music, the paintings of Caspar Friedrich and Turner, the writing of Thomas Carlyle and the German romantics and the poetry of Wordsworth and Coleridge. It has been embraced in our own time by Jung: “it is necessary to give up the attitude of conscious planning in order to make way for the inner growth of the personality” (1968, p. 164); and von Hayek’s view that what men believe is less important than what men do, and Ludwig von Mises in *Human Action* (1949) critiquing the “rationalistic prepossessions” of economics when “in reality men prefer irrational objectives to rational ones”, (p. 884), and in much of the verse of the late Philip Larkin, head of Hull University Library and one of Britain’s greatest poets, who in “A Study of Reading Habits” decides: “Books are a load of crap.” (1964, p. 31) *The Prince* sits within this school of thought, and continues to nourish its proponents.

Machiavelli’s recommendations for communication respond to this view of the world, one in which toughness and cruelty are sometimes needed, not reason and rationalization.

Communication has played a large and often overlooked part in defining the resulting praise and criticism of *The Prince*. In particular, in three of the book's chapters, eighteen, nineteen and twenty-one, communication priorities are especially prominent and reinforce the author's pragmatic and conservative attitude to power: conservative, because he believed people were, if not imprisoned, at least highly constrained by their natures, and could not easily defy Fortune's inexplicable caprices; pragmatic because – whilst possibly having personal principles, one of which was a pan-Italian patriotism and desire to save the peninsula from foreign domination – he was ready to advise states as they were and not as he may have felt they should be. With masterful figures like Cesare Borgia on the scene, *aut Caesar aut nihil* offered no hope for a world constructed from Utopian reason. Pragmatism was the only option for Italy and for Machiavelli himself, who tried at various times to revive his career with rival republics, principalities and popes.

How then, must communication respond? It must help rulers in the task of wooing, denying or deceiving Fortune, by the use of public display. It must convey the impression that a prince's power is substantial, whether it really is or is not, in a manner that will impress his peoples and his enemies alike. Machiavelli sees that public communication must also be effective to a larger audience than those in the traditional centers of power: court, nobility, church and foreign potentates; in other words it must reach beyond the select and cultivated circle remembered by Castiglione. To achieve this, the wise prince must understand what aspects of human nature should be satisfied. In *The Discourses* (1517), we learn which ones Machiavelli has in mind. Understanding human nature is more important than worrying about what particular policy to follow in any given situation. Machiavelli asks himself why Scipio's kindness in Spain and Hannibal's cruelty in Italy produced the same effect: the loyalty and obedience of its peoples. He offers two explanations. One of them also appears in *The Prince*, and is notorious: "men are moved in the main by two things; either by love or by fear." A feared man "is usually better followed and better obeyed than is one who makes himself loved." (1517, p. 463) The other is that "men are fond of novelty":

For, as has been said before, and rightly, in prosperity men get fed up, and in adversity cast down. Now, this desire for novelty throws open the door to anyone in the neighbourhood who puts himself at the head of a new movement (p. 463).

The task of communicating well depends on the ability of the ruler to meet expectations about what novelty, fear or love are at a given moment. In *The Prince* this problem is tackled in "The Eighteenth Chapter: Concerning the way princes should keep

faith.” (1513, p. 79) As with his account of Scipio and Hannibal, Machiavelli decides in favour of the negative: that ruling with craft is on balance more effective than ruling with integrity, though at different times a display of either may be necessary, for “it is necessary for a prince to understand how to avail himself of the beast and the man.” (p. 79) He must be a lion and a fox; a lion to terrify the wolves and a fox to discover the snares. This defines the kind of public communication needed:

Therefore it is unnecessary for a prince to have all the good qualities I have enumerated, but it is very necessary to appear to have them. And I shall dare to say this also, that to have them and always to observe them is injurious, and that to appear to have them is useful; to appear merciful, faithful, humane, religious, upright and so on, but with a mind so framed that should you require not to be so, you may be able and know how to change to the opposite (pp. 80-1).

A public communication and display of lion-like power by the Prince, then, is deceitful, because a wise Prince, as he must also be a fox, should:

Know well how to disguise this characteristic, and to be a great pretender and dissembler; and men are so simple, and so subject to present necessities, that he who seeks to deceive will always find someone who will allow himself to be deceived (p. 80).

Machiavelli, in the world we have described, often holds qualities like liberality, affability, generosity, courage, sincerity, gravity, Faith, to be of no more or less political value than their opposites, except in communication. A prince must know “how to avoid the reproach of those vices which would lose him his state,” merely because people praise a prince who can “exhibit all the above qualities that are considered good.” Negative qualities are not usually publicized but nor are they abandoned since at other times “something else, which looks like vice” might help bring a ruler “security and prosperity.” (p. 71) Nevertheless, survival might depend on how you were seen and heard:

For this reason a prince ought to take care that he never lets anything slip from his lips that is not replete with the above-named five qualities, that he may appear to him who sees and hears him altogether merciful, faithful, humane, upright and religious. There is nothing more necessary to appear to have than this last quality, inasmuch as men judge generally more by the eye than by the hand, because it belongs to everybody to see you, to few to come in touch with you. Every one sees what you appear to be, few really know what you are, and those few dare not oppose themselves to the opinion of the many, who have the majesty of the state to defend them (p. 81).

A public identity is not only crafted by well-chosen public words. A prince must also take care to feed his reputation with deeds, by association with respected third parties, and by unexpected decisions designed to promote publicity. Such are the themes of the Twenty First Chapter, “How a Prince should conduct himself so as to gain renown.” “Nothing,” Machiavelli flatly states, “makes a prince so much esteemed as great enterprises and setting a fine example.” (p.102) And, “a prince ought, above all things, always to endeavour in every action to gain for himself the reputation of being a great and remarkable man” (p. 104) by feeding the audience’s desire to be awed by novelty and majesty. Great enterprises calculated to build a public reputation should be supplemented by reflected glory from persons of talent. “A prince ought also to show himself a patron of ability, and to honour the proficient in every art.” (p. 105) Machiavelli also tells us that “it much assists a prince to set unusual examples in internal affairs” (p. 104) citing the despotic 14th century Lord of Milan, Bernabo Visconti, whose reputation was also referenced by Chaucer, who had met him, in *Canterbury Tales*. Machiavelli too is struck by Bernabo:

Who, when he had the opportunity, by any one in civil life doing some extraordinary thing, either good or bad, would take some method of rewarding or punishing him, which would be much spoken about (p. 103).

Machiavelli knew the value of integrating regular public spectacle with the calendar, to create a permanent cycle of festivities aligned to the prince, and incorporating into his public reputation communication to honour opinion leaders.

Further, he ought to entertain the people with festivals and spectacles at convenient seasons of the year; and as every city is divided into guilds or into societies, he ought to hold such bodies in esteem, and associate with them sometimes, and show himself an example of courtesy and liberality; nevertheless, always maintaining the majesty of his rank, for this he must never consent to abate in anything (p. 106).

We see here multiple recommendations amounting to counsel that rulers design their actions not to pursue a policy, but solely to make an impression on an audience. For Machiavelli, of course, the two are interdependent.

The Nineteenth Chapter, “That one should avoid being despised and hated,” discusses the overall importance of reputation, and how the actions and policies already described must help a prince “maintain himself in such reputation that no one can hope either to deceive him

or to get round him.” (p. 83) Again, we see that this means communicating the qualities of the lion-prince rather than the fox; the promotion of personal “greatness, courage, gravity and fortitude.” (p. 83) Again, we see that Machiavelli understands that a public reputation is a political tool and need not - should not - be reflective of the whole person, for “provided it is well known that he is an excellent man and revered by his people, he can only be attacked with difficulty.” (p. 84). Machiavelli frequently recommends using public communication to build popular support: “I consider that a prince ought to cherish the nobles, but not so as to make himself hated by the people.” (p. 87) “I repeat, it is necessary for a prince to have the people friendly”. (p. 45) He seems in part to have drawn this conclusion from study of ancient Rome, with an interesting refinement that suggests his “quite modern realization of the political potential of the masses” (Ingersoll, 1968, p. 593):

It is now more necessary to all princes, except the Turk and the Soldan, to satisfy the people rather than the soldiers, because the people are the more powerful (Machiavelli, 1513, p.93).

Machiavelli uses public communication as a valuable tool to build a popular and strong public reputation, to “turn the vinegar of violence into the wine of civic harmony.” (Ball, 1984, p. 533) To be popular a prince ideally must publicly reveal one side of his nature but not the other - the lion and not the fox - however useful both are in statecraft. He must associate with talented and powerful third parties, honour and respect civic institutions held in esteem by the people, stage festivities and attempt to make them permanent and much-anticipated fixtures following the cycle of the seasons, and launch great enterprises with the sole purpose of inspiring awe and getting himself or herself talked about. This kind of public communication, based on calculated display and the erection of a politically necessary facade, is recognizable to modern audiences - if used effectively it remains a vital aid to the business of remaining in power. Thomas More, who inhabited a similar world to Machiavelli, had no illusions about power either, but took another approach to communication which also resonates today, in a very different way.

Utopia

More knew much of *Utopia's* content was politically and personally dangerous. The first book of *Utopia* makes this plain by placing the critique of power in the mouth of the fictitious Raphael Hythloday, the main protagonist. Hythloday does not hesitate to catalogue the miseries of the many that toil and the vanities, pride, cruelty and indolence of gentlemen

whose tenants they “poll and shave to the quick by raising their rents” and who “carry about them at their tails a great flock or train of idle and loitering serving-men, which never learned any craft whereby to get their livings.” (More, 1516, p. 25) The reader is presented with a justice system that extinguishes the dispossessed and desperate and a political system that rewards unscrupulous and ingenious royal councils which agree “that no abundance of gold can be sufficient for a prince which must keep and maintain an army” (p. 46), and counsellors who “giveth the king counsel to endanger unto his grace the judges of the realm, that he may have them ever on his side”. (p. 45)

Machiavelli accepts this world as it is, to the point where harshness and kindness are reduced to strategic choices. More, on the other hand, makes moral judgments. They are no less moral judgments because they are made by Raphael Hythloday – whose first name translates from Hebrew into “something like ‘God’s physician’ or ‘salvation-bringer’” (p. xiii) but whose last name, possibly as an extra form of personal risk insurance, adapts two Greek words to mean “learned in nonsense.” Utopia’s approach to communication therefore rests on a moral judgment about Power, and it is this that separates it from Machiavelli’s treatment of the same subject.

What does More say, or imply, about communication? He does not give it the same concentrated attention as Machiavelli, but it appears at significant points throughout the book. It has for instance little overt place in Hythloday’s attack on social injustice and power imbalances, but part of the problem is that the main communication conduits, the “consultations of kings and princes”(p. 49) have been co-opted and corrupted by “evil opinions and naughty persuasions.” (p. 49) A King bends the law to his needs by bringing the judges into his palace “to argue and discuss his matters in his own presence” (p. 45) creating the conditions for sycophantic, insecure or scared judges to pronounce on the King’s side. Similarly, the French King might call in his counsellors “in that most secret consultation, the king himself there being present in his own person” (p. 41-2) and “they beat their brains, and search the very bottoms of their wits” to further his ambitions. (p. 42) A feature of Utopia is that political communication channels like these have been separated, at severe penalties for transgressions, from the control of individual holders of power.

Hythloday wisely chooses not to risk his life in a fruitless quest to reform European society, but describes for More and his friend in the second book an island nation he had visited with some fellow voyagers from Europe. Utopia is the legacy of wise King Utopus; a nation essentially run by communities of skilled craftsmen and farmers, where princes are chosen and centralized power does not exist, goods and property are held in common and

money, gold and silver serve no useful purpose save to fund wars and, in a concerted piece of perception management, as chamber pots and shackles for convicts and slaves.

In *Utopia*, More is also describing a society where public communication must be strictly controlled for the good of the commonwealth. Regulated spaces for public communication are created to minimize the possibility of power imbalances. In the ideal state, no communication tricks and traps should exist. Partly this is achieved by proscription of dangerous influences, particularly legal and political communication. Condemned thieves, who must serve their sentence by working in the community, are forbidden to talk to each other. Power concentrations are prevented from developing by rotating the populace from the city to rural communities at set intervals. Laws are few, and those whose communication artifice might contaminate the course of justice are forbidden: “they utterly exclude and banish all attorneys, proctors and sergeants of the law, which craftily handle matters and subtly dispute of the laws.” So writes More the successful lawyer. (p. 105-6)

For they think it most meet that every man should plead his own matter, and tell the same tale before the judge that he would tell to his man of law (p. 106).

Most dramatically of all, political communication is rigidly controlled to prevent conspiracy between the Prince and his leading councillors, known as Tranibores: “It is death to have any consultation for the commonwealth out of the council or the place of the common election.” (p. 64) The death penalty is paradoxically the Utopian way of protecting liberty by confining discussion to an open and transparent communication platform.

Utopia does not just proscribe. It provides positive opportunities within communities for “honest and wholesome communication,” (p. 67) but to work this cannot happen in wine-taverns, ale-houses or stews, which do not exist, but “in the present sight and under the eyes of every man.” (p. 78) The open process includes a six hour work-day in which the whole nation shares, and by encouraging lectures, reading, games and pastimes that develop skill and learning, rather than dice-play; by deliberately mixing the old and the young when dining in common halls, to “keep the youngers from wanton license of words and behaviour”. (p. 76) It is at this level, of the family and small community, that communication in Utopia is managed with special care, with the added benefit of hardening into a custom over time. Control over religion similarly rests in the hands of the craftsmen and farmers, not the prince. A small number of priests are “chosen of the people, as the other magistrates be, by secret voices for the avoiding of strife.” (p. 126)

We discover how this controlled public communication environment neuters public displays of the kind recommended by Machiavelli to project power. A group of foreign Ambassadors arrive in Utopia attended by servants, wearing silks and encrusted with gold and precious stones, only to see “more gold in the chains and gyves of one fugitive bondman than all the costly ornaments of them three was worth”. (p. 83)

They began to abate their courage, and for very shame laid away all that gorgeous array whereof they were so proud (p. 83).

It has from time to time been asked whether More took Utopia – which adapts the Greek for “nowhere” or “not a place” - as a serious model for European society but the detail in his account, and the precautions he took to present his information, suggests that he had given considerable thought to it. Perhaps it is significant that More located his imaginary Utopia off the coast of newly discovered South America: far distant, uncharted, alien but within the bounds of knowledge, and understanding, and a place that could be and had been reached by fellow-Europeans. There is too, perhaps, sincerity in More’s political reaction to Hythloday’s description of Utopia at the book’s end: “I cannot agree and consent to all things that he said.” Nevertheless:

So must I needs confess and grant that many things be in the Utopian weal-public which in our cities I may rather wish for than hope for (p. 138).

His imagined State is upheld by managing the communication environment to prevent conspiracy and the concentration of power in a few hands, and to encourage public virtue. It is a social structure that hinges on providing the “right” kind of communication framework for any of the more significant and influential occasions in society: public, political, legal, religious, urban and rural-communal. More banishes perceived communication excesses from power politics almost in inverse proportion to the degree in which Machiavelli exploits it. Utopia is a society where public relations strategies have been abolished or radically constricted by law.

More and Machiavelli

Whose view best fitted the tenor of their times? More’s fate may be said to justify Machiavelli: Fortune changes and we cannot adapt without a supreme effort of strength and will. Much like his personal avatar Hythloday, More was unprepared to surrender his

principles in exchange for power, and was tried and beheaded in 1535, for not supporting Henry VIII's divorce from Katherine of Aragon and for opposing the creation of an Anglican Church under the King. He was eventually beatified by the Catholic Church. Machiavelli's fate may be said to justify the pursuit of More's larger ideal: for all his learning, pragmatism and flexibility, Machiavelli was unable to defy Fortune and regain his authority, a patron or his City, until he was buried there in 1527.

We must also take care not to draw obvious conclusions from their treatment of communication. Machiavelli focuses on glorifying the ruler, whose standards must differ from the citizen. In *The Prince*, communication helps maintain stability, strength and statecraft. In *Utopia* princely communication is an impediment to a humane, free, popular and prosperous civic commonwealth and must be taken from the prince and any other potential sources of alternative power. One reason Utopian society works is that, for More, an ideal state is one where managed and mediated communication from the top scarcely exists. Machiavelli deploys public communication to help strong leaders build stable polities resistant to mercenaries and foreign rulers, by centering power on their persons and bringing Italy much-needed security. The moral failings of Machiavelli's approach are clear: communication conveys a ruler's preferred public identity; using plenty of spectacles, solemn ceremonial and less solemn sensation but not exposing the full extent of his plans and personality. Is More's approach better? Only if Utopia's benefits - for most sixteenth century Europeans at least - are unanimously accepted by its citizens, for Utopian public communications do not allow much room for dissent. By abandoning "the chief causes of ambition and sedition," Hythloday assures us, "there can be no jeopardy of domestical dissension". (p. 137) This assumption is Utopia's essential pre-condition. Even its geography is part of More's effort to manage communication, and to secure "the hedging off of the island from historical contingency." (Freeman, 1992, p. 293) To change the perfected system, except by communicating through the institutions and channels that support it, is to expect death, a recourse which would have been very familiar to readers then, but as part of a hopeful longer-term vision of freedom it seems extreme to modern liberal democracies. Utopia's inhabitants are moreover so certain of their own system that they absorb states with unproductive land the Utopians need.

And if the inhabitants of that land will not dwell with them to be ordered by their laws, then they [the Utopians] drive them out of those bounds which they have limited and appointed out for themselves (More, 1516, p. 72).

Utopia's wars are preceded by a public relations tactic Machiavelli might have appreciated: the simultaneous and mysterious appearance of proclamations in the enemy's main population centers, offering rewards to anyone who kills their own leaders. (p. 111)

Legal procedure, freed from lawyers, would also seem to favour the citizen with the best legal knowledge and communication skills: "For they think it most meet that every man should plead his own matter, and tell the same tale before the judge that he would tell to his man of law". It is a system which relies heavily on the judge to "helpeth and beareth out simple wits against the false and malicious circumventions of crafty children." (p. 106)

Communication's ethical failings in both books cannot be avoided, but nor also can the overriding fact that More's description of a fairer, if not wholly utopian, society and Machiavelli's recommendations for governing in existing society were both alert to a connection between communication and power. Their accounts of this subject help us understand their views about politics, power and the value each man placed on morality in government, one by exploiting communication's capacity to orchestrate popular feeling and the other by containing and strictly regulating its dangers and possibilities. It might be asked if a similar choice will ever face the Information Age.

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Public relations in Uganda: a historical account of the understanding, nature and growth of the practice in Uganda: 1890-2010

Barbra Natifu, University of Oslo, Norway &
Amos Zikusooka, Makerere University, Uganda
Email: barbra.natifu@media.uio.no; amosmedia@gmail.com

Introduction

The concept of 'Public Relations' (PR) in Uganda is mostly understood by the general public as '*relating well with people*'. Public relations therefore, can be argued to have been in existence from time immemorial as a cultural virtue that is inherent among the Bantu peoples of Africa (Mamdani 2001, p.17, Rensburg 2008, p.261). The modern day construction of public relations that defines PR from a normative outlook as a strategic, two-way organizational communication management function (Grunig and Hunt 1984; Cutlip, Center et al. 1985; Grunig and White 1992; Jefkins 1998) is a relatively 'young' profession in Uganda. In this paper we trace the history of public relations in Uganda retracing its growth, nature, image and professional understanding of the Public Relations profession from pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial times. At the heart of the professionalization process is the professional body the Public Relations Association of Uganda (PRAU), and various higher education training institutions.

Methodologically, in order to draw inferences and trace evidence of the usage of public relations practices and tactics in pre-colonial and colonial Uganda, we use secondary sources, particularly Mahmood Mamdani's (1976) classic work '*Politics and Class Formation in Uganda*' published in 1976 as a monographic work and in 2001 as a book. Skocpol (1984, p.382) in Lustick (1996, p.606) argues in favour of using secondary sources as appropriate sources of basic evidence in writing historical accounts. Although, Lustick (1996, p.606) points out that the main challenge with using secondary sources to inform historical sociologists is the challenge of establishing which studies are 'excellent' and valid histories; we found Mamdani's work a fitting account that would more excellently capture our analytical framework that bases its analysis of the development of public relations in Uganda from a socio-cultural, political and economic environment perspective. The section that examines the PR history of post-colonial Uganda till to date is partly informed by Zikusooka's (2002) survey with PR practitioners, company/organizational executives and the

general public, with the main research question, being how these different groups perceived, understood and used the PR function.

Empirical data used hereon is thus updated with expert interviews conducted in March 2009 with past and present PRAU presidents who served in the period (1999-2005), and (2006-2010). The PRAU website (www.prauganda.com) provided additional information as well as reviews of selected PR dissertation research works written on various dimensions of the public relations practice in Uganda, along with a review of articles published in the PRAU's *Trumpet Magazine*, the *Uganda Journalism Review*; and 2010 PRAU, *PR Excellence Magazine* and *Annual Report*.

However, research into the nature, status, understanding and use of the PR function in Uganda cannot be comprehensive without looking at the wider environment within which different strands of the PR practice have emerged and evolved over the years. The concept of *the environment*; particularly the contextual environment is imperative in understanding the development of any profession or society. Wheelen and Hunger (1987, p.148) in Grunig and Repper (1992, p.122) posit that in order to accomplish its mission an organization or a *profession (authors' emphasis)* works in its task environment, but the societal environment may divert its attention from the task environment. The societal environment in this case is the larger external environment that is affected by economic, technological, political-legal, and socio-cultural aspects of the societal environment in which the profession operates. This paper will, thus be theoretically interpreted from an Afro-centric socio-cultural, political and economic environmental context. (Though imperative, an analysis of the way technological changes have affected the PR practice in Uganda, is excluded).

Unlike in the US and other Western democracies, the context in which public relations is understood and practiced in Uganda today, as is in many parts of sub-Saharan Africa, is largely reflective of her socio-cultural, political and economic historical environment, so much so that to avoid superficial comparisons Rensburg (2008, p.255) proposes a new paradigm for Africa that is relevant to understanding the specific context in which PR is understood and practiced in many African nations. "The way that developed countries define their life styles differs from Africa where there are still distinct life styles, knowledge systems and cultures which justify African paradigms"[...] wrong paradigms can lead to inaccurate knowledge construction (ibid, p. 256).

Consequently, to avoid an ethnocentric approach to knowledge construction, we discuss the public relations profession in relation to the socio-cultural, political and economic environment in which the public relations function developed in Uganda. We identify three

periods for historical analysis: 1) Pre-colonial, 2) Colonial, and 3) Post independence eras characterized by authoritarian regimes and relatively 'democratic' and semi-democratic autocratic regimes in what Ronning (2010, p.2) described as, "first generation liberation movements and second generation African liberation movements". The first two periods are covered in the first part of this paper, while the post independence era through to current situation is covered in the second part. We do not claim to exhaustively cover every detail of the socio-economic and political history that shaped Uganda's public relations profession from 1890-2010. However, we select a few examples and pointers in our empirical analysis that point to evidence of the existence of various strands and facets of the usage of the public relations function.

Brief background to the socio-economic and political context of Uganda

Uganda is a landlocked country that lies in the East African region, with a population of 32.3 million, of which 87 per cent live in rural areas (Uganda Human Development Report 2007, P.6). Economically, Uganda has substantial natural resources, including fertile soils, favourable climate, regular rainfall, vast variety of plant and animal life and sizable mineral deposits and more recently untapped natural gas and crude oil deposits discovered in the Lake Albert rift basin area (Kasita and Temmerman, 2009). Agriculture still remains the mainstay of Uganda's economy; employing 73 per cent of the labour-force and accounting for 32 per cent of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), and 85 per cent of export earnings with coffee accounting for the bulk of the export revenues (Uganda Human Development Report UDHR 2007, p.12). The 2007 Human Development Report on Uganda further observes that in spite of considerable efforts to transform the economy, the overall welfare of the farmers and the rural population has not correspondingly registered a substantial improvement (UNDP, 2007). Basing on these statistics we argue that economically, poverty still affects many Ugandans and as a result has negatively impacted on the professional blossoming and returns generated from the PR industry that is increasingly finding relevance in commercialized and industrialized economies.

Politically, Uganda has undergone various unique dispensations of political turmoil characterized by radical change that includes a turbulent history of inter-tribal wars, slave trade, colonialism and post independence political upheavals (Mamdani 1976; Mutibwa 1992; Mamdani 2001). These dramatic political eras left a legacy of disorder and mayhem on the political, social and economic scene of Uganda. "The first six years of British involvement in Uganda, from (1887 to 1894) had produced three bloody civil wars and four

new kings. Under conditions of no law and considerable disorder, trade was the first casualty,” (Mamdani 2001, p.41).

Owing to a history of political and economic instability, the rise, growth and vibrancy of any profession particularly the growth of a profession based on democratic and participatory values of two-way symmetrical models of communication (Grunig 1992), which are largely burgeoning in a stable economic and political environment, was mired and could not blossom to its full potential. However, various aspects of the less-normative usage of the public relations profession are observed given the nature of the socio-political and economic climate that prevailed at the time as will be observed in the three periods discussed in this paper.

Public relations in pre-colonial Uganda

Pre-colonial Uganda was a largely communal and heterogeneous society that was politically organized into kingdoms and chiefdoms ruled by Kings and Chiefs. Economically, most of the tribal groupings practiced simple methods of production that included simple communal shifting agriculture and simple herding/cattle keeping (Mamdani 2001, p.20). The nature of economic relationships under the communal mode of production was cooperative, not antagonistic. “Material distinctions between families were of little importance. Surplus produce took the form of gifts, the giving and receiving of which was emphasized and specified by tradition.” (ibid, p.22). In their discussion of symbolic capital, Bourdieu and Nice (1990) argue that gift exchange tends to put the law of self-interest into abeyance although it is also seen to disguise the transaction that a rational contract would telescope. This refusal to recognize the ‘objective’ truth of ‘economic’ practices or the law of ‘naked self-interest’ and egoistic calculation is, however, recognized through a conversion of its efficacy into symbolic capital (p. 113,118). Taking Bourdieu and Nices’ (1990) observations into consideration, we argue that the communal mode of production and social existence that characterized most of pre-colonial Uganda (in some cases still evident today) prioritized a form of public relations that valued maintenance of favourable social relations, building of social and symbolic forms of capital through gift giving and receiving and observing of general good will among ones neighbours within the community as opposed to emphasis of the ‘naked self-interest’ and ‘egoistic calculation’ and accumulation of economic capital per se.

Maintenance of harmonious relations with neighbouring kingdoms and chiefdoms was of great importance as it favoured interregional trade and barter trade. Different regions

had developed unique artisan specializations, which allowed for direct exchange between artisans and agriculturalists, and between the pastoralists. “Toro kingdom had a good supply of copper, Busoga built and supplied canoes, the Banyoro and Acholi manufactured and exported spears and hoe blades and the Banyoro were major suppliers of salt and pottery throughout the region. Trade was always complementary and not competitive” (Mamdani 2001, p.26-27). It can be argued that the history of pre-colonial Uganda was embedded with a form of public relations that today likens itself to PR concepts that would require a mastery of relationship management, social and symbolic capital accumulation and harmonious co-existence of the trading publics, even in the business arena. In such societies where ‘complementarism as opposed to competitiveness’ was fostered, modern day PR strands of publicity, spin, advertising and branding would probably not flourish, as competition as a macro-factor that instigates their growth wasn’t yet in place.

Culturally, Uganda is a multi-ethnic and thus a multi-cultural country with over 36 languages. Bantu speakers are the largest ethnic groupings comprising two-thirds of the population; the other third is comprised of Nilotics. The major ethnic classifications include Bantu: Eastern and Western Lacustrine Bantu, the Nilotics: Eastern and Western Nilotic languages and the Central Sudanic languages. All these ethnic groupings have unique cultural values, norms and practices.

Hofstede (1980) in Sriramesh, Grunig and Buffington (1992 p.580) defines culture as a ‘system of values’, a collective programming of the mind that distinguishes the members of one human group from another. Curtin and Gaither (2007) look at culture as the characteristics, norms and practices of a society arguing that due to cultural differences, what works in Mali may totally be ineffective in the United States in terms of public relations communications (ibid, p.35).

In Uganda as is in many parts of Africa, the prevailing culture or ‘system of value’ is one of collectivism/communalism, as opposed to individualism. The culture of communalism and interdependence that is apparent in most African nations can be ably understood using the Ubuntu philosophy that posits that ‘people exist because of and with other people’ (Rensburg 2008, p.261; Battle 2009, p.1-6). With the Ubuntu cultural construct in hindsight, we later show that the members of the general public that responded to the survey perceived public relations as ‘relating well with people’ as generally ‘everybody’s business’. This can also be linked to Bourdieu’s theory of social capital where developing social capital by cultivating good relations with people is an inherent virtue in most African cultures, particular the Bantu peoples of Africa (Mamdani 2001, p.17).

Pre-colonial Uganda was also characterized by slave trade and disruption of society in which an estimated (40,000-60,000) slaves were exported annually from the East African mainland (Mamdani 2001, p.19). This for the most part, caused disruption of good relations within communities that suffered the effects of slave trade. As Mamdani argues,

The acceleration of slave trade not only led to the decline of all other kinds of trade; it meant that the very foundation of social production was threatened [...] slave trade meant that the export of the most critical force of production; living labour. The corresponding decline in production was particularly marked among the productive strata. The slave trade concentrated on the export of able bodies, ignoring the very young, the very old, and the disabled. While total production diminished, the proportion of productive members declined even further, while the proportion of dependents increased in relation to total population. And where the slave trade undermined both social and productive organization [...] famine, followed by epidemics, [...] intensified the process of depopulation. Social production became further subservient to the constraints of the environment (Mamdani 2001, p.19).

Public relations in colonial Uganda: 1894-1962

Colonial Uganda had four levels of economic influence where facets of the modern day understanding of public relations interfaced with the political, economic, and cultural stratifications of society. They included (i) Establishment of a peasant economy; (ii) The formation of a dependent commercial bourgeoisie in the form of Indian Capital (iii) Formation of the petty bourgeoisie; (iv) Formation of landlords, tenants and the colonial state. Mamdani (2001) documents four levels of economic change influence that saw the emergence and interplay of different strands of public relations on the Ugandan political and economic scene; change management, stakeholder management, issues management, negotiation, activism, propaganda and influence peddling. However, this paper will limit the analysis of the colonial rule to the first three levels of economic influence and how they can be linked to evidence of implicit or explicit practice of public relations in colonial Uganda.

Colonialism defined as “the implantation of the metropolitan state apparatus in a conquered territory” began to take shape in Uganda in the late 1880s (Mamdani 2001, p.41). Politically, Uganda became a British protectorate in 1894 (Mamdani 2001, p.40). The British colonial rule introduced a system of governance called ‘indirect rule’ in which ‘a class of collaborators, mainly Baganda chiefs, would receive preferential treatment in return for helping to maintain law and order (ibid, p.41). The collaborating chief played a mediating form of PR, which can be likened to the modern day liaison role, which saw the native local chief working closely and on behalf of the colonial master to facilitate the extension of

colonial influence and control among other regions of Uganda. This form of liaison can be argued to encompass a strand of public relations aimed at fostering diplomatic relations through negotiation and cooperation. In some cases it can be construed as a form of implicit influence peddling and control of those regions of Uganda subjugated to indirect-rule. By agreeing to the collaborative arrangement of championing British colonial 'indirect rule' to other parts of Uganda; (a policy that was embodied in the Buganda Agreement of 1900) (Mamdani, p.41). Buganda can be described as essentially being a merchant of a form of 'self-interested influence peddling PR' crafted to her own advantage and to that of colonial administrative apparatus.

Economically, the colonial government established an agriculturally-based cash crop economy, which was marked with the introduction of commodity production of crops such as cotton and coffee for export. The introduction of this new mode of economic livelihood meant change of the status quo - from communal subsistence agriculture to commercial cash crop agriculture. With the emergence of these four levels of economic influence and control aspects of issues management and stakeholder management were set into motion; first to communicate change and then to manage it. For instance, some local peasant farmers were not enthusiastic to completely abandoning their old subsistence commercial lifestyle to embrace the cash crop economy and were described by the British Foreign Office as being lazy; indolent and undisturbed:

The uncivilized native desires a life of indolence, complete and undisturbed; the missionaries, who have done much to educate him for agricultural and industrial work, would prefer to see him farm his own small property; while the settlers and plantation owners depend on him for labour which will give them a reasonable profit and in the aggregate secure the country's prosperity. There are abundant opportunities for both skilled and unskilled labour; but the one attitude that cannot command sympathy is the refusal to work (Mamdani 2001, p.50).

The refusal to work can be partly said to have been compounded by the dynamics of change management of which change and acceptance of change (Lippitt, Langseth and Mossop, 1985) is a process of sequential phases of unfreezing, moving and refreezing, in which the persons involved must be made open to change, or 'unfrozen' (ibid, p.101-102). In this case we see the colonial government faced with a PR challenge that required change communication and management in the midst of a national socio-economic transition or in some instances a dramatic transformation.

Furthermore, the formation of a dependent commercial bourgeoisie witnessed by the rise of Indian capital led to the emergence of issues management, amongst the native artisan trader, Indian commercial bourgeoisie and the British Colonial government. Issues management, defined by Grunig and Repper (1992, p.146) as the external component of strategic management aimed at anticipating issues and resolving conflict before the public makes it an issue, was evident with the rise of Indian capital and domination of native artisan trade. The Annual Report of 1930 for the district of Kigezi in the Western province, which was pre-colonially linked to internal trade in salt, had now been displaced by externally oriented export-import trade conducted by the Indian commercial bourgeoisie.

There is no doubt that the Indians are capturing much of the trade which was formerly in the hands of natives; e.g. Katwe salt and locally caught fish. Salt is brought to Kabale by lorry and there made into traditional bundles, which are retailed at 80 cents instead of the former one-shilling. This acts detrimentally in two ways: a) It is bought for cash, thus eliminating trade in the exchange of goats and sheep for salt, b) the profits go to the Indians instead of the natives. The goat and sheep trade is thus also affected (Mamdani 2001, p.65).

This emerging realization of the presence of a form of economic domination and economic disenfranchisement further led to a strained relationship between the natives and Asian tradesman; an issue that failed to be managed and subsequently culminated in the unfortunate and undiplomatic manner in which the Indian/Asian tradesman was expelled from Uganda in Idi Amin's despotism of (1971-79).

Besides issues management, there is evidence of the existence of the practice of public relations as conducted by the colonial state in the form of management of stakeholder concerns particularly observed after the Church Missionary Society missionary, Kenneth Borup introduced cotton in 1903 and later coffee was introduced in 1923 (Mamdani 2001, p.45, 47). After the introduction of these two major cash crops, the colonial state often dealt with complaints and conflicts that arose among the crop growers, the British ginner and the Asian middlemen, and between the plantation growers and peasant sectors (Mamdani 2001, p.55). Although the designation and profession of public relations hadn't yet been coined, in practice by responding to the growers' interests the colonial state was practicing facets of the functions public relations today termed as issue management and strategic stakeholder management. Grunig and Repper (1992, p.147) argue that issue management equals strategic public relations.

Thirdly, the later part of the colonial era witnessed the emergence of what Mamdani (2001, p.151) describes as the petty bourgeoisie: the kulaks, civil servant and African trader. A kulak is a self-sufficient middle peasant who may produce for the market but relies on family labour for production. The African civil servant was a category of petty bourgeoisie who emerged as a substantial low priced substitute for hiring expensive European office or an Asian Goan (ibid, p.156). The petty bourgeoisie class also comprised of the trader; however, by the 1930s the trading petty bourgeoisie and commercial bourgeoisie-traders and businessmen were predominantly Indian. The traders operations however substantial were confined to retail (ibid, p.165-166). The 1968 Report of the Commission on the Africanisation of Commerce and Industry noted that:

Even in the more rural areas, the African traders have found it difficult to compete with the Asian traders only a few miles away because though not wholesale, they are their nearest sources of supply. The Asians must make a profit on their wholesale/retail sales and so the African traders must charge higher prices than the Asians. Thus the consumers are attracted back to the Asian centres. At worst the African traders' prices are governed by the Asian prices and in consequence the Asian retailer/wholesaler prospers at the expense of the poor African trader (1968 Report of the Commission on the Africanisation of Commerce and Industry in Mamdani 2001, p.169).

The failure to strategically manage the issue of Africanisation of commerce and industry continued to strain relationships between the local African trader and Asian commercial bourgeoisie. Consequently, we argue that the socio-economic and political environment of colonial Uganda was ripe with public relations practices that today are embodied in PR concepts of activism, issues management, change management and stakeholder management, as the various disadvantaged and dissatisfied stakeholders of colonial Uganda demanded for fair representation in matters of business, particularly regarding control over the most important means of production, economic capital and power.

The post independence era: 1962-2010

From propaganda to strategic communication management

The post-independence epoch, specifically the 1970s and 1980s, played a role in the setback of the 'professionalization' of public relations, as this was an era of civil and military unrest that led to the destruction of the economic and social infrastructure. Mwesige (2004, p.72) succinctly states that, "soon after attainment of self governance, the new African leaders turned the guns on their own people, first with the despotic regime of Idi Amin characterized

by human rights abuses and death of over 300,000 Ugandans, followed by Milton Obote's regime that claimed at least 100,000 lives" (ibid, p.72).

According to Kanyeihamba (1997) the professional practice of public relations in Uganda started in the 1960s in government departments with the objective of enhancing the free flow of information in the newly independent government. With the liberalization of the economy in 1989, the profession expanded to include the private sector, leading to a need for managers of corporate relationships. Kanyeihamba (1997) notes that the early days of the public relations practice in Uganda were pervaded with misuse of the PR function:

Where Public Relations Offices were opened, Chief Executives, or Managements used them as defensive offices or shields; others used them as propaganda tools or political ornaments. Public Relations Offices were diverted from their intended purposes, namely to play a productive role in management. In other establishments, public Relations officers played roles of publicity, welfare and sports (Kanyeihamba, Francis, *The Trumpet Magazine*, 1997, p.6).

The use of propaganda and 'spin', what Bates (2006) in his article 'Mini-Me History: Public Relations from the Dawn of Civilization' describes as the intentional manipulation of public opinion without regard for what is accurate or true, seems to have been the norm and not the exception in the politically and economically turbulent post independence era. Ignatius Igunduura, former president of PRAU, (1999-2005), is in consensus with Kanyeihamba (1997)'s observations when he notes that,

Initially the profession started out with the practitioners playing the role of government spokespersons explaining the challenges in economic, political and social arena in the country. After the 1970s political unrest, government departments including utility providers (water and electricity) were not delivering efficient services to the consumer and basic needs industries had shut down, hence the need for someone to constantly explain the state of affairs to the consumers and also to the government (Ignatius Igunduura, Interview, March 20, 2009)

In defense of what can today be considered as a corrupt and unethical usage of the PR function, Igunduura observes that the practitioners at that time faced political challenges that affected their ethical standards in the practice of PR at the time.

You had to explain issues within the realm of the government, to the advantage of government not the consumer. So in a way people had to tell a lie...which created skepticism towards the spokesperson among consumers. Ethically people would lose faith in you because everything was on the decline...and the spokespersons were promising what was not available. Politically it was a big challenge, if you went out of government policy; you

would be playing with your life (Ignatius Igunduura, Interview, March 20, 2009).

Stauber and Rampton (1995) underscore Igundura's observation when they note that the public relations industry seeks to manipulate public opinion, but it can only manipulate while it remains invisible. Stauber and Rampton, (1995, p.15) further note that, "today's 'opinion manipulation industry' is a powerful giant, but like Goliath, it is a giant with a fatal weakness. When the public is educated about its techniques, it often loses its ability to mislead and manipulate". Although manipulation of public opinion to benefit government policy, in this case, put the practitioners' individual reputation at stake; 'manipulation of public opinion' or 'corruption of the public relations practice', should not be branded a professional practitioner objective per se. Keenan (2009) illustrates a muzzling of two-way flow of information in Egypt resulting in the existence of a dictatorial versus a democratic regime in government. Newsom Turk and Kruckeberg (2010) acknowledge the role of the environment in shaping the nature of PR practices in global communications when they note that, "you cannot make the assumption that all news media operate in a 'free' environment. A change of government or even change of leadership in a democracy can make the word *free* a relative term"(ibid.p.344).

In the case of Uganda, the political environment at the time (1971-79) was highly authoritarian and it was upon this background (a background marred with public suspicions of the credibility of the public relations practitioners' word) that in 1974, the Management Training and Advocacy Center (MTAC), organized a symposium conducted at Nakawa, Kampala with the aim of reviewing the practice of public relations in Uganda (Mutabazi, 1992). The symposium comprised of 15 participants and 12 organizations. The founding organizations included Bank of Uganda, National Insurance Corporation, Kampala City Council, Uganda Commercial Bank, Coffee Marketing Board, Ministry of Labour, Uganda Cement Industry, Uganda Bottlers Limited, Nytil Uganda, Uganda Police, Uganda Hotels Limited and Uganda Tourism Board.

The organizations felt a need to come together to address consumer concerns with one united voice. The association would also offer some form of protection, to the practitioner, from public criticism at that time (Ignatius Igunduura, Interview, March 20, 2009).

Current status of public relations in Uganda: 2002 - to date

As mentioned in the introductory section, this section discusses the current nature and status, image and understanding of the public relations profession in Uganda based on Zikusooka's

(2002) survey with individual practitioners, general public and organizational top managers or dominant coalition. Educational and association contributions of PRAU in the professionalisation of PR in Uganda are also discussed.

The image and ‘understanding’ of public relations in Uganda

Although, key advocates of the management definition, define public relations as the ‘definitive management function’ that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on which its success or failure depends (Grunig and Hunt 1984, p.6; Harrison 1996, p.3; Cutlip, Center and Broom 1999, p.6; Coombs and Holladay 2007, p.49); Zikusooka’s (2002) survey revealed that particular individual practitioners, managers and the general public in Uganda perceive the ‘image’ and definition of public relations differently. Most ‘misconceptions’ of what public relations are drawn from the normative definition of public relations. Although, the question of what constitutes a misconception is highly debatable, Zikusooka, (2002) observes that the professional term, public relations, in Uganda is one that has been misconceived at three levels: (i)the individual practitioner, who often has limited knowledge and understanding of what constitutes public relations; (ii)the general public who view public relations as the ability to ‘relate well with people’; and thirdly (iii)at the organisational management level, with the inappropriate placement of practitioners on the organizational chart limiting their roles to publicity and media relations, which are only part of the multi-faceted management function of public relations.

Musoke (2000) argues that many practitioners and business executives interpret public relations as either playing a marketing or sales function or a department under the human resource manager. In some organizations, public relations is placed under the marketing department or confused with some of its facets such as publicity, promotion and advertising among the most prominent ones. Grunig (1992, p.19) observe that public relations and marketing are distinct functions conceptually and serve different, though mutually enhancing roles in an organization. Excellent public relations departments will be separate from marketing departments and less excellent ones will be sublimated to marketing. Grunig (1992, p.20) continues to posit that the major purpose of marketing is to make money for an organization, while that of public relations is to save money for the organization by building relationships with the publics. Musoke, (2000) further argues that another fallacy, often held by top executives in Uganda is that public relations is some form of organizational magic

wand for wiping out bad policies, poor planning and performance or any organizational problem involving public opinion. It is in this perception that public relations practitioners have been referred to as, 'spin doctors' - 'the manipulators of public opinion' or 'manipulators of the masses' as postulated by Stauber and Rampton (1995, p.15-16&24), yet John W. Hill and Ivy Lee, believed to be grandfather of the profession, observed in his "declaration of principles" that, public relations is not and can never be a substitute for good organizational performance and policies. Goodwill must be earned through good policies and actions by the organization (Miller 1999; Russell and Bishop, 2009). Public relations will only help maintain or sustain this goodwill. But the function per se will not originate it.

Similarly Igunduura, notes that the public's interpretation and understanding of public relations (PR) is "relating well with people," "being nice to people," and "being generous." He adds that this is the sole factor underlying the belief that 'any one can do PR as long as he/she is smart, caring and hospitable' (Zikusooka 2002:p.46). Harrison, (1996) partly supports the above view when she argues that "public relations means exactly what the words suggests-relations with the public" (Harrison 1996, p.1). She adds that the relationships can be good, bad or indifferent and may change from time to time. The distinctive thing about public relations as a profession is that it is deliberate (Harrison 1996, p.1). However, the former (relations with the public) is the popular interpretation of the term in Uganda yet it is the latter that captures the essence of the public relations profession.

Zikusooka's (2002) survey further shows conceptual differences between PRAU member practitioners and Non-PRAU members' practitioners. The survey revealed that 67% of the non-PRAU member practitioners had misconceptions of what constitutes public relations and were wrongly placed on the organizational chart (either under human resource or marketing), compared with only 18% of the PRAU members. The rest of the PRAU member practitioners (82%) were well placed on the organizational chart and specifically running independent PR departments (Zikusooka, 2002, p.41). The practitioners who didn't have a full grasp of the professional understanding and placement of PR had higher chances of being misplaced in terms of placement, status and roles than their knowledgeable and informed counterparts, a situation, which has been described as playing a technical rather than managerial role. Grunig (1992, p.19) in the Excellence Study submits that less excellent departments consist mostly of technicians whose work is supervised by managers outside the public relations department, managers who usually have less potential for strategic management of public relations than managers trained in communication management. Sriramesh, Grunig, and Buffington (1992, p.579) argue that 'If a public relations practitioner

is not part of the dominant coalition, which is frequently the case, public relations practitioners function more in the implementation of decisions about public relations than in their formulation'. In essence, the practitioner is kept out of the strategic planning process, thus creating a gap in the efficacy of management of stakeholder issues and concerns.

David Musoke, a veteran Ugandan PR practitioner writing in *The Trumpet*, said: "I find that I can spend 75 percent of what I do explaining to management what I do in the remaining 25 percent" (Musoke, *The Trumpet* 1998, p.12). Musoke's remarks underscore the fact that the role played by public relations practitioners is yet to be fully understood by organizational and corporate management in Uganda. Namara (2001) observes that there is still little appreciation of public relations as a management function, and the practitioner is generally taken for a technician or stooge, rather than a manager who should actively participate and influence decisions at the highest level of the organization. Walugembe (1998) notes that one of the hardest and most important tasks of a newly established public relations department is for the practitioner to explain and convince top management of the relevance of public relations in advancing effective corporate communications. He further notes that the latter requires the expertise of a well-trained practitioner who understands the profession and can effectively articulate the strategic communication issues, roles and contributions of public relations to management.

Furthermore, Musoke (2000) notes that sometimes misconceptions arise because some organizations understand PR to mean publicity and media relations and therefore ignore other dimensions of research, counseling, community relations, reputation management, issues management and corporate relations. Coombs and Holladay (2007) argue that public relations is more than simple publicity, because public relations operates within the web of relationships that binds organizations and various stakeholders with one another (ibid, p.49). Likewise, Igunduura submits that, "the current practice in Uganda is yet to detach itself from its past, where it started out as playing a 'spokesmanship' role that represented the interests of one stakeholder" (Ignatius Igunduura, Interview, March 20, 2009).

Another aspect compounding the confusion of what is and isn't public relations in Uganda are the different titles accorded by management to practitioners. James Mutabazi, founder member and past PRAU president, observes the confusion with titles, when he notes that they range from "Spokes Persons," "Public Relations Officers," "Information Officers," "Research Officers" to "Public Relations Personnel" and hence the tendency for management to literally construe the meaning of the title for the roles (Zikusooka, 2002, p.44). Walusimbi also notes in a interview that due to the ambiguities in the titles "a spokes person will be

limited to speaking, while an information officer will be limited to gathering and disseminating information” (Juma Walusimbi, Interview, March 21, 2009); which is a lopsided and often one-way mode of information flow.

Harrison (1996), using Grunig and Hunt’s (1984, p.22) two-way symmetrical model of public relations, emphasizes the importance of two-way communication in attainment of effective public relations communication. The model states that, “communication is two-way, from sender to receiver and with feedback from the receiver...” (Harrison 1996, p.42). If public relations practitioners are to counsel management regarding the affairs of corporate decision-making, then the public relations function cannot shy away from involvement of stakeholders’ views, from management (sender, top), to stakeholders (receivers, bottom) and back to management and vice versa. Therefore, if effective public relations is two-way and is participatory in nature, then titles such as ‘Information Officer’ used to suggest one-way flow of information need to be revisited at management and job description levels, as information is mainly a one-way communication process, which doesn’t allow for feedback.

Formation of a professional association: 1970 and beyond

As mentioned in the discussion of the history and evolution of public relations in Uganda, the formation of a professional association of public relations practitioners was birthed in 1974 during a symposium comprising of 15 participants and representatives of 12 organizations and corporations all of which were government enterprises.

During the symposium a four-man committee was assigned to draw up plans for the eventual formation of the Public Relations Association of Uganda (PRAU). PRAU was later formed in 1976 as an umbrella organization for all public relations practitioners in Uganda. The motivating factors for the formation of the professional association according to Ignatius Igunduura, president of PRAU (1999-2005) included among others the need for a professional umbrella body that would link all practitioners and assist them in forming a united voice when addressing consumer demands. However, due to political instability in the 1970s and 1980s, the association failed to achieve its objectives. Igunduura notes that PRAU became more active and visible in the recent years particularly after the 1990s when Makerere University started offering the mass communications degree programme where public relations is taught as a key subject major.

The association launched its premier Public Relations Excellence Awards on April 23, 2009 aimed at rewarding excellence in the PR professional practice at 13 specific levels of excellence (www.prauganda.com). In addition to awarding excellent performance, the awards

are also aimed at improving the general public's image of public relations, as the general public is invited to participate in rating the best performers in the different specific categories. In terms of professional affiliations, PRAU enjoys networking and collaborations with the Eastern African Public Relations Association (EAPRA), the Federation of Africa Public Relations Associations (FAPRA), International Public Relations Association (IPRA) and the Global Alliance (www.prauganda.com). Since its inception in 1975, Uganda has also had the privilege of hosting the FAPRA regional conference twice (Garba, 2009); a symbol of goodwill, regional participation in the growth and development of the profession on the African continent.

Presently, the association has over 400 members, with 50 corporate members, six of which are public relations and advertising agencies. Majority of the existing agencies carry out a wide spectrum of public relations and advertising functions which range from branding, advertising, marketing, research, counseling, communication campaign among others, depending on customer communication demands. The PR/Advertising agency industry is on the rise, with current number of agencies in Uganda standing between 30-40. Asked why the number of agency subscribers to the professional association is still low, he argued that: "Focus on profits is central for these agencies and the benefits of attaching themselves to a professional body are erroneously viewed as secondary. Others are hindered by the annual corporate membership fees charged by the association" (Ignatius Igunduura, Interview, March 21, 2009).

Contrary to the UK research statistics that show a feminization trend of the public relations profession noted in White, L'Etang and Moss (2009, p.389), Uganda seems to have masculinization of the public relations field as the gender composition of the PRAU stands at a 40% female to 60% male ratio. The male gender dominance, Igunduura explained,

"could be associated with the history of the profession, which required the practitioner to weather the political hazards of the job; where one's life was at risk, should they report outside the realm of government policy... This may have precluded women from joining the profession... though currently the profession is becoming more academic than hazardous, thus we hope to see an increase in the female gender membership" (Ignatius Igunduura, Interview, March 21, 2009).

Professional public relations educational training environment

Education and training of professional public relations practitioners is an important tool and a point of departure in highlighting what is and what isn't public relations among individual practitioners, managers, and members of the general public. Walugembe, (1998) notes that, most PR practitioners especially in developing countries are people who are not professionals

in the discipline while Igundura notes in an interview that “there is still a belief that anyone can do Public Relations...” In some organizations, the practitioner is in the words of, Musoke, “hand-picked by the boss: someone who may be a boyfriend or girlfriend, some ‘coy bimbo’ or the relative of the managing director or a friend who failed to get a job elsewhere” (Musoke 2000, p.13).

Formal media training in Uganda, as in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa was a post – independence phenomenon (Mwesige 2004, p.74; Rensburg 2008, p.253). Training of public relations professionals in Uganda gained prominence in 1990s following the 1988 inception of the Mass Communication Department at Makerere University, Kampala. Postgraduate, Masters and doctoral degree research studies are not yet in place, however, the Uganda Management Institute (UMI), based in Kampala offers public relations courses. Besides Makerere University and UMI; there are seven other private and government training institutions offering undergraduate degree specialization in Public Relations Studies. These include: Uganda Christian University (UCU) in Mukono district, Ndejje University, Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU) in Mbale district and Kampala International University (KIU), Uganda Media Training Centre, Management Training and Advisory Centre (MTAC) in Nakawa, Kampala and the United Media Consultants and Trainers (UMCAT) ‘School of Journalism and Mass Communication’ that offers diplomas and certificates in public relations. Nassanga and Tayeebwa (2005) cautiously note that the rapid development of the media sector has sparked the proliferation of many private training institutions at diploma and certificate level some of which have dubious credentials. Besides the formal training in schools and universities, Juma Walusimbi underscored the fact that PRAU offers other forms of training during workshops, seminars and conferences to association members which has contributed to improving the understanding and proper placement of PR on the corporate ladder. He further noted that PRAU had started offering educative talks to managers of her corporate membership on the contribution of Public Relations Communication to the overall management goal (Juma Walusimbi, Interview, March 21, 2009). The rise of specialized training in public relations at various training institutions and universities in Uganda as well as the growing membership and recognition of the role of PRAU have had considerable strides in the professionalization public relations in Uganda.

Observably, the interviews showed a noticeable gap between training institutions and the professional body as most of the research findings of the training institutions are seldom publicized among members of the professional association and the challenges of the practitioners in the job market, including sharing of best practices need to be fed back to the

training institutions, in order to strengthen the body of knowledge in theory and practice. More visibly too, research and publication to enrich the body of knowledge of the public relations practice is an area that has yet to be captured on the PRAU areas of excellence continuum.

From the above discussion, it is evident that the nature, image and practice of public relations in Uganda has evolved and metamorphosed in its usage from the colonial period's PR strands such as activism, influence peddling, issues management and stakeholder management to include ethically questionable strands of propaganda, publicity, spin and one-way asymmetric forms of PR practice, that are distanced from the ideal and normative two-way symmetrical usage of the PR function. The emergence of specialized training in journalism and public relations at various universities in Uganda as well as the growing membership, recognition and role of the Public Relations Association of Uganda (PRAU) are a step in the right direction as far as professionalizing public relations in Uganda is concerned.

Most recent developments: 2005-2010

In an effort to improve the Ugandan government image and reputation internationally, the Uganda government in 2005 invested US 1 million dollars in a public relations campaign aimed at marketing Uganda as 'Gifted By Nature'. The campaign raised a dispute over the use of an international public relations agency rather than a local agency. Among other concerns, the government hired the London office of Hill & Knowlton "to polish the image of the government which is wrestling with civil war, a tarnished human rights record and a wave of criticism from Western media and human rights groups" (Curtin and Gaither 2007, p.111). The step that the Ugandan government took to raise global publicity of its image, as well as branding the country with the controversial identity of 'Gifted by Nature' as opposed to the popular and more agreeable Winston Churchill's 1908 description of Uganda as "Pearl of Africa", is one that shows the political recognition of the role of reputation and reputation management in the promotion of individual national identities and reputations. The drawback to this government strategy is focusing on publicity alone to engender what Musoke (2000) described as 'a magic wand that wipes out poor government policy', without taking into consideration performance/actions which play a more convincing and foundational role in the reputation formation process as publicity/communication alone only reinforces what already exists (Katz and Lazarsfeld 2006).

Regarding garnering political clout for the public relations profession, expert interviews

with veteran practitioners revealed a progressive achievement of political recognition of the relevance of the practice of public relations in the communication management of government entities. One of the national achievements the association has attained in this regard is the recent appointment of four PRAU members, to the five-man National Task Force committee assigned with the task of drawing up Uganda's National Communication Strategy (<http://www.prauganda.com/general/index.php>, (accessed June 06, 2011)). The two informants acknowledged that the president has a cabinet minister in charge of information who acts as the official government spokes person, a senior advisor on public relations matters to the president as well as the government of Uganda Media Centre under the president's office whose mandate is to create "better understanding and awareness" of Uganda government policy through regular interface with the media and the general public (<http://www.mediacentre.go.ug/>)(accessed June 01, 2011). Legally, Article 41 of the Ugandan Constitution guarantees the right to information as a fundamental right to every Uganda citizen and not a favour. The article which states that "every citizen has a right to access to information in the possession of the State or any other organ or agency of the State except where the release of the information is likely to prejudice the security or sovereignty of the State or interfere with the right to privacy of any other person" 1995 Constitution of Uganda http://www.ugandaembassy.com/Constitution_of_Uganda.pdf (accessed July, 22nd, 2011) enables the general public to seek and receive information held by public bodies.

This article requires public relations officers who act as gatekeepers of corporate information to release corporate information to the media whenever it is sought for, basing on arguments of accountability, transparency and public interest. Although the law promises benefits of open and transparent public and private corporate governance, nonetheless, the law pauses questions of the extent to which information should be availed to the inquirer and who should be allowed this access, and questions regarding the motive behind the search for this information. Jjuko (2006, p.15) notes that the exemptions in the Access to Information law need to be appreciated in the context of where Uganda is coming from. Exemptions and exclusions are not put in mandatory terms where a person may or may not give the information. The exemptions are also meant to bar non-citizens from accessing national information.

Juma Walusimbi noted that "the government was taking necessary steps to effect the implementation of the Access to Information Act, 2005 and PRAU executive members were part of the National Task force that has been tasked with the role of developing a National Communication Strategy in line with the Access to Information Act of 2005." (Juma

Walusimbi, Interview, March 21, 2009). Walusimbi also noted that in addition to increasing number of PR and advertising agencies in Uganda, all major government agencies, corporate and private sector organizations as well as non-government organizations have public relations officers at management level, a sign of the growing recognition and professional use of the function. These developments are a sign of strategic usage of the PR function. Newsom Turk and Kruckeberg (2010) argue that public relations practiced at the strategic level is one “where the PR person has the power and authority to affect policy”(ibid.p.344). The fact PRAU members are involved in the national communication planning process is a positive indicator of the growing appreciation of the function at the strategic management level.

Conclusion

This paper set out to discuss the nature, status and professional development of the public relations profession in Uganda in relation to the socio-economic and political history that has shaped the profession’s development from 1890 to 2010. The first section of the paper retraced the history of public relations in Uganda drawing heavily on Mamdani’s 2001 classic work, *Politics and Class Formation in Uganda*, showing that various strands of the usage of the public relations function existed in Uganda since the pre-colonial period and are embedded in Ubuntu African philosophy where pre-colonial Uganda’s concepts of collectivism, communalism, complementarism and interdependence among people, clans, tribes and chiefdoms were paramount. Colonial Uganda, with the emergence of a cash crop economy, was also characterized with public relations components such as issues, stakeholder and change management. Activism, negotiation, liaison and influence peddling facets of PR were also observed in the colonial era.

Zikusooka’s (2002) survey conducted with practitioners, organizational executives and the general public provided a great source of empirical evidence for understanding the status and usage of the profession in recent times. Since the 1990s, a more stable and comparatively liberal Uganda has seen the nature, status and image of the public relations profession in Uganda blossom with the guarantees of the right to information embedded in article 41 of the Ugandan Constitution and the Access to Information Act, 2005. It is no wonder therefore that these developments have led to the growing membership and stature of the Public Relations Association of Uganda (PRAU), a body at the helm of professionalizing public relations in Uganda and the emergence of specialized training in public relations at various institutions and universities in Uganda.

Despite these developments, the professional *asymmetric* and *two-way* forms of modern PR as envisaged by Grunig and Hunt (1984), Harrison (1996), and Coombs and Holladay (2007) co-exist with the *propaganda*, *publicity* and *spinning* manifested in the *one-way symmetric* forms of PR in some government and private sector agencies as noted by Zikusooka (2002) and Musoke (2000). The latter is mostly common in organizations that are not members of the professional body, PRAU, or those whose roles are limited to being a spokesperson, media relations provider or those who don't have independent PR departments and work under marketing, branding and human resource departments. We, therefore, noted that despite the growing recognition and blossoming of the public relations profession in Uganda over the years, the profession has only metamorphosed from egg to pupa stage of development, to use an analogue of the butterfly cycle. Moving to the adult and butterfly stage will require extending the professional body's influence over all government and private sector practitioners and appropriate placement of these professionals under the management section to enable them carry out their strategic management functions. The enjoyment of a vibrant professional public relations growth, however, will largely depend on the degree of political openness and transparency that exists within the state of Uganda, as history showed a tendency to use propaganda, spin and asymmetric forms during despotic eras and allowance of participatory engagement has been observed in economically vibrant and relatively free political spaces that allow for free speech in the public arena.

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Development of public relations in Latvia: Pre-history and periods of development

Inga Pūre

Doctoral student of the School of Business Administration Turība, Latvia

Lecturer of Public Relations, Liepāja University, Latvia

inga.pure@liepu.lv

Abstract

Public relations practice has come to Latvia recently. The first features of public relations could be seen during the period of Third Awakening of Latvia at the end of 1980s. It was the time when all Latvians could openly express their opinions, say what they thought, and when the control over the mass media was going away. It was the time when freedom fighters, in seeking to attract attention to changes in Latvia, were trying to cooperate with the mass media of West Europe and USA; and the time when different actions were being made to create public opinion. Until the Third Awakening, public relations had not been put into practice because of the existing totalitarian regime, centralised planning and collectivism policies of the national economy.

When creating new political power in the country and making economic reforms, some persons (politicians, companies managers) and organisations (state institutions, enterprises and public organizations) needed to create their image and reputation, debate public thoughts, and create and develop relations with the surrounding environment. Political organisations and foreign enterprises got their first press secretaries, PR department managers (PR was the abbreviation used during that time) and, shortly after, public relations consultants, specialists, project managers and structural units managers appeared

The need for services of public relations agencies arose because of the foreign companies coming into the local market and they were established. The structural units of public relations started their work in the organisations. At the same time, higher schools and universities, understanding the demand, started to offer the study programmes in public relations. Public relations were rapidly developing and became more professional.

Twenty years have passed since Latvia got to know public relations practice and now periods in the development of public relations can be defined:

- 1) Warm-up period (1991 - 1994)
- 2) Beginning period (1995-2000)
- 3) Professionalization period (2001 onwards)

The aim of the article is to give an insight into the pre-history of public relations development in Latvia and to analyze the periods of development. It offers analysis gained

from detailed, semi-structured interviews with 30 public relations practitioners and universities lecturers, as well as the analysis of the theoretical literature and other sources.

The insight of public relations in the article is based on the approach of relations management. Following the ideas and cognitions of different public relations researchers, such as James E. Grunig, Larissa A. Grunig, David M. Dozier, John A Ledingham, Scott M. Cutlip, Allen H. Center, and Glen Broom, the author identifies public relations as:

“Public relations is one of the organization management functions, a planned, sustainable, continuous, and deliberately conducted process with an aim to create and maintain mutually understanding and supportive relations with internal and external publics of an organization, realizing ethical many-sided two-way communication as the result creating a positive image of the organization which in its turn promotes the growth of the organization competitiveness.”

Key words: Latvia, periods of development of public relations, prehistory of public relations, propaganda, public relations.

Pre-history of public relations development in Latvia

Being based on the cognitions from the scientific literature, the author has researched and analysed adaptation of public relations in Latvia (1991-2010). The results show that during Soviet Union time in Latvia (1945-1991), the modern concept of public relations did not exist. During the period of Soviet occupation there some public relations features could be seen and public relations methods and instruments used. However, taking into consideration the totalitarian regime leading in the country in which public opinion was not playing the main role and when Soviet Union ideology was being enforced and propaganda was used to press the society, it was practically impossible to speak about creation of any relations with society – public relations. Practice in Latvia has confirmed the views of public relations researchers from other countries (Freitag and Stokes, 2009; Sriramesh, 2009; Tampere, 2009) that relations with public cannot be created during totalitarian regime, and the presence of public relations is the sign of any democratic country.

In April 1985, when Mikhail Gorbachev became the general secretary of Central Committee of Soviet Union Communist Party, the Soviet Union started its ‘perestroika’ reorganization. It became possible to speak critically at the meetings, express opinions in mass media openly, participate in demonstrations, establish non-formal organisations, protest against migration and nature pollution, and fight for Latvian language revival (Zīle, 1998a). In general, this major change started the democratic processes in society which created the

positive environment for public relations development in Latvia. There soon appeared some organizations which, for development of public opinion, started using public relations methods, such as publicity development, making events and lobbying.

In July 1986, for example, in Liepaja the 'Helsinki-86' group for human rights protection had been established. Their resolutions were fixed on a simple piece of paper: "Promise to inform international organizations openly, without censorship and pressure about offence against our nation ... Our principle – stop the road for lies and terrorism" (Bormane, 2006). Organization members, such Linards Grantins, Raimonds Bitenieks and Martins Bariss were, as well as in other Helsinki implementation groups in the world, looking for the development and implementation of final document points from the 1975 Helsinki conference which was concerned the people's rights and freedoms (Zīle, 1998b).

As without the help of Latvian mass media it was impossible to express opinions (vice versa, for example, *Cīņa, Sovetskaja Latvija*, regularly criticised the group's work), some other alternatives had been found to attract a bigger audience. In October 1987, Helsinki -86 started to issue the journal *Auseklis* (morning star). The magazine protested against the ethnic changes among Latvian citizens, the diminished role of the Latvian language and ignorance of national economic needs of the nation (Zīle, 1998b). The journal could be considered as public relations instrument because it "satisfied the organisational necessity to declare opinions and spread the information necessary for the achievement of organization aims. It gave organization the possibility to deliver the information to target audiences and express own opinion by own words and own form without any fear that it would be interpreted in another way" (Katlips, 2002, 401).

To develop public opinion, Helsinki-86 organized special events including demonstrations that attracted big crowds and foreign mass media. These actions could be called public relations activities (development of public opinion), not taking into consideration that the term "public relations" had not been used at this time. Such activities did not happen spontaneously; they were specially organized. During the meetings people came together and expressed their opinions as well as listened to others. It was the process of two-way communication and mutual understanding: the basis of public relations.

The first Helsinki-86 organized activities took place at the Monument of Freedom on June 14, 1987. It was organized in memory of people deported from the country on June 14, 1941 during the Nazi regime. Then followed the demonstration on August 23 at the Monument of Freedom. "It helped to actualize the historical meaning of August 23, the date in 1939 when document signed by Soviet Russia and Fascist Germany about the sphere of

influence in Europe. It was the day when Latvia lost its independence for many years” (Latkovskis, 2007). The event attracted big attention from foreign mass media - “in the same evening, radio *Amerikas balss* reported the events at the Monument of Freedom. About 5000 people participated in the demonstration ... the world was speaking about us – then it was not a dream” (Latkovskis, 2007).

Public relations features can be also traced in the activities of the Environment Protection Club (EPC) founded on February 28, 1987). In the time of the Third Awakening EPC became one of the main political powers in the defeat of the Soviet empire and the renewal of Latvia’s independence. More than 10,000 active members participated in it. EPC was a well-structured organization which organized mass actions. Although these actions were aimed at the renewal of the independence, they were of different character. The main emphasis was on issues linked to the protection of the environment and even existential issues, but not merely political. The action against the building of a metro in Riga, organised by EPC made this project impossible. The prayer event on September 1, 1988 at the seaside united 300,000 people holding hands (www.vak.lv). It had been carefully planned and organised to attract not only Latvian citizens but other country’s people and to draw mass media attention to the ecological problems connected with the Baltic Sea pollution. It was the creation of public opinion with the help of events and publicity. Maris Graudins, interviewed during research, says that public relations elements were seen in the early work of environment activists.

In October, 1987, EPC asked the Ministerial Council of Soviet Latvia for permission to publish its own press material, but the request was rejected. However, in autumn 1987, the journal *Staburags* was published (Zīle, 1998b). It could also be considered as a public relations instrument because it had similar communication characteristic features as the earlier journal *Auseklis*.

Public relations methods were also used in the work of Latvian Popular Front (LPF), including event organisation, lobbying, creation of publicity and the publication of informative documents (bulletin *Atmoda* (Awakening)). Respondent Kristians Rozenvalds, a LPF information centre worker then, remembered that different press releases were written each day, translated into Russian and English and sent to Russia and other countries. *Atmoda* was issued to persuade the world of LPF’s ideas. Rozenvalds indicated that *Atmoda* was not an independent journalistic source, but an instrument of propaganda and public relations. It was impossible then to express different opinions. For example, it was impossible to make some publicity for the representatives of the International Front of the Working People of

Latvia (pro-Soviet socialist organization in the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic). “*Atmoda* was issued to express the ideas of Popular Front”, considered Rozenvalds.

Activist Sandra Kalniete in her book “*es lauzu tu lauzi mēs lauzām viņi lūza*” (I broke you broke we broke they broke) remembered that the help of media was used from the beginning. Debate about the foundation of Popular Front took place on the live TV *Discussion Club on Television* programme on July 7, 1988. Some days later, a statement from the LPF initiation group about the Popular Front’s foundation appeared in the *Padomju Jaunatne* (Soviet Youth) newspaper. Later, there was news that LPF’s coordination center had started its work. (Kalniete, 2000, 457). Later, cooperation with mass media happened regularly. For example, the board members had been interviewed again before the manifestations in Latvia Radio (LPF radio bulletin) (Kalniete, 2000, 119). Cooperation with mass media showed that Popular Front understood the importance of mass media in getting popular support for its goals. Respondent Maris Mednis remembered: “There were specialists who understood the journalists’ work very well. They spoke English fluently and were able to communicate with Western journalists, express their opinion and deliver all the news that Latvians wanted to communicate.”

The Popular front organized some manifestations (major demonstrations). Sandra Kalniete wrote:

Our manifestations were one of the Front’s strategies ... In spite of the attempts of the Inter-front to gather people who “thought differently” under their flag, LPF managed to get the support of the majority. The biggest manifestation gathered around half a million people! ... The most magnificent of the manifestations was the Baltic Way, which with the help of which the Baltic Council (Council of Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia) tried to attract attention to Ribbentrop - Molotov pact black anniversary because Latvians were still the victims of it (Kalniete, 2000, 174).

Respondent Maris Mednis says that public relations came to Latvia with the major events of 1988 events:

Demonstrations, meetings and protest actions were organized. The events, reflected in the western press later, were of vital importance and aimed to show that Latvia wanted to be free from the Soviet Union. These activities were a good example of the use of public relations techniques. “*Baltijas ceļš*” (Baltic Way) was organized twenty years ago. People holding hands stood from Tallinn to Riga in 1989. Everything was filmed and broadcasted. That was the news of international importance. Those were the first manifestations of public relations. Public relations was not yet identified in Latvia but people understood how to work with journalists. Those were Latvians from abroad. Their level was very high. Latvia gained its independence to great extent because of the implementation of public relations. We were recognized (Interview).

The Popular Front understood that, to get results, they should develop two-way communication. It was necessary to meet people, make dialogue and conversation with them, and answer the letters. All over Latvia, the LPF organized meetings where they discussed “Appeal” (a conception of Latvian independence regaining) and tried to get the support for national independence. The service of reading and answering the letters was founded to respond to large amounts of correspondence (Kalniete, 2000, 119).

Special attention given to local government election campaign in December 1989, when LPF had got biggest quantity of votes across Latvia. The aims of the campaign was to “break the interest of Soviet power in many country questions connected with power and awaken people’s awareness that the results of elections were dependent on everybody personally” (Kalniete, 2000, 119). Educating the public was another function of public relations.

Respondent Maris Graudins indicated that the Front’s work was identified by public relations elements such as symbols (morning star etc.), slogans and messages.

Similar public relations methods were employed by other organizations such as the Latvia National Independence Movement (LNIM) and the International Front of the Working People of Latvia (known as Inter-Front).

Third Awakening time was a very remarkable and bright time in history of Latvia: Newly founded organizations were able to fascinate people with their ideas, get people involved in different activities and start to use special public relations methods and instruments. It was the time when people started to look differently at the events happening around them, live with the time and get involved into the life of the society. People became open for communication. Because of that, it was a favourable time for the development of the first public relations features in Latvia.

Public relations strategies and instruments appeared exactly when it was necessary to help people to turn off their fears and prejudices against capitalism in their social mind and provide the peaceful transition from socialist political and economic system to another one.

Warm-up period (1991 - 1994)

Public relations got into Latvia at the time the country gained its independence. Changing political, economic and social processes in the country meant it was very important to offer public relations services. The period from 1991 till 1994 could be called as warm-up period of public relations development because it was the beginning of work of the first organisational press secretaries (press officers) and *public relations* (not translated into Latvian)

practitioners. However, they used basic public relations methods, mostly publicity, not strategical level public relations practices. These were not clearly understood and so the following period is called the warm up period before public relations started its rapid development.

During the warm-up period of public relations development, there were separate but parallel developments: recruitment of press secretaries in large quantities, employment of public relations specialists for work in different organizations, the use of public relations instruments by politicians and parties for image making and the foundation of agencies which offered to implement public relations methods.

Former journalists, who became the first press secretaries and public relations specialists, knew the mass media specific features and had very good contacts in mass media environment. There were also former communists who were able to influence people's opinion. Summarizing and analysing the respondents' opinions, it is possible to say that it was common for the position of press secretary to be united with the work of a journalist; by this way breaking public relations ethical norms. The main press secretary and public relations specialist tasks were article writing (not news releases) and its delivery to journalists using different, very often dishonest means. It was implementation of one-way communication for purposes of publicity.

The development of other countries' public relations started in the same way with the activities of publicity development (Grunig and Hunt, 1984; Cutlip *et al.*, 2002; Newsom *et al.*, 2004; Golitsinski, 2000; Bentele and Wehmeier, 2009; Flodin, 2009; Lawniczak and Szondi, 2009).

This was the period of political parties and separate politicians in strong competition because many parties had been formed in the newly-independent country. It was necessary to create organisation and personal identification, emphasise good works and intentions, "create public opinion to the maximum positive way to your side", respondent, PRAE Public Relations project manager Arnis Lapins explained. Respondent, Latvian media and public relations researcher Sandra Veinberga, said that the first experts understood quickly that propaganda should become more flexible, however, "it was necessary to press your opinion, lead the people like a crowd, like a blind herd; just making it more lissom". She argued that the conceptions of public relations in Latvia had more manipulative character. "Public opinion insight, acceptance and tolerance did not exist that time. The same manipulation came from Soviet Union times had been considered as acceptable instrument which should not be so blunt (Interview)." Manipulations and propaganda methods, inherited from Soviet

Union, were used to influence public opinion and behaviour. Literature on other eastern European countries in the same period (Lawniczak, 2004; Lawniczak and Szondi, 2009; Freitag and Stokes, 2009) show that similar practices had been implemented.

This period was characterised by the use of lobbying for legislation, but society was not ready for it. The following actions were not accepted or supported by the people positively. For example, in 1993 National Economy Research Fund had been founded (NERF). Respondent, former fund activist Jurgis Liepnieks, remembered that NERF was founded by Latvian Deposit Bank and Central Bank as a separate public organization with the aim of lobbying for the development of financial legislation in Latvia, especially regulation of the issue of securities. After crises at Bank Baltia, the activity was stopped. Liepnieks is sure that “the following helped to get completely different insight for public relations – the representation of industries’ interests in legislation, and that public opinion could be created and impressed in order to obtain the changes of law for the industries’ needs (Interview).”

Lobbying had thus been perceived negatively by the society for many years after Latvia got its independence, because it was closely connected with bribery. This view is explained by the high level of corruption in the country, according to World audit data. Latvia has 45th place in the table - one of the highest ratios (in negative way) among all European Union countries (<http://www.worldaudit.org>).

This period could not be connected with the study programmes in public relations offered by the higher schools. After making close contacts with Scandinavia and taking opportunities for teaching staff to get new knowledge and information from US lecturers, the University of Latvia started to offer new study courses in which public relations had been taught as a journalistic method. Teaching public relations as journalistic method could also explain the narrow insight of the discipline in the beginning, with the emphasis on public relations as work with mass media.

Different courses in the field of public relations were managed by Baiba Rubesa, a Latvian born in Canada who came to Latvia in 1993, who had experience in public relations working in Canada (*The Commonwealth Group*) and in Germany (*Volkswagen*). According to respondent Marcis Bendiks, the halls of Baiba Rubesa’s lectures were always. It proved that more organisations started to understand the importance and necessity of public relations.

Organisations and individual people of that time tried to create and develop public opinion in maximum positive way. The one-way publicity creation model had been implemented. Dialogue was not created, and public opinion was not known or taken into consideration. Propaganda was openly used.

Beginning period (1995 - 2000)

Analysing the period from 1995 till 2000, it is possible to say that it is the beginning of rapid development of public relations. The first public relations agencies (in 1995) and first departments of organizations (in 1996) were founded. Higher schools started to offer the first study programmes (curriculum) in public relations (in 1996).

According to the Latvian information technology enterprise Lursoft, the first public relations company in Latvia was registered in the LR Enterprise register on March 28, 1995. It was the limited liability company, Consensus PR. (<http://lursoft.lv>)

One of the agency's founders Maris Graudins said Consensus PR shared a common client with Hill & Knowlton, the oil enterprise Amoco. They had the task to gain government approval for Amoco's operations in Latvia. The target stakeholders and decision makers included 100 Saeimas deputies. Consensus PR focused on lobbying (meetings with deputies, seminars, articles) while Hill & Knowlton was responsible for the publicity implementation. The project was not successful because Latvia and Lithuania could not agree on sea borders and blocked the offshore exploration by Amoco.

Later there were other public relations agencies such as: Agency EPI (1995), Public Relations Agency PR Stils (originally Publicity Studio) (1995), McCann-Erickson Riga (1995), Mediju Tilts (media bridge) (1996), Hill and Knowlton Latvia (1996), PRAE (1998), Repute (1999), MRS group (1999) and Nords Porter Novelli in 1999 (<http://lursoft.lv>).

Summarising respondent opinion, it is possible to conclude that the first public relations agencies were founded to meet demand for service from foreign companies which started their work in Latvia. Basically, business organisations, not political ones, got the services started. Public relations was mainly used for the products promotion in the consumer market (marketing public relations). As the first agencies founders were journalists, the main service of public relations agencies was publicity in mass media. The second work aspect was lobbying. To get into the Latvian market, foreign companies sought the help of public relations agencies to obtain the most favourable changes in legislation and regulations.

Banks were the first national organisations which identified the value of public relations and obtained results. On January 1, 1996, a public relations department started work within the Latvian Bank, and so could be considered the first public relations structural unit in an organisation structure in Latvia. Four specialists started work that day: a manager who was responsible for the press secretary job (official position name - manager of public relations department, press secretary), assistant manager, editor of *Averss un Reverss* (Front and Back) and editor's assistant, who was responsible for other jobs, too. The department was

under the control of the Bank president from the start. Respondent Kristaps Otersons, one of the original bank public relations staff, said the highest attention was paid on the work with mass media. Many articles were written, along with plots for TV and radio programmes. Later, work on the web was added. Written news was put to web pages, sent to media and other interested in parties, such as government, shareholders and others. It was one-way information flow. The second focus was internal public relations. From 1997, a newspaper for bank employees was issued and some activities were organised to develop mutual cooperation and work motivation.

One of the first organisations with public relations structural units were Latvijas *Mobilais telefons* (Latvian Mobile Phone) and *Valsts sociālās apdrošināšanas aģentūra* (State Social Insurance Agency).

The first study programme in public relations was offered by Vidzeme Higher School in 1996. Other Latvian higher schools followed its example. In comparison with Western countries the studies in public relations started to be realized about 20 years later, but in comparison with transitional countries in eastern Europe, it was almost at the same time. Practitioners and lecturers were trained and taught by practitioners and lecturers of other countries. They attended seminars and courses and studied public relations literature of different countries (mainly USA and Germany).

Analysis of comments by interview respondents showed that, in general, it was still not possible to speak about public relations as management function. Public relations activities had tactical, not strategic features. Step-by-step the importance of internal public relations was understood and dialogue with internal and external publics was developed. Organisations became more open for public responses and they tried to get understand public opinion. However, there was no symmetrical two way communication, only asymmetrical. In this period, there were too many organisations where the concept of public relations was still unknown and strange. It was mainly foreign companies which brought their organisations' and countries' experience to Latvia and valued the opportunities of public relations. Economic public relations developed more rapidly than did political practices, which were still dominated by propaganda.

Period of professionalization (2001 onwards)

In 2001 after national public relations associations had been founded (Latvian Public Relations Association for Professionals and Association of Latvian Public Relations Companies), the new period of public relations in Latvia started and is being continued till

today. During this period public relations became more professional, but there were still serious problems to be solved in order to declare that public relations in Latvia is professional.

Public relations development from 2001 has been very rich and full of different activities. Notable events that have happened in this period that time and supported public relations development are:

- Foundation of the two national public relations associations in 2001;
- Foundation of annual public relations award in 2004;
- Issue of the first book about public relations in Latvian starting from 2002;
- Inclusion of public relations profession into the national Profession Classification and development of the public relations standards and its affirmation in 2003;
- First Master studies programme in public relations (from 2005);
- Doctoral level studies in communication science where the first serious researches in public relations field had been made (from 2006).

In comparison with transitional countries of Central and Eastern Europe where the first public relations associations appeared in 1990, Latvia was one the last. In 2001 two associations were registered in Latvia - Latvian Public Relations Association for Professionals and Association of Latvian Public Relations Companies.

Analysis of respondent opinion about the associations' work could give the conclusion that most respondents valued the associations' work negatively. Both have identified their aim as public relations development in general but, in reality, everybody was taking care of themselves – professionals about getting new knowledge and experience; associations seeking control over the market and polishing of companies' images. Associations representatives said the reasons for such negative attitudes are lack of time and inability to cooperate. "The PR environment is envious, even grudging. It is not collegiate and has never been, and to my mind will not be," said respondent, companies association president Inga Latkovska.

The associations' biggest contribution to the public relations development was foundation of an annual public relations award in 2004. This activity has not been evaluated positively. Respondents indicated that it was established to build prestige of association members. This claim is not denied by respondent, companies association vice-president Maris Plume: "Agencies offered their works for evaluation and then evaluated each other." However, the event has become international during the last three years. Jury from foreign countries started to participate in the evaluation process. Winning an Award is important

because of the stimulus for public relations professionals do their job with more quality and creativity.

Since 2002 the first books about public relations in Latvian have appeared, both from local authors and translation of foreign books. The first Latvian-authored book mentioned is *Public relations: Introduction into theory and practice* by Teika Lapsa (Lapsa, 2002). This book is based on mostly UK authors' work. It offers basic knowledge in public relations. Big value is given to media relations which aligned with practices at that time tendency. In 2004 *Public relations: PR theory and practice*, written by Sandra Veinberga, was published (Veinberga, 2004). It gives a wide summary of public relations theory and deals with practice issues. In 2005, *Corporate social responsibility. New ways how to earn more* by Andris Petersons and Lolita Pavare was published (Pētersons and Pavāre, 2005). The book offers information about the development of corporate social responsibility in Latvia and shows that Latvia did not lack socially responsible entrepreneurship at the beginning of the 21st century. These three books are still the only ones in the public relations field written by Latvian authors.

The first translated book about public relations published in Latvian was *Effective Public Relations*, by USA researchers Scott M. Cutlip, Alan H. Center, Glen M. Broom (Cutlip *et al.*, 2002). It explores many theory and practice issues which are still not very clear in the Latvian public relations field. The books of British public relations researchers Anne Gregory, Andy Green, David Phillips and Philip Young, Sandra Oliver and German public relations researcher Dieter Herbst have been published in Latvian as well. After the first books published in Latvian on the relationship management approach of public relations, the perception of public relations as a management functions slowly developed.

This period is rich with the study programmes in the field of public relations offered by higher schools. In 2010/11 study year, the first level of professional higher education has been offered by five higher schools, the second level of professional higher education by seven higher schools, and the second level of academic higher education by two higher schools in Latvia. Graduates have the possibility to continue their studies in Master and Doctoral levels.

Activities implemented during professionalisation period have become more multi-formed and creative. It has been especially encouraged by financial and economic crises in Latvia. Searching for the new solutions, agencies started to turn to business consultations, social media and direct communication. However, this period was not also characterized by dominance of symmetrical two-way communication. Most organizations in Latvia still do not

undertake planned and strategised public relations practices. During the most recent period, economic public relations has developed more rapidly than political communications, in a similar manner to the previous Beginning period (1995 to 2000). Propaganda and manipulation were still used widely in political public relations.

Summarizing and analysing the respondents' opinions, it is possible to say that nowadays the perception of public relations in Latvia is different. The majority of respondents look at public relations through the power positions and undertake that relations development with public happens using ethical as well as unethical communication forms including manipulation and propaganda. Fewer respondents look at public relations through the positions of communication and relations management.

Conclusion

During the period of Soviet regime in Latvia (1945 -1991) the modern insight of public relations had not been existed. It is possible to start speaking about pre-history of public relations development in Latvia since the first public relations activities started during the time of Third Awakening until national independence was regained (1987-1991). That was the time when people started to express their opinions and mass media became more independent and less controlled. To create public opinion different organizations – Helsinki-86, Environment Protection Club, Latvian Popular Front, Latvian National Independence Movement, International Labour Front and others - organized events such demonstrations and meetings which attracted big crowds and foreign mass media attention. Public relations methods such as work with mass media or publicity (news performance, organization of press conferences, participation in TV and radio broadcasts), creation and distribution of informative materials, lobbying and public opinion identification, had been used. In that period, however, organisations were still closed for communication and creation of relations with publics. They had not been acquainted with the public relations practice.

Public relations came to Latvia with the independence regaining in 1991. Since that time almost 20 years have passed and development of public relations can be divided into three periods:

- 1) Warm-up period (1991-1994): First press secretaries and *public relations* (not translated into Latvian) specialists started their work implementing one-way communication through the mass media; the first lobbying activities had appeared;
- 2) Beginning period (1995-2000): Foundation of the first public relations agency (LTD Consensus, 1995), foundation of the first public relations structural unit

(Latvian Bank, 1996) and the first public relations study programme in higher school (Vidzeme Higher School, 1996); public relations became independent – public relations services were separated from advertising; the model of one-way publicity creation was mainly used, as was the two-way asymmetrical model; economic public relations were developing more rapidly than political ones; propaganda was still dominant in the political environment;

- 3) Professionalization period (2001 onwards): Public relations associations - Latvian Public Relations Association for Professionals (2001) and Association of Latvian Public Relations Companies (2001) were founded; since 2002 books in Latvian about public relations have been published; public relations became an official profession in Latvia when public relations were included in the Professions Classification (2003) and Profession Standards (2003); since 2005 higher schools started to offer Master level study programmes in public relations; communication science doctoral level study programmes started research in the public relations field (from 2006); step by step, public relations has been accepted as a management functions.

Nowadays the perception of public relations in Latvia is different. Most respondents look at public relations through the power positions and undertake relationship development with publics using ethical as well as unethical communication means, including manipulation and propaganda. Fewer respondents look at public relations through the position of communication and relations management.

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Augustus - Public relations and the making of an imperial reputation

Christian Schnee
University of Worcester
Email: c.schnee@worc.ac.uk

Introduction

This paper analyses how Rome's first emperor Augustus used reputation management techniques in order to legitimise his position at the apex of the Roman political system. This investigation conceptualises PR as a process of reputation building which in ancient Rome just as in 21st century helped both organisations and individual leaders to justify and maintain an inequality of power.

I aim to expand the historical perspective of the subject area and place the focus on a period in history that in PR writing regularly gains perfunctory mentioning, but rarely in depth attention. I aim to detail how in Roman antiquity approaches were developed and tools deployed to identify, build up and maintain a politician's reputation. This discussion is grounded in the assumption that reputation is a means to justify worldly power. While it is understood that reputation does have a role to play as justification of unequal power distribution, academic literature is still predominantly conceptualising its function in a modern business context (Eisenegger et al., 2008)

The decision to focus on the earliest phase of Roman imperial history, specifically the era of Augustus and the initial years of the imperial period is due to the historical chronology of preceding events commencing with Caesar's assassination, which led to a civil war that witnessed warring factions supporting various contenders who each tried to sway public mood and win power. Arguably, in situations of crisis and war the development of communication techniques advances in big strides (O'Shaughnessy, 2004). For persuasive communications this is an innovative time. The period discussed here seems to evidence that key factors of modern PR and, more specifically, reputation management – such as responsiveness, two-way communication and a sophisticated approach to the management of relationships – could flourish in a political setting that moved steadily from a semi-democratic to an authoritarian structure. This transition may add to the discussion about public relations as a constituent feature and facilitator of democracy (Hiebert, 1966).

Whilst studies of Roman and Greek antiquity refer to rhetoric, propaganda (Elliott, 1990) strategic communication (Moore, 2010), as well as the meaning of political iconography (Flaig, 2003), historians don't usually relate these communicative phenomena to

PR. Petersen's (2005) work on political communication activities in the era of the emperor Augustus appears to be one of few exceptions. Much of the material Peterson uses originates from work by Zanker (1990). This historical analysis expands on Petersen's and Zanker's work.

While I primarily intend to establish how political communication strategies and techniques deployed by the imperial court in Rome impacted on images of the emperor and shaped public perceptions of Augustus and his successors, I hope to relate this discussion to the backdrop of Roman political history in the years leading up to Augustus' ascendancy, as it is this historical context that will help us understand and appreciate the strategic approach taken by Augustus.

The rationale for this historical study is in part provided by an acknowledgement that the current and future PR practice is indebted to the knowledge and expertise that have been accumulated by communicators in past decades and centuries.

Machiavelli in his work *Il Principe* points out – and John Lewis Gaddis (2002) agrees – that we should add historical insights to our limited personal experience to enhance our understanding, power of judgement and performance. Gaddis reminds us that in the course of the past 5000 years mankind's intelligence arguably did not increase tremendously, yet the level of civilisation and achievements have reached breathtaking dimensions – presumably because we learned from our forefathers and are much better at doing things now than 5000 years ago.

Writing about the past is in part an effort to understand the present, particularly if it is confusing. History writing therefore may be driven by current motivations and the need to address contemporary issues that require clarification (Pearson, 2009; Burke, 1957). This can be achieved through a critical reflection of existing sources about both imperial policies and communications and by relating findings to our current understanding of public relations practice. In other words history writing responds to questions that echo the present, the author's background and the cultural values and beliefs espoused by society in general or – more specifically – the group the author is part of. Objective truth therefore should not be expected, at best an approximation, in any case a new interpretation of the past.

The rationale for reputation management

Reputation management for political leaders in early imperial Rome was arguably at least as relevant as it is for their current day counterparts. In part political leaders' power to operate today depends on an efficient civil service that loyally implements the political decisions and

a professional police to enforce them. In ancient Rome political leaders had neither at their disposal. Instead, the emperor's political power hinged on local elites and their willingness to collaborate with the central power in Rome. This system could only run smoothly if there was agreement among critical publics that the man at the top legitimately issued orders and was trusted to take the right decisions (Flaig, 1992). The power of the administration did therefore rely on the authority of the leaders. In other words, if citizens and local elites did not recognise the hierarchical position political leaders laid claim to, they might as a consequence doubt their legitimacy to take decisions. If this mutual agreement between governing and governed broke down, collaboration was severed. It has been argued that force – demonstrations of imperial power and superiority, brutality in the arena and legions marching up the streets - did little to impress the plebs (Flaig, 1992). It did not immediately inculcate into the plebs that the magistrates' or – in later years - emperor's role was legitimate and commanded allegiance. To the contrary, public officials had abuses hurled at them by a crowd unwilling to follow their leaders and in some cases the plebs even broke the fasces carried by lictors that symbolised the magistrates' authority. Flaig (2003) names two reasons for this emergence of public opposition to political authority: faulty behaviour (decisions and implementation) or faulty communication (Scullard, 1982).

In other words reputation – the planned and long term management of behaviour and communications in line with public expectations - as a means to establish authority and to justify an imbalance of power was needed since force alone would not guarantee allegiance and following. For Augustus a fitting reputation may have helped secure public approval and acceptance of his position at the apex of the political structure, kept plebs just as aristocrats in their places and staved off opposition.

Mommsen (2010) claimed the emperor's position initially was not legitimate in a legal sense. Legitimacy had to be earned. Augustus himself reminds us in his autobiographical record of achievements (*res gestae*) that military force would not suffice to maintain the position of absolute power he had created for himself (Augustus, 1967). He contends that his imperial sovereignty was grounded in two sources: The power the Senate had conferred upon him (*potestas*) and the respect of the Roman people (*auctoritas*). Augustus recognised that for his political authority to appear legitimate any power from above needs to be recognised from below.

The importance of reputation in politics as a tool to justify and legitimise power becomes evident in the fate of political leaders who preceded and followed Augustus. When reputation building failed, as in the case of Caesar who was seen by the oligarchic elite as a

ruthless dictator who consistently ignored what they thought were their legitimate interests, consequences could bring about a politician's demise (Winterling, 2007). This is also illustrated by the assassination of Emperor Caligula who had lost the public's support for his decision to arrest and kill opponents who had heckled him in public and yelled abuse at him during visits in the stadium. His assassin was not a rabble-rouser, but an army officer. This tribune Chaireas later justified his deed with the emperor's total loss of popular sympathy and appreciation which had left the imperial reputation in tatters (Suetonius, 2001).

Now that we have looked at cases that illustrate how through reputation sovereignty can be maintained or lost, I try and explore in the following paragraphs how Augustus's imperial court went about managing reputation. Taking Augustus' statement as a starting point I will be arguing that in the context of ancient Roman politics there are two paths to secure a leadership position society. Whilst one is by force and repression the complementary route is by public respect. If we assume that society is prepared to accept the uneven distribution of power and the position of an individual at the pinnacle of the power structure as long as the political leaders succeed in creating a narrative that helps construct a robust reputation which in turn generates a sense of legitimacy. It follows from there that we also need to establish how this reputation is built up, maintained or adapted to changes in the environment.

Managing consensus

Reputation is a reflection of how publics perceive an individual, the features they associate him or her with, past experiences and expectations. Since a mismatch between what the public expected from Augustus and his ability to deliver would have lost him sympathy and approval (Flaig, 1992) reputation management was aimed at creating both a policy agenda and a public persona that bridged the gap between the individual's actual personality, their ability, knowledge and strengths on the one hand and what publics expect on the other. Indeed it has been argued that the ability to accommodate expectations and balance interests was an integrated element in Augustus' political and presentational design. In order to achieve this, a system had to be in place that allowed the imperial court to gauge public expectations and perceptions of Augustus (Kienast, 2009; Dahlheim, 2010). Relationship management in shape of a clientele system encouraged two-way-communications between Augustus on the one hand and key publics in Rome and the empire on the other.

For this purpose relationships were carefully managed with key segments of Roman society. What is referred to as clientele system was different from a patronage system, which

was loose and entailed more one-way-communication. While the followers of a patron offered their services and hoped to get protection and support in return, the clientele system would place collective peer group expectations on patrons to look after their followers. The system became more formalised, reliable and reciprocal, when leaders aimed to make efficiency gains and pursue their aims more effectively in society. This required a formal integration of clients (Flaig 2003). Patrons reserved time every morning to talk to their clients which helped communicate perceptions and align policies. Patrons even had their architecture tailored to meet the purposes of clients. The atrium style house was not known anywhere but in Italy and served as the waiting room for clients (Wallace-Hadrill, 1988).

Consensus through two way dialogue was practiced by the imperial court beyond the clientele system and applied to key stakeholders both in Rome and the empire. At the core of Augustus' communication was the agreement and consensus among key publics about the style and substance of good government. This consensus was reached through dialogue. Weber et al (2003) therefore is wary to talk in this context of propaganda and for good reasons so. He points out that this consensus is reached not just through the use of different media but the adoption of appropriate, adequate governing practice, which echoed the various interests, expectations among critical publics, such as the values of the republic.

Following Caesar and learning from his mistakes Augustus calibrated his communications for specific publics. The emperor's habits, gestures, presentational style as well as his policies were adapted to meet expectations. While to some extent the preferences in society for a specific government, policies and personality at the helm could through communications be moulded to reflect the emperor's image, this room to manoeuvre was limited by pre-existing tendencies and currents that existed in society. If the emperor intended to alter his position in the political power structure, he had to solicit support to re-establish consensus or anticipate what was acceptable (Dahlheim, 2010; Eck, 2007). This suggests that the failures of emperors to win support in society may have been a failure to establish an open system of dialogue. In many respects, therefore, the respective failure in office of emperors Caligula and Nero may be attributable to their unwillingness or inability to understand their publics through efficient relationship management.

Being a man of the plebs

One commonly deployed strategy to bridge the gap between leader and specific publics and to create favourable images was through a carefully organised demonstration of shared views and conduct. This approach was widely deployed in an attempt to create the impression of

commonality between the political leaders on the one hand and citizens on the other. The military commander Marius shared food with his men, ate the same bread, spent the night on a straw bed as the common legionary did and helped dig the trenches alongside the regular soldier, in short, he shared their hardship. Marius impressed his men with symbolic actions which carried messages that in turn met popular expectations (Plutarch, 1920). These expectations had been conditioned and shaped by the Roman cultural heritage of modesty and self-discipline as well as the Roman army's ethos of military valour that any leader was expected to display (Keppie, 2002). The reputation of an army leader and emperor therefore was largely based on how he supported the army, organised logistics and ultimately led his troops into battle. Yet, at the same time Flaig (2003) points out that the army leader just like the emperor needed to engage in symbolic acts, that shape images and help determine his public persona and perception. Thus military commanders instrumentalised personal, affective relationships with their troops to increase their efficiency as leaders. For instance after his victory at the river Muthul against the Numidian king Metellus spent four days in the camp, making presents to heroic fighters and assuring the wounded were being looked after.

If this strategy of creating and demonstrating shared experiences and vicinity to the audience was either not pursued or failed, this may potentially be damaging to a politician's reputation. Maximus (1976) reminds us of the young political candidate Scipio Nasica, who stood for high office (curule Aedile). In the course of his campaign Nasica had to – as candidates usually do – shake hands with crowds of potential supporters. When it was the turn of a man whose hands were coarse and calloused due to years of hard labour, Nasica asked mockingly if it was his habit to walk on his hands. The source tells us that bystanders had overheard the exchange of words and spread the politician's scornful remark. Voters in rural areas felt slighted by this depreciative remark and this allegedly put an end to Nasica's political aspirations.

The strategy to show commonality with an audience was applied both by military and political leaders. Martin Jehne (2000) describes this behaviour as an attempt to imitate the voters' joviality, which he argues is not be a trait of the candidate's genuine personality, but a standardised and ritualised practice to establish and maintain a relationship with ordinary citizens. Political leaders would often try and present their knowledge of the simple country life that resonated with Roman traditionalists. Likewise candidates denied in public any acquaintance with the allegedly effeminate Greek culture, which was frowned upon in more traditional Roman circles who habitually claimed that Roman farmers were closer to their

hearts and minds than what were perceived to be decadent Hellenic artists and athletes (Gruen, 1984).

Efforts to accommodate public expectations of political leaders and to demonstrate commonality with subjects determined an emperor's diary: Physical presence in the stadium and publicly displayed interest in circus spectacle were critical for an emperor who wished to create an image of himself that was in tune with what the masses appreciate. Caesar's habit to work through his correspondence during his visit at the arena suggests it is not genuinely enthusiasm for cruel sports that made him attend (Goldsworthy, 2008). On other days he abstained altogether, yet without set-piece public appearances in front of the masses an emperor in the early imperial could not do.

The reason why the plebs expected the emperor to join in the games and to perform on the tribune a representative role may be found in their desire for respect. Through participation in this popular pastime the emperor demonstrated respect for a critical audience in the city. Abstaining from the games in the arena by contrast was deemed a manifestation of disrespect. Cicero had this in mind when he publicly criticised his political adversary Clodius for not attending theatrical performances and games even in the year of his tribunate. One is reminded of politicians in our days who create images of themselves in a football stadium to tie in with voters' perceived sympathy for sport (White, 2007).

Clearly, for Augustus it would have been relevant to know which stakeholders – apart from the plebs - his reign would be affected by and – more critical – what their respective expectations were. Only this understanding would allow Augustus through action and communication to generate images that fed into the desired perception and generated the intended reputation. Flaig goes on to argue that if notions of strength, ability and knowledge were not reflected in the images Augustus created, publics might be missing in the emperor's public persona the qualities they expect in a leader and consequently could come to question their sympathy for and approval of him (Flaig, 1992).

In this endeavour to present a public persona to relevant publics the geographical extension of the empire posed a particular problem. The messages the emperor generated would have to be relevant to audiences in a number of distinct cultural contexts. The most tangible cultural divide existed arguable between the Hellenic eastern provinces of the empire and the Latin western part (Millar, 2002). Whilst the east had a long entrenched tradition of apotheosis any notions of deifying their leader was alien to people in Italy or the provinces of Gaul and Spain, whilst in Rome officials had just about come round to the view that amongst the senators Augustus was *primus inter pares*.

But if we were to look at the Empire's western territories only, there still was a diverse range of publics who each would perceive Augustus in a specific and not necessarily identical way. Apart from plebs and aristocrats with their conflicting expectations, enemy tribes were keen to gauge the emperor's decisiveness, so did the legions and Rome's praetorian guard and fleet, and not least the officials in the provinces who were eager to identify how the Emperor was about to exert his power

These were the critical stakeholder groups that Augustus and any of his successors had to reckon with. If we fitted them into a stakeholder map to categorise their interest in political matters and power to influence outcomes we would have to take into account that throughout the preceding decades the senatorial aristocrats had less and less courage to act independently, whilst the plebs did and on several occasions literally left Rome in huge numbers to go on what amounts to a general strike in demand of rights and freedom (Flower, 2009). In later centuries they would show their dissatisfaction with emperors who refused to distribute bread for free. Meanwhile the aristocracy expected assurances from the emperor to maintain their standing in society as well as political privileges. Augustus had two approaches to deal with this scenario – he could either allow the aristocratic power to increase at his expense or alternatively communicate intensely and justify why in the interest of the country this could not be an option. Flaig (2003) reminds us that Augustus in fact was able to take unpopular decisions that at times curtailed aristocratic power only by justifying his decisions to the aristocracy as the most affected stakeholder, thereby usually applying an apologetic strategy.

Opinion research – what do the publics want?

Augustus' sensitivity to the mood of the plebs and the aristocracy's sensitivities were at the time not systematically researched by any modern standards. However, there was an impressively comprehensive and effective tool to gauge the public's opinions. The Roman theatre which hosted a wide range of spectacles attracted representatives from all strata of society who visibly and audibly engaged both with the programme on stage and occasionally voiced their views about the emperor on the VIP stands.

Political leaders knew that Rome was not governable when the plebs broke up channels of communication (Flaig, 2003). This may have motivated the sponsors of the games – often senior politicians or the emperor himself - to use public performances as a tool to build and maintain relations and engender *Concordia* between them and the plebs in the audience. However, success in this endeavour was not guaranteed as the emperor Commodus

learned who in 192 ordered 14 days of gladiatorial games and found the crowd on the stands was extremely hostile to him. Eventually the crowd decided to leave the stadium en block to demonstrate their disapproval of the emperor, who had formally hosted the event. Shortly afterwards Commodus was murdered. Clearly, the theatre was an excellent place to test the mood among key publics (Flaig, 1992). It was the place where the sponsor and host of the games was cheered or jeered, celebrated or ostracised (Cicero, 1992).

The theatre as the primary public meeting place that regularly brought together all sections of society helped indicate how and to what degree changes occurred over time in what is an otherwise clearly defined, rigid culturally charged ideal image of what the emperor should be like and how incumbents were expected to fill their role (Flaig, 1992). Following the successful war leaders Vespasian and Titus their son and brother Domitian for instance found that he needed to model his public persona on his predecessors' images. In order to achieve this he had himself declared and celebrated "emperor" ("military leader" in the original sense) 8 times in the 8 years of his reign (Jones, 1993). This way he hoped to meet the popular assumption that an emperor equates courageous military leadership. This purely communicative attempt to manage his reputation bore risks as it was not aligned to his actions. While his predecessors had fought battles to expand the empire, Domitian's objectives were aimed at securing and protecting borders.

Communication techniques

Augustus was very much aware what kind of new leader was expected after Caesar's death and the ensuing civil war and his messages were calibrated accordingly: To put an end to civil war, a restoration of traditions, religion and values and the republic itself. Augustus directed both his policies and communications towards attaining these objectives. More importantly he carefully associated himself with symbols and terminology that widely represented the old republic which he claimed to restore, thereby meeting a deeply felt popular sentiment. (Petersen, 2005)

Augustus' ability and willingness to meet widely voiced political expectations visibly affected the public sentiment towards him. His key strategy was to portray himself as modest, pious and abiding by republican traditions. Any images of heavy handedness towards the established elites were consistently avoided. The statues that throughout Augustus' reign were erected in cities across the empire were not willed by the emperor; instead it has been argued that they were the tangible expression of popular sentiment (Galinsky, 1996). Their erection reflects a dialogue between the ruler and subjects who wanted to venerate their

leader. In turn Augustus gradually conceded to have himself portrayed as an object of veneration (Alföldi, 1977). Arguably, the statues' purpose was to provide a focus point for veneration, rather than the carrying of complex messages. While they did carry messages these may have been less explicit and it may be worth debating, how straightforward they were to decipher (Bergmann, 1998).

There seems to be agreement that architectural projects in the capital Rome were directed by the emperor himself. Yet Augustus' vision for the city did not envisage his images at the centre of lavish palaces, squares and temple districts (Weber et al 2003). Instead his message was consensus and a united society. He was a man who did not force public opinion, and was reluctant to use restrictions and controls used architecture as a tool to bring about an atmosphere in society which would lead to gratitude and approval spontaneously (Levick, 2010). While he hoped to achieve applause and recognition, he refrained from commanding it. Hölscher (2000) termed this approach a ritual of orchestrated plurality under the supervision of Augustus. The Ara Pacis, a splendid altar dedicated to peace and prosperity embodied Augustus' image as the guarantor of peace. The Augustus forum lined up statues of his ancestors, thus tracing back his family to Rome's Trojan founding fathers. By integrating his family into the tradition of Roman ancestry he secured himself the image of the quasi untouchable and thus justified his position at the helm of the empire. Augustus' decision to restore the ancient temples was testimony to a wide spread hope to have the old Gods and with them the entrenched republican values and traditions revived.

In the absence of print media, attention is on literature production. Augustus' involvement with commissioning authors and influencing output is not entirely clear and remains somewhat contentious. Some features seem to be clear though. On the one hand those who wrote favourably about the emperor were supported financially by the emperor's friends and councillors such as Maecenas. However, there was apparently no stringent guideline for the production of literature. Instead, among the elite the understanding had emerged that the political success of Augustus would benefit the state and was therefore worthy their support (Eich, 2000). More importantly through his policies Augustus strove to be accepted among his key publics and it was these efforts that afforded him largely favourable coverage. Formal payment in return for publication of texts was not known. Certainly the Aeneid, the founding mythology of Rome had not been commissioned by an official or the emperor whose approach was decidedly more sophisticated. Augustus

dominated poetry by dominating public opinion, not by cultivating a literary policy (Weber et al, 2003).

Petersen (2005) reminds us that the terminology used by Augustus was skewed to fit into the public perception he was so carefully creating of himself. He made it clear that it was not kingship he aspired to. Again, this reflected a strong anti royalist sentiment which since the expulsion of the kings in 510 BC had been at the core of the Roman identity. Instead he allowed himself to be called princeps, which in its singular was a title that was unique to Augustus and his successors and in effect testified to the singularity of the position he claimed. At the same time it allowed him to reject the disdained title of Rex. The Res Publica, the cherished Roman republic who Augustus had promised to restore was the equivalent of a society that guaranteed its citizens the freedom (libertas) to become politically involved and take over offices of state. While Augustus was keen to use the term Res Publica and to praise its virtues he stealthily redefined the concept of libertas. What he had in mind for citizens was a freedom from war, hardship and fear. That he guaranteed, whilst political participation was never restored to what it had been.

Augustus' channels of communication came in the shape of statues, forums, public buildings which in their own right carried their sponsor's agenda. In addition to this and arguably more powerful than literature production were theatre performances that featured prominently in the tool kit of the ancient political communicator. Flaig (2003) identifies three ways to influence the crowd in the theatre with the objective to make them support the games' sponsor and cheer for him. The sponsor – at times the emperor himself - could select a specific play and alter the text to make it match his political purposes. Through pronouncing and word play the lyrics were charged with a specific message. Actors were then instructed to emphasise the argument by pointing at a specific senator, knight or the emperor on the VIP stands. The final option to manipulate the audiences was through commissioning cheerleaders. This latter option came with some risk and at times caused an outrage among the audience that felt affronted by any blatant attempt to be manipulated. In return the crowds may turn hostile and jeer the games' sponsor (Nicolet, 1976). A more low profile strategy to guide the audience's responses was through the selection of the play. Brutus and Cassius may serve us as an example. After the murder of Caesar the two had been in exile, but hoped that the mood of the plebs would change in their favour during the ludi apollinares. To this effect Brutus and Cassius financed a stage Tereus, a play written by Accius (Cicero, 1992). To ensure which way the response would swing some claque had been hired to speak out loudly and favourably when the actors discussed the return of an exiled

assassin. Caesar's supporters who were largely denied access to the theatre, were outraged, fought their way in and filled the stage, thus ruining Brutus and Cassius's otherwise nicely planned attempt to change the public perception of exiled adversaries (Appianus, 1933).

Reputation management – a planned process?

Throughout the Augustean era no formal propaganda machinery seems to have existed (Zanker, 1990) in the shape of a systematic organisation as we know it from a number of authoritarian regimes in the 20th and the current century (Syme, 1939). Admittedly, neither Augustus nor his successors were aided in their communications by trained professional advisors. Even though a dedicated apparatus may have been lacking we may still want to ask if and to what degree the management of Augustus' reputation was the result of a systematic, planned process. Given the sophistication of communication techniques that were deployed it would seem likely that the imperial court also defined objectives and engaged in long term planning. To illustrate this point Roman coins may be a case in hand that would deserve mentioning along the communication techniques we have discussed so far. Money traditionally carries an image that is linked to a message (Howgego, 2000). Howgego reminds us that authors in antiquity took it for granted that the emperor was in control of what was printed on the coin. Surely, it is fair to ask if anyone paid attention to what is printed on the coin. Yet sceptical historians would probably be wrong to disregard the ultimate effect of this medium. The messages audiences retrieve from coins may not directly trigger action, they may however still have a powerful function in shaping values, ideas, basic notions of government and in any case mould the public perception of the man who ran the empire. In this sense a coin was a powerful communication tool. Wolters (1999) agrees that coins assert past and present and through imagery and text communicated the emperor's public persona.

As far as explicit communication objectives are concerned there was among Augustus' advisers - as indeed among the entire elite in Rome - an understanding that the republic needed to be restored in name at least and that the traditional values and old gods needed to be revived to consolidate order and peace within. These were throughout his career Augustus' corporate or political objectives he wanted his public persona to be identified with. The strategy was one of reciprocal negotiation and consent between Augustus and his key publics in an attempt to create the impression that the restoration of the republican order was a project the entire elite as well as the plebs would participate in under his guidance. The campaign to achieve this objective ran over a period of 20 years (Zanker, 1990). Ideally

historians of PR would like to find written evidence for formal planning - perhaps some notes drafted at Augustus' chancellery. None of this has been found if it ever existed (Weber et al, 2003).

Conclusions

I have been looking at reputation as a strategic tool deployed by political leaders to secure access to power and to justify their position at the apex of the political system. The strategy adopted by Augustus to generate his reputation can only be fully appreciated if we remind ourselves of the historical context, particularly Caesar's murder by assassins who saw in him a threat to the republic. Whilst Caesar's war report *De Bello Gallico* was a skilful tool to create images of him as a war leader, Augustus had to adopt a more sophisticated communication strategy that took into account the concerns of the elite for the republic and their suspicion of monarchical rule. His strategy hinged on relationship management and mutual communications that aimed at meeting the expectations of critical publics. In other words Augustus' reputation management espoused almost modern features of public relations. In consequence his position of power was not secured through the force of oppression, but buttressed by the support and trust of society.

Kemkes (1999) argues that the reputation of Augustus and its connotations were so powerful and positive throughout the first century AD that Trajan in the early second century modelled his public persona on Augustus'. This status as a role model for successors may in the view of Kemkes only be achieved if good performance was systematically matched with a carefully orchestrated strategy of self-presentation.

If the features of political and communications management with Augustus suggests that strategies and objectives were guided by a necessity to preserve reputation, this may be indicative of the mind set and approach taken subsequent decision makers in ancient politics. This insight may provide us with a perspective, perhaps a framework that helps us understand and interpret decisions and motivations for decisions taken by Augustus' contemporaries in particular and leaders in the early era of the Roman Empire more generally. This perspective would for instance contribute to the interpretation of Claudius' decision to invade Britannia. The arguments for the invasion currently are manifold. One may be his intention to deprive Celts in Gaul of potential support from their kinsmen in Britannia. Alternatively the decision to invade may have been driven by Rome's interest in natural resources which were known to be in abundance in British soil (Waite, 2010). The third option is related to the Roman emperor's desperate need to silence his critics in Rome who weren't convinced that the

stammering Claudius was the kind of leader the state could afford. The man who for fear and ineptitude had tried to avoid his proclamation by hiding behind a curtain now was forced to work on his public persona to portray imperial credentials. Just like Augustus before him he adapted his policies and communications to meet this objective. Specifically, he ordered a military adventure that even the great Julius Caesar had not accomplished - the conquest of Britannia.

By contrast, Nero was the popular people's emperor who alienated the senatorial aristocracy. While he intensified his communications with the plebs by organising extended games, his communications alone did not carry much weight as his public persona was not based on a personality that matched the description of the ideal Roman leader. After all Nero showed no interest in warfare and was not eager to expand the frontiers and bring wealth and slaves back to Rome (Fini, 1993). The images of him as an artist and Greek athlete marked a sharp contrast to the public persona either Caesar or Augustus or even Nero's predecessor Claudius had adopted. Nero's name was not associated with territorial conquests, a fault that is perceived as a critical in a society that traditionally idolised military leadership.

If the case of Augustus allows us to conclude that reputation management in ancient Roman politics was a critical objective that impacted on messages, political agenda and imperial behaviour in the broadest sense we may in turn use our understanding of imperial reputation and its relevance to put into perspective political events in subsequent decades. The mentioning of Nero and Claudius was somewhat cursory but perhaps illustrates how the concept of reputation in a public relations context offers a perspective that helps interpret historical phenomena.

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Colonial and other influences in the history of public relations in the Philippines

Marianne D. Sison, PhD (*RMIT University*), Zeny Sarabia-Panol, PhD (*Middle Tennessee State University*), Caterina Lorenzo-Molo, PhD (*University of Asia and the Pacific*) and Ritz Villarico-Ronquillo, APR (*Public Relations Society of the Philippines*)

Introduction

“Three centuries in a Catholic convent, fifty years in Hollywood.”

This is how former journalist, Stanley Karnow summed up the history of the Philippines in his Pulitzer Prize winning book, *In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines* (1989).

Because of this colonial history and the continued ties between the US and the Philippines forged long after the country's independence in 1898, public relations in the Philippines developed within a robust democracy and Western-educated, English-speaking population. Aside from the educational system, the Philippine government and media institutions are patterned after the American system. However, critics claim that the economic system despite being capitalist remains largely feudal (Montes, 1989; Chua, 2010).

Located in Southeast Asia, the Philippines is an archipelago of 7,100 islands. The predominantly Catholic nation of 98 million Filipinos, however, ranks 134 of 178 countries in Transparency International's 2010 Corruption Index. While the capital Manila is recognized as a Beta World City +¹, similar in ranking to Melbourne, San Francisco and Barcelona, it also records the highest incidences of urban poor². In 2007, the International Monetary Fund listed the Philippines as the 37th largest economy in the world, with overseas foreign worker remittances accounting for 10 percent of the country's GDP. The Philippines registered a 0.638 on the United Nations Development Program's 2010 Human Development Index³ where it ranked 97th out of 169 countries. In addition to housing one of the most active and robust media systems in Asia, the Philippines also lays claims to having 75% of its population as registered mobile phone subscribers.

Within this context of contradictions, this paper presents the paradoxes that both enhance and hinder the growth of professional public relations in the Philippines. Through a historical analysis, this paper discusses how religion, colonial influence, journalism, marketing and education have shaped Philippine public relations practice.

Brief history of the Philippines

The paradox begins with varying versions of Philippine history as recounted by the colonizers or the government of the day. But regardless of which version of history one believes, early inhabitants in the Philippines shared similar traits with its regional neighbours in Indonesia, Malaysia and Australia. Before the Spaniards arrived, Chinese and Japanese traders settled in the main island of Luzon. Muslim Arabs arrived in southern Philippines in the 1400s when they introduced Islam and were under the control of the Muslim sultans from Borneo.

In 1521, Portuguese explorer Ferdinand Magellan, who was circumnavigating the globe on orders of the Spanish crown, landed in the Philippine island of Homonhon. He befriended locals including Rajah Humabon and converted some to Catholicism. However, Magellan got involved in political rivalries of the indigenous population and was eventually killed by a local chieftain named Lapu-lapu. After several more expeditions, another Spaniard Ruy Lopez de Villalobos landed in 1543 and named the islands Las Islas Filipinas after King Phillip II. In 1565, Miguel Lopez de Legazpi arrived from Mexico and formed the first European settlements with his fleet of five ships and 500 men including Augustinian monks. He occupied the kingdoms of Maynila and Tondo and established Manila as the capital of what was then known as the Spanish East Indies.

The Spanish colonizers then introduced Christianity and established schools and hospitals, and offered local Chinese free education to convert to Christianity. Aside from establishing the first public education system in Asia, Spaniards also introduced the Western code of law, printing and the Gregorian calendar. During the 19th century, Spain further invested in infrastructure in the Philippines by building bridges and transport systems and establishing banks. While the Philippine economy seemed to flourish under Spanish rule, the mood altered with a change of leaders in Spain. The execution of three Filipino priests exposed the abuse of the colonizers and triggered the revolution. Initially an underground movement, the revolution started in 1896 as a propaganda movement inspired by two novels written by Jose Rizal, a middle class intellectual who argued for independence. Not long after, the Spanish-American war ensued and Commodore George Dewey defeated the Spanish army in Manila.

In the Battle of Manila, the US captured the city from Spain and as part of the Treaty of Paris, Spain paid the US \$20 million for the handover. On June 12, 1898, Filipinos declared independence and shortly after elected revolutionary Emilio Aguinaldo as the first president of the Republic of the Philippines until his capture by the Americans. In 1901,

William Howard Taft was appointed as the first US governor in the Philippines. The US government passed the Jones Law, which established the Philippine legislature composed of a Senate and a House of Representatives, and the Tydings McDuffie Act that created the Philippine Commonwealth and a commitment to a ten- year transition to its own constitution and independence.

In the next 35 years, the Philippines increased its foreign trade, mostly with the US, reduced mortality rates with the establishment of a health care system, and created a new educational system with English as the medium of instruction. During this time, Filipino legislators would regularly lobby the US government for complete independence. So in 1935 after US president Franklin D. Roosevelt approved the Philippine constitution, Manuel L. Quezon was elected president of the Commonwealth of the Philippines.

However in December 1941, Japan invaded and occupied the Philippines until 1944 when General Douglas MacArthur returned to 'liberate' the Philippines. On July 4, 1946 the Philippines gained its independence from the US with its own national anthem and national flag. Independence from the US, however, did not mean a complete retraction of American forces, as the Philippines kept two military bases until 1992.

In 1964 then president Diosdado Macapagal proclaimed June 12, 1898 as National Independence Day to commemorate the struggles of the Filipino revolutionaries. In September 1972, then president Ferdinand Marcos declared martial law on the pretext of reforming the country with the slogan, "*Sa ikauunlad ng bayan, disiplina ang kailangan*" (For the country's progress, discipline is needed) and his goal for a new society. The martial law period witnessed a new parliamentary form of government and signaled a new era in government-controlled information management. After Corazon Aquino ousted Marcos through a bloodless People Power uprising in 1986, subsequent governments have struggled to balance democratic ideals with the country's feudal and colonial history.

Colonialism, religion and public relations

Colonial influences permeate through the current business and political environments. Spain's introduction of Catholicism in the Philippines transcended all the political and economic turmoils the country has experienced over the last five centuries.

The role of religion

To say that religion pervades every aspect of Philippine life is no exaggeration. With more than 90% of its population being Christian, of whom 80% are Roman Catholics, the cradle-

to-grave influences of religion and particularly those of the Catholic Church are not hard to imagine. It is common to find announcements of religious events such as baptisms, weddings and funerals of society's elite in Philippine community newspapers and other mass media.

The scholarly literature has noted "the intersection of mass media and popular religion" (Evensen, 2003, p.13). The Catholic Church's Pope Gregory XIII, for example, established some sort of a "PR boutique agency" (Brown, 2004) to promote the church's evangelization efforts. Scholars have pointed out that organized religions "have harnessed public relations tools to propagate the faith, to inspire devotees to fight for their faith, to enhance national identity through the association with faith such as devotional-promotional communication (Tilson, 2006), and to establish legitimacy for the church and, by association, for the state" (Lamme and Russell, 2010, p. 291).

The most enduring and ubiquitous public relations piece still used by churches throughout the archipelago is the weekly newsletter, which the faithful can pick up after mass on Sundays. These newsletters chronicle community events, funds raised through collections and prayer intentions.

Church propaganda

The colonial history of the Philippines is replete with friar propaganda, with remnants of these practices alive and well in contemporary religious life. Since public relations is persuasive communication and propaganda is one such form of persuasion, it would be remiss not to mention the advocacy writings of Spanish friars in the Philippines. Lahiri (2007) wrote that propaganda composed by Spanish friars "ostensibly directed to *indios* or natives (referring to Filipinos) were meant to warn against the dangers of modernity, understood in terms of liberal ideas, the questioning of ecclesiastical authority, the learning of Castilian, and with it, the destabilization of the social and linguistic hierarchies of the colony" (p. 244).

Two types of clergy exist in the Philippines – regular and secular. The first refers to members of religious or monastic organizations such as the Augustinian, Dominican, Franciscan, Jesuit and Recollect orders that have their own set of regulations for members. Secular clergy, on the other hand, are diocesan priests, who report to their bishops. The regular clergy, who are known to run schools and reputable universities to this day, were as Lahiri (2007) contends "the principal architects of evangelization..." (p. 244).

Doctrina Christiana, a 16th century book of prayers, is considered a fine example of evangelism done in the native language, *Tagalog* (now called *Filipino*). Among today's

internationally-known academic institutions established by the regular clergy are the Jesuit-run Ateneo de Manila University, De La Salle University, and the Dominican-run University of Santo Tomas.

History also tells us that Spanish rule and friar propaganda did not remain unchallenged. The Propaganda Movement led by Filipino nationalists such as Jose Rizal and Marcelo H. del Pilar through combined journalistic discourse and correspondence from Europe to the Philippines, exposed the abuses of the Spanish regime including those committed by the clergy in the islands. Their annals of discontent and calls for solidarity constitute according to Lahiri (2007) the “first canonical writings of Filipino nationalism” (p. 243).

Doctrinas, devocionarios and novenas

Examples of what Tilson (2006) called devotional-promotional communication are the *doctrinas*, *devocionarios* and novenas still prevalent in present-day Catholic Philippines. With printing expensive during colonial times, evangelical translations or vernacular publications such as *doctrinas* and *devocionarios*, were not accessible to the *indios* or native Filipinos. Instead these served as auxiliary devices that facilitated standardization and interpersonal communication between clergy and the faithful (Rafael, 1993 in Lahiri 2007).

Devocionarios were the most common printed religious genre in the 18th and 19th centuries. These are often inexpensively produced pamphlets “that taught lay people how to expiate sins by earning indulgences or pleading for intercession from the saints or the souls in purgatory” (Lahiri, p. 256). Novenas are prayer books typically devoted to particular saints or the Virgin Mary and done in private or as well-orchestrated public religious rituals in churches. Generations of Filipinos pray novenas and *devocionarios*. These religious publications together with rosaries, crosses and images of saints have evolved in modern times into standard merchandise in religious bookstores or museum souvenir shops and hence serve both prayer/piety purposes and income sources of churches or religious institutions.

Religion-driven community relations

Every town and city in the Philippines has a fiesta or feast day. This is a major community event where the locality celebrates a patron saint and turns its festive and religious face for everyone to see. For individual Filipinos, fiestas are opportunities to pray and make amends for past wrong doings. Masses in honor of the patron saint and community-wide activities such as parades, beauty pageants, sports competitions, cultural programs combine with day-

long feasts in Filipino homes. Fiestas are well-anticipated and planned events that are often reported in the media in big cities or by word of mouth as well as through *barangay*/municipal meetings in smaller towns.

Roman Catholic holy days like Christmas and Good Friday, which are official national holidays, are ripe opportunities for organizations to promote goodwill among various constituents. During the Christmas season, for example, office parties become employee appreciation programs where Christmas gifts, awards and prizes are distributed. The Lenten season is now a hybrid of religious rituals, often with live media coverage in many places, and family or office holiday excursions especially by those based in Manila.

Festivals built around religious observations such as the feast of the *Santo Niño de Cebu* are celebrated nationally but the largest one is the *Sinulog* Festival in Cebu City. Kalibo, Aklan honors the child Jesus with its *Ati-Atihan* and Iloilo has its *Dinagyang*. These are major cultural and religious-based events that draw media attention and domestic as well as international tourists.

Church and state relations

Separation of church and state is enshrined in the Philippine constitution. In colonial times, however, the Catholic Church was deeply involved in political administration. The influence of the Catholic Church on the Philippine government continues to this day. In 1986, then archbishop of Manila, Cardinal Jaime Sin used radio broadcasts to urge Filipinos to join the massive street protests that toppled the Marcos regime. The media coverage of the 1986 People Power revolution imprinted forever in the national and international consciousness, images of priests and nuns with rosaries who together with the laity, surrounded military tanks.

In less dramatic but equally potent fashion, the Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines issued in 1987 a pastoral letter urging the electorate to vote 'yes' in the constitutional plebiscite. The ratified 1987 Constitution had provisions favorable to the Catholic Church. These include the ban on abortion and the restoration of a limited role for religion in public education. The Catholic Church also used its significant influence in hindering government family-planning programs.

The country's first woman president, Corazon Aquino, a devout Catholic, reportedly started cabinet meetings with prayers. She and other Philippine presidents are known to seek spiritual guidance from the Catholic Church in private and in public especially during crisis.

But, in addition to religion, the values of patronage and indebtedness seem to underpin the way of life in government, business and in the communities. These practices have not escaped the public relations industry as favors are exchanged between media and public relations practitioners.

The roots in journalism

Like in the West where public relations practice is most developed, Philippine public relations has its roots in journalism. For the uninitiated, “public relations is simply being a ‘journalist-in-residence’ for a non-media organization” (Wilcox *et al*, 2011, p. 12).

However, the ‘journalist-in-residence’ takes a dismaying, albeit unintended but nonetheless discomfoting interpretation in the Philippines where Filipino journalists (those working in news media outlets) are actually on the payroll of corporations and politicians (Coronel, 2002). Although common knowledge in the industry, the practice expectedly creates a whole slew of ethical problems that severely erode the credibility of both professions. It is worth asking whether such media practices are rooted in cultural values, such as ‘*pakikisama*’ (comradeship), or whether the presence of colonizers ingrained in Filipinos deference to ‘foreign’ authority.

It does not help when scholars inadvertently exacerbate the confusion when some like Quebral (1986) reminded readers “that the functions of the media in any society are to inform, to teach, to *persuade* and to entertain” (p. 274). The intermingling of these media roles might have caused the further blurring of important lines of divergence between journalism and PR, which in the Philippines may account in large part for ethical breaches such as “envelopmental journalism” or journalists moonlighting as publicity agents or press relations officers (Panol, 2000).

Journalism’s influence on public relations can likewise be explained by the migration of journalists to the public relations profession. In the US, Wilcox *et al* (2011) have noted that “many reporters change careers and become public relations practitioners” (p. 12). The same trend occurs in the Philippines. Aside from generally better pay and benefits that serve as pull factors, this trend can be explained also by the chronological development of the two professions. Journalism has been in existence longer than PR. So historically, public relations may well be the younger cousin of journalism.

The early beginnings of Philippine journalism and public relations

According to Lent (1972), the Philippine press “began in the 17th century but did not take root until the 19th century” (p.1). In fact, the first newspaper in the Philippines, *Del Superior Gobierno*, appeared in 1811. It can be argued that the Philippine press and what may be construed as media relations developed almost in tandem during the nation’s colonial times. Lent (1972) described Philippine journalism as “a press which has bred nearly all of the country’s heroes like Rizal, Mabini and del Pilar, and at the same time is breeding many corrupt and unscrupulous newspapermen” (p. 1).

So while the institutionalized or formal practice of public relations started after World War II, historical accounts tell us that the profession actually began as early as colonial times with the country’s national hero, Jose Rizal (Sarabia-Panol and Lorenzo-Molo, 2004).

When Rizal left for Spain in 1882, he did not intend to simply study and experience Europe for his own personal growth. He campaigned for the Filipino cause by taking advantage of the anti-clerical feeling in Spain. In what was later called the Propaganda Movement, Rizal wrote news on the real state of religious corporations in the Philippines, which in Spain were portrayed as good missionary endeavors of the friars. He sent copies of his letters published in the Spanish press to his brother Paciano, who circulated them among his friends in the Philippines. Arguably then, the country’s foremost national hero practiced what is known today as advocacy communication although history books refer to him as a newspaperman. This shows the close linkage between journalism and public relations since the Spanish colonial times.

Media and politics

Like the US, Philippine public relations is identified with media and politics, with publicity as its primary and sometimes, only role. Veteran PR practitioner Maximino Edralin recalled that in the beginning, “PR was understood as media relations” (in Lorenzo-Molo, 2007, p. 60), which he believed explains the influx of journalists to the profession. Edralin further suggested, “successful journalists were thought to make ideal PR men because they knew how newspapers worked and had a built-in network of friends in media” (in Lorenzo-Molo, 2007, p. 61). But such an arrangement also made ethical practice difficult since combining friendships with business become vulnerable to abuse and wrongdoing.

Some trace the practice of gift-giving and bribery in exchange for publicity to these types of arrangements which led to negative views about public relations (Nieva in Lorenzo-Molo, 2007, p. 61). Public relations’ association with government and politics exacerbated

this negative perception. When Ramon Magsaysay ran against president Elpidio Quirino in 1953, the former's media handlers led by J.V. Cruz and the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) Col. Ed Lansdale, developed a public relations strategy that changed the conduct of political campaigns. The American-inspired public relations strategy resulted in Magsaysay being dubbed the most 'loved' Philippine president. Scholars suggest this period saw public relations being used for public information and public opinion (Lorenzo-Molo, 2004).

Another interesting phenomenon is the intersection of media celebrity and Philippine politics. Several television and film actors have become elected politicians reflecting a strong celebrity culture and the continuing relationship between PR, government and the media.

Journalism education

Journalism schools in the Philippines also started much earlier than public relations education. Established in 1611, the University of Santo Thomas, after receiving approval from the Philippine government on April 13, 1936, opened the first journalism school in the archipelago (Lent, 1972). The American-style education also introduced university degrees in journalism usually as part of a liberal arts program. For example, in the University of the Philippines, journalism was offered in the 1950s where many English language journalists and writers emerged. These journalists operated as the fourth estate, providing an activist, critical voice to the government.

Aside from journalism being around longer than public relations both from the industry development and educational or formal training perspectives, it is not uncommon to find public relations being taught in journalism schools in the Philippines as it is in the US. It is therefore not difficult to see why journalism continues to have its long sway on Philippine public relations because to date, academic institutions maintain curricular structures with both specializations housed in the same unit.

One therefore wonders whether a more professional, educated and ethical industry can help eradicate corrupt practices. And how are educational institutions addressing the need for professional, ethical public relations practice? Furthermore, how has the development of professional public relations been enhanced or hindered by other institutions?

Education, professionalization and public relations

While the Americans used education to supposedly 'emancipate' the Filipinos, the Spaniards used education to make the locals more subservient to the colonizers. Spanish missionaries were tasked to educate the indigenous population as public schools were established in local

municipalities. Teaching Spanish was made compulsory and replaced the local pre-colonial writing script. However, despite the establishment of many public universities in the Philippines during the Spanish regime, education was restricted to middle class families, mostly men and based on Catholic teachings. The Americans used education as a tool to quell the growing nationalism and imposed English as the medium of instruction as a 'subtle means of cultural imperialism'.

...from its inception the educational system of the Philippines was a means of pacifying a people who were defending their newly-won freedom from an invader who posed as an ally. The education of the Filipino under American sovereignty was an instrument of colonial policy. The Filipino had to be educated as a good colonial. Young minds had to be shaped to American ideas. (Constantino, in Schirmer and Shalom, 1987, p. 45)

With an activist, highly literate, mostly Catholic, English speaking population living with a robust media system, one would expect a highly professional public relations practice. However, the absence of public relations programs in top universities seems to be a barrier to achieving the ideals of professionalism. As several public relations scholars have mentioned, education is a key pillar in developing a professional practice, from moving the occupation from a technical function to a more strategic, management-oriented practice (Grunig, 2000; Pieczka and L'Etang, 2001).

Like in many countries, it was the industry association that demanded that public relations programs be offered at the university level. So unlike journalism's early start, it was only in 1977 that the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) secured a permit from the Ministry of Education allowing schools to offer public relations as a specialization (Nieva, 1999). The first formal public relations degrees were offered in three private universities: Arellano University, Santa Isabel College and St Paul's College (Lorenzo-Molo 2007; Sarabia Panol and Lorenzo Molo, 2004). To date, however, only the latter offers a bachelor's degree in mass communication with a major in corporate communication.

While journalism, film, media and communication arts programs abound, very few programs with a public relations focus may be found. There are single courses or majors in public relations but not full degree programs. Most of the practitioners who called for formal public relations degrees had journalism backgrounds. The top universities such as the University of the Philippines (UP) Diliman and the Ateneo de Manila University do not even have formal degrees in public relations, despite having well regarded journalism, broadcasting and mass communication programs. Instead the UP College of Mass

Communication only has two courses in public relations: Public Information, and Public Relations Principles (Sarabia-Panol and Lorenzo-Molo, 2004; and Rolando Tolentino, personal communication). Apparently while public relations is popular among young people, journalism academics have strongly opposed its introduction as a separate degree. But all is not lost. There are signs of public relations education in some key universities albeit under a different guise or name.

Beyond public relations

If public relations' scope was extended to include development communication, we could trace the earliest program to the University of the Philippines Los Baños (UPLB), which offered the first bachelor's degree in development communication in 1974. Development communication links human communication with socio-economic transformation. Initially an agricultural college, UPLB's development communication program assisted farmers in learning about new technologies. Agricultural extension workers were tasked with an educative and informative approach not too dissimilar from Grunig and Hunt's (1984) public information model. It is relevant to note that James Grunig also had a background in agricultural communication. UPLB has a more progressive approach to public relations education with the transition of its programs from its agricultural information beginnings to the establishment of the College of Development Communication and College of Public Affairs in 1998 (<http://www.devcom.edu.ph/site/about.html>).

Following the development focus, the Asian Institute for Journalism and Communication (AIJC) runs a Master of Communication Management with graduate certificate and graduate diploma exit points. The program includes foundation courses in the craft of communication, communication issues and knowledge management and electives such as development communication, ICT for development and corporate communication, risk and crisis communication, and cross cultural communication. It also offers an online certificate course in Corporate Communication with courses on strategic communication, corporate communication planning, building and managing corporate image and reputation, employee communication, publicity and media relations, stakeholder and public affairs, and crisis management and communication (<http://www.aijc.com.ph/newsite/onlinea.html>).

Another progressive university, De La Salle University (DLSU) offers public relations under organizational communication. Its undergraduate and postgraduate curricula reflect Western public relations approaches with a management-oriented public relations course, issues management, power and politics, negotiation, organisational change,

communication management, etc. Its previous program director received her PhD from Purdue University in the US.

Silliman University, a university operated by American Protestants in central Philippines, also has a public relations course within its Bachelor of Mass Communication. The Polytechnic University of the Philippines offers a Bachelor of Advertising and Public Relations in the College of Business. Similarly the University of the Asia and Pacific (UA&P), houses its public relations courses within a bachelor's degree in integrated marketing communication. More recently, the *Pamantasan ng Lungsod ng Maynila* (University of the City of Manila) offered a Bachelor of Mass Communication with a major in public relations.

Despite the existence of public relations programs in the Philippines, why are there very few when there are 2,180 higher education institutions⁴ in the country? A study of degree sources of Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) members for instance show that at the bachelor's level, 27 percent earned degrees in journalism/mass communication, followed by business at 21 percent then by arts/literature/philosophy at 17 percent (Panol, 2000). At the master's level, however, only 22 percent pursued graduate journalism/mass communication degrees. The majority or 59 percent majored in business management, public administration and development management.

Marketing and public relations

With a small number of public relations degrees and a majority of practitioners with a business background, it is not surprising that the industry is seen primarily within the marketing discipline. Here are some of the paradoxes between public relations and marketing. Public relations has been interpreted in various ways depending on a specific industry's needs and concerns. For instance, Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC), "a process of strategically managing audience-focused, channel-centered, and results-driven brand communication programs" (Kliatchko, 2002, p. 26), has adopted numerous principles of public relations. Unfortunately, it has sometimes incorporated many public relations functions, even rewriting some of its approaches. Second, while marketing communication may have helped public relations, it often conflicts with the predominantly Western notion of public relations as a management function (Lorenzo-Molo, 2007). As a result, while marketing communication may have ensured the survival of the public relations industry,

“their intrusions may have also heightened the already equivocal and uncertain nature of public relations” (Lorenzo-Molo, 2007, p. 59). So what exactly is the level of marketing’s influence on public relations and how did it get there?

The backdrop for public relations in marketing

While entrepreneurship is celebrated and encouraged in the Philippines (see Co, 2004), the government and the private sector closely coordinate their work. The real paradox exists with a business environment that combines neo-liberalism, a dominant local land-owning oligarchy and strong United States investment (Ranald, 1999).

From the post-war era to the present, the same system prevails. Lagging behind its Southeast Asian neighbours’ prosperity, the Philippines was referred to as the ‘sick man of Asia’. Thus, reforms were undertaken in the 1990s to accelerate liberalization and deregulation to attract foreign multinationals to invest in the country. So in one industry, “foreign firms are now dominant and contribute more than 80 percent of the value added to refined petroleum, non-ferrous metals, and electronic goods” (Coclanis and Doshi, 2000, p. 273). Even with then president Joseph Estrada who was well known for his extreme nationalism and as a champion of the masses, the oligarchy and business elites dominated the political process (Ranald, 1999). This combination of a neo-liberal economy driven by an oligarchy may explain why the Philippines performed poorly in the region (Coclanis and Doshi, 2000). Undoubtedly, Spanish and American colonialism each contributed to the feudal system and democratic processes in the country that continue to underpin the current business environment in which public relations operates.

The business of public relations

But among recognized and distinguished professionals in the field, public relations is about management, communication, relationships, strategies and tactics for the survival and success of any business or corporation. The 1980s saw public relations take on a more business-related role (Lorenzo-Molo, 2006). Although publicity still dominates the practice, public relations has become a more business-oriented function with its incorporation into marketing often referred to as consumer public relations. Moreover, it has integrated a more community relations approach with a stronger corporate social responsibility (CSR) focus (Lorenzo-Molo, 2006). When marketing practitioners realized that advertising could no longer satisfy their needs and meet their objectives, the alternative was found in public relations. Suddenly public relations became a bigger and more significant aspect of the marketing mix (Nieva in

Lorenzo-Molo, 2006), helping publicize a product and extending the longevity of advertising campaigns (Virtusio in Lorenzo-Molo, 2006).

While publicity plays a significant part in marketing, it is still referred to as “below-the-line advertising” (Nieva in Lorenzo-Molo, 2006). This view relegates public relations to a support function with a focus on publicity and media relations (Lorenzo-Molo, 2006) that could stunt its development as a truly professional practice.

The role of industry associations

Making public relations a professional practice is the goal of industry associations around the world. The Philippines is no exception. The two dominant industry organizations in the country are the Public Relations Society of the Philippines (PRSP) and the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Philippines or IABC Philippines. The country also has a small International Public Relations Association (IPRA) membership composed primarily of senior practitioners in in-house and consultancy roles.

PRSP is “the country’s premier organization for public relations professionals with members coming from business, government, non-profit organizations, hospitals, schools, professional services and other industries, that aims to advance the professional, ethical and highly competent practice of the discipline and profession of PR...” (PRSP by-laws).

IABC Philippines is “the lead association of business, industrial and organization communicators and others pursuing allied activities supporting the highest professional standards of quality and innovation in organization communication, providing continued learning, promoting and sharing best practices for highly ethical and effective performance standards, linking communicators to the global network of IABC, championing the communication profession to business leaders and striving for the highest ethical standards in carrying out these purposes...” (IABC Philippines by-laws).

There are other organizations with similar objectives but the two mentioned are the leading associations in terms of membership and activities. PRSP explicitly advocates public relations while IABC Philippines describes its niche in the bigger umbrella of communication, particularly, business and organizational communication within an international context.

PRSP documents record the beginnings of public relations as a profession in the Philippines during American occupation after World War II. A key person attached to the US

Army was the Press Information Officer whose responsibility was to effectively disseminate information to the public.

In 1947, Manila's business editors and reporters organized the Business Writers' Association of the Philippines (BWAP) and launched the BWAP Awards for those who excelled in their businesses and contributed to social welfare via socio-civic projects. In the same year, the Philippine President appointed a Press Secretary. But it was only seven years later, in 1954, that the Office of the Press Secretary was elevated to cabinet level reflecting the importance given to the function.

The first formal practice of public relations was recorded in 1949 when government and business leaders organized a public information campaign to attract investors to a slowly recovering war-torn Philippines. Led by ambassador to the US Carlos P. Romulo and businessman Andres Soriano of San Miguel Corporation, the effort was coordinated by former journalist Jose Carpio with the help of American public relations practitioner George Peabody (Sarabia-Panol and Lorenzo-Molo, 2004). The successful outcome generated an economic recovery and an interest in public relations by local and multinational companies who employed more practitioners. Six years later, Carpio established the PRSP.

In 1957, PRSP was created "to advance the welfare of the Filipino people through the dignified, effective and relevant practice of the art and science of public relations" (*PRSP records*).

When Martial Law was declared in 1972, the Office of the Press Secretary became the Department of Public Information and a former journalist was appointed as the first Information Secretary and cabinet minister. Also at that time, government public relations officers and public information officers formed the Public Relations Organization of the Philippines, which has been inactive of late.

The PRSP has since continued to grow its membership and practically mirrors the Public Relations Society of America in its objectives, programs and structure. Like its American counterpart, the PRSP also runs member accreditation, awards and annual conferences. Recently, PRSP members have attended PRSA conferences, which could include a one-year PRSA membership. With many practitioners educated in the US and Canada, this approach reflects the adoption of western trends and tools in Philippine practice.

PRSP's original members included PR and advertising executives while IABC Philippines' founding members were corporate editors of the then Philippine Council of Industrial Communicators. After lobbying by the Philippine group between 1978 and 1982, the IABC Board approved the establishment of IABC Philippines in 1983 making it the first

chapter of IABC outside of the United States (www.iabc.com.ph). The group remains active in national, regional and international events. Two of its past presidents have been Asia Pacific regional directors and the incumbent vice president is the regional director for North Asia.

Conclusion

As this paper shows, Philippine public relations practice is and has been shaped by its Spanish and American colonizers even long after the country's independence. As religion permeates through government, business, and educational institutions, public relations practitioners have to deal with political patronage, a culture of indebtedness and a highly literate and media-savvy population. As Filipinos are one of the highest users of mobile and social media, they are generally early adopters. However, they continue to take the lead from the US and Philippine public relations practice follows the same path.

Undoubtedly, the impacts of Spanish and American colonialism have been embedded in the Filipino culture and psyche that make it difficult to distinguish what is truly Filipino. The showbiz-celebrity culture that pervades the political and social environment attests to the dominance of American pop culture despite strong nationalist sentiments. Furthermore, the American's legacy of the English language allows Filipinos to engage in the contestation of global ideas and the global labor market. In time, however, Philippine public relations may start to explore options beyond the dominant American experience. The growing strength of China and other Asian economies is a big factor. Practitioners are forming partnerships with international public relations organizations, associations and firms from other regions of the world such as China, the UK, and Spain.

Filipino public relations practitioners have to juggle between their Eastern culture, their Spanish-inspired religiosity and their Americanized education within the context of a globalized economy. Despite a western approach to public relations, the Philippines is revealing its own brand of public relations that combines elements of the Eastern approach. For example, as in many Asian cultures, hierarchy, age and seniority matter. So during meetings, junior members tend to be silent in deference to more senior members. Furthermore, Filipino practitioners will engage in preliminary conversations to establish trust before diving right into clinching a business deal (Cuna, 2006).

This analysis also shows that attempts at professionalizing the practice through educational programs exist but have not gained enough traction. While most practitioners have an undergraduate or postgraduate degree in communication, only a few who studied

overseas will have a formal degree in public relations. Somehow, the absence of public relations degrees in major universities hinders the legitimacy and professionalization of the practice in the Philippines. However, there are strong streams of activists, social development and community movements within the academe, which could provide the groundswell for critical theory in public relations. The existence of university programs focusing on critical theory and development communication provides some hope in the future of public relations for social responsibility and social change.

Perhaps, we will soon witness a new chapter in the evolution of the practice where paradoxes can be reconciled to further the growth toward a professional, socially responsible and meaningful public relations practice in the Philippines.

Footnotes

¹ <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/world2008t.html>

Beta+ is a categorization developed by the Globalisation and World Cities Research Institute that assesses cities according to their integration into the world city network. Beta cities are “instrumental in linking their region or state into the world economy” (<http://www.lboro.ac.uk/gawc/gawcworlds.html>).

² www.nscb.gov.ph/poverty/default.asp

³ <http://hdrstats.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/PHL.html>. The Human Development Index (HDI) was developed to provide a more comprehensive measure of well-being to include three dimensions: health, education and income. The Philippines’ HDI for 2010 is 0.638 which is slightly below that of East Asia and the Pacific region (0.650) but above the world index (0.624).

⁴ Higher education institutions include public and private colleges and universities as per the Commission on Higher Education (<http://202.57.63.198/chedwww/index.php/eng/Information>).

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Public relations and peace-building in Northern Ireland: Dissemination, reconciliation and the ‘Good Friday Agreement’

Ian Somerville and Shane Kirby

University of Ulster

Email: IJA.Somerville@ulster.ac.uk

Abstract

This paper analyses the public relations (PR) strategies employed by the mainstream political parties during the ‘Good Friday Agreement’ referendum campaign in Northern Ireland in April/May 1998. Using data from elite interviews, triangulated by content analysis from campaign literature, the study analyses the communication strategies of the pro-Agreement parties, the Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), the Ulster Unionist Party (UUP) and Sinn Féin and assesses the PR tactics of the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) and the United Kingdom Unionist Party (UKUP), who were attempting to persuade the electorate to vote No to the Agreement. Key findings of the research include; firstly, there appears to have been an important upsurge in the importance of public relations expertise (for many political parties the pre-Agreement negotiations and the referendum) campaign represented their first major investment in political PR). A second key finding pertains to the communicative model adopted by the key actors. All parties adopted, in different ways, a ‘dissemination’ model rather than a ‘dialogic’ one to communicate with allies, enemies and the general public. The communication model of the SDLP is particularly noteworthy because it was an approach underpinned by dissemination and reconciliation. More generally the paper will suggest that PR based on dissemination and reconciliation ultimately offers a more realistic and ethical approach to PR, for the kinds of communication and information exchange necessary in contemporary democratic societies, than the currently fashionable dialogic or two-way symmetrical models.

1.0 Introduction and context

The election of a Labour government under Tony Blair at the UK General Election in May 1997 helped to re-energise the Northern Ireland peace process. Although successive British governments had attempted to instigate negotiations between Northern Ireland’s political parties during the State’s troubled past, on this occasion (despite the absence of the DUP) the negotiations were more inclusive than in previous years. More importantly, the negotiations

between eight political parties, and the British and Irish governments, continued until agreement was reached on 10th April, that is Good Friday, 1998. As a result, the Agreement represented the first significant opportunity to construct an inclusive power-sharing government since the partition of Ireland in 1921. One of the Agreement's stipulations was that its very legitimacy would have to be strengthened by (or founded upon) a positive endorsement by 'the people' of Northern Ireland. This led to a six-week-long referendum campaign on the Good Friday Agreement which became the biggest public relations exercise ever to be carried out in Northern Ireland.

The Good Friday Agreement was a negotiated settlement between Nationalists (mainly Catholic) who aspire to the reunification of Northern Ireland with the Republic of Ireland and Unionists (mainly Protestants) who want Northern Ireland to remain as part of the United Kingdom. It offered a devolved power-sharing government and held out the hope of a peaceful accommodation between two deeply divided communities. Most important of all it was to signal an end to 30 years of conflict 'during which more than 3,700 people died (the pro rata equivalent of some 600,000 mortalities in the United States). In addition, over 30,000 people suffered serious injury, with the result that most people in Northern Ireland know someone who was killed or seriously injured in the Troubles' (Hargie, O'Donnell and McMullan, 2010, p. 7).

2.0 Literature review

As noted above once the Agreement was concluded it still had to be voted on by the Northern Irish public and also, because it involved changes to the Constitution of the Republic of Ireland, by the population south of the border as well. The Good Friday Agreement proposed a framework for ending conflict in Northern Ireland but the question, for the pro-Agreement parties, was how to communicate this to the voting public. Much of the literature from a public relations and communication management perspective proposes a dialogic process (which emphasises communication exchange, reciprocity and mutual understanding) when confronted with difference and conflict (Grunig, 2001; Cutlip, 2002). A key question for this research project was how relevant the dialogic approach was in respect to the communicative activity under investigation.

2.1 The tyranny of dialogue?

'In certain quarters dialogue has attained something of a holy status. It is held up as the summit of human encounter, the essence of liberal education, and the medium of

participatory democracy' (Peters, 1993, p. 33). Arguably this is nowhere more apparent than in much of the theorising about public relations. As Pieczka (2011) points out 'Dialogue has been at the centre of public relations theory for about thirty years' (p.108). Kent and Taylor (2002) have noted the 'increasing ubiquity of dialogue as a concept in public relations' (p. 21) although they also point out that 'Public relations scholars have referred to dialogue as a "dialectic," "discourse," and a "process" with little consistency in its usage' (p. 21). They note diverse conceptions of dialogue appear in scholarly PR literature, sometimes it appears to refer to 'relationship building' (Grunig and White, 1992), sometimes it is equated with a form of rhetorical 'ethical debate' (Heath, 2000) for others, such as Pearson (1989), it seems to refer the management of 'interpersonal dialectic' (Kent and Taylor, 2002, p. 22-23). In PR literature dialogue is viewed as a good thing and therefore is used to describe PR activity which ultimately arguably twists and stretches the concept beyond coherence. For example, Pieczka (2011) points to Heath's use of the term 'rhetorical dialogue' to describe a process, that of public policy formation, which might be more usefully described as 'deliberation'. She goes on to note that 'despite assertive statements about the importance of dialogue to public relations theory and professional practice, the field has a very poor understanding of the concept' (Pieczka, 2011, p. 109). Pieczka (2011) and Kent and Taylor (2002) do a good job of shedding light on the key sources, ideas and theorists which have had direct and indirect influences on public relations ideas in respect to dialogue. The concept of dialogue and the terminology describing the idea is traced through the disciplines of philosophy, theology and psychology in particular. These scholars are clearly aware that 'dialogue', despite a degree of apparent terminological overlap, has developed different meanings in, for example, the psychological theories of Carl Rogers, the educational theories of Paulo Freire and the political philosophy of Jurgen Habermas. Perhaps some of the lack of conceptual clarity within PR theorising on dialogue stems from a failure to recognise this.

At times within the PR literature great claims are made for the dialogic model of communication, for instance Botan (1997) suggests 'dialogue elevates publics to the status of communication equal with the organisation' (p. 192). Pieczka (2011) punctures this elevated status claimed for dialogue to some extent by rightly pointing out that 'Dialogic theory (and symmetrical communication) is based on the interaction of individuals, or groups of individuals, and face to face communication ...it seems problematic to assume that encounters between individuals and organisations can be treated in exactly the same way as encounters between individuals' (p.117). Kent and Taylor (2002) make a similar point when they note that 'it is the presence of an interpersonal relationship (although not necessarily face-to-face)

between participants that facilitates dialogue’ (p. 28). Some scholars have highlighted the dangers of fake dialogue or contrived dialogic engagement (Grunson and Collins, 1997; Kent and Taylor, 2002; Day et al, 2000). Even the risks of genuine dialogue are sometimes referred to; for example, Leitch and Neilson (2001) suggest that ‘genuine dialogue is a problematic concept for systems public relations because it has the potential to produce unpredictable and dangerous outcomes’ (p. 135). Kent and Taylor also acknowledge that there are key problems with the practicalities of engineering dialogue:

Not everyone agrees, however, whether dialogic public relations is even possible or practical. Research from public forums such as town meetings and community workshops shows that the process and product of well-intended, theoretically grounded, and highly structured dialogic communication efforts often fall short of participants’ aspirations’ (2002, p. 33).

Despite pointing to the lack of conceptual clarity and the problems of the practical application of dialogue both Pieczka and Kent and Taylor in their reflections argue for retaining the concept as central to PR theory and practice. Pieczka (2011) ultimately argues that what might be called the ‘dialogue industry’ is a developing area and it’s important for PR to get in on the act. In what is ultimately a pragmatic argument she states:

The constitution of public relations professional jurisdiction needs to be broad and extensive in terms of communication theories, applications, and practise in order to sustain the profession in times of change. ...the fashion for dialogue and engagement in public policy has not attracted much attention in public relations. Yet ...These policy initiatives have opened up a big area for communication specialists’ (p. 119-120).

While this is undoubtedly true up to a point, some of the downsides of this enthusiasm for dialogue in public communications must also be acknowledged. Jeffreys (2001) has assessed the problems, revolving around power and patriarchy, which have bedevilled recent initiatives in ‘interfaith dialogue’, initiatives which have been backed with substantial government funding in states like the UK and Australia in recent years. Jeffreys notes that one key problem, amongst many, is that ‘interfaith activity presents particular difficulties of exclusion for women ...The promotion of interfaith dialogue is a problem for sexuality because it is likely to exclude those who are unrecognised by male community leaders, including women and lesbians and gays who may not feel safe to speak’ (2011, p. 372).

At the end of their study of dialogue in PR literature Kent and Taylor (2002) suggest, strongly echoing Pearson’s (1989) position, that ‘Dialogue is not synonymous with “debate” – which is about the clash of ideas – but rather, dialogue is more akin to a conversation

between lovers where each has his or her own desires but seeks the other's good' (p. 27). This is a very significant comment because it links us back to the origins of 'dialogue' as a communicative ideal and more explicitly the views of the 'Socrates' of Plato's *Phaedrus* who articulated a view of dialogue which has had an important influence on Western thought ever since. It also, arguably, highlights why some commentators have viewed the dialogic conception of communication, with its virtually impossibly high demands, as a double edged sword.

2.2 Dialogue versus dissemination

In an interesting but largely ignored article Stoker and Tusinski (2006) discussed the importance of some of the ideas of philosopher of communication John Durham Peters for PR theory. Peters (1999) in an important work on communication theory, traces the reasons for the rise of 'dialogue' as the pre-eminent concept in communication theory in contemporary thinking, and why this is both a blessing and more often, a curse. For Peters:

[D]ialogue can be tyrannical and dissemination can be just... The strenuous standard of dialogue, especially if it means reciprocal speech acts between live communicators who are present to each other in some way, can stigmatize a great deal of the things we do with words. ...Dialogue is a bad model for the variety of shrugs, grunts, and moans that people emit (among other signs and gestures) in face-to-face settings. It is an even worse normative model for the extended, even distended, kinds of talk and discourse necessary in large-scale democracy (1999, p. 34).

Peters (1999) then does not see the concept of dialogue wholly negatively but he does see the obsession with it as having had a pernicious influence on the broader possibilities of human communication. One of his key aims is to restore dissemination to what he sees as its rightful place although he does warn: 'The rehabilitation of dissemination is not intended as an apology for the commissars and bureaucrats who issue edicts without deliberation or consultation; it is to go beyond the often uncritical celebration of dialogue to inquire more closely into what kinds of communicative forms are most apt for a democratic polity and ethical life' (Peters, 1999, p. 35). To explore this difference between communication as dialogue and communication as dissemination Peters traces the archetypal origins in Western culture of these rival models of communication, Plato's 'Socrates' and the 'Jesus' of the synoptic Gospels. Peters' attributes the preeminent position of dialogue in the Western tradition to the views of Socrates in Plato's *Phaedrus*, communication as intimate love, which he argues *have* dominated thinking about communication and dialogue ever since. He notes that 'Socrates' model of the proper and pathological forms of communication resounds to this

day. We are still prone to think of true communication as personal, free, live, and interactive' (Peters, 1999, p. 50). However according to Peters 'The synoptic Gospels evaluate dissemination in a way quite opposite from the *Phaedrus*' (1999, p. 51). He emphasises this by pointing to the use of the parable as the key communication tool:

The parable of the sower celebrates broadcasting as an equitable mode of communication that leaves the harvest of meaning to the will and capacity of the recipient. ...Those who have ears to hear, let them hear! It becomes the hearer's responsibility to close the loop without the aid of the speaker. ...The synoptic Gospels repeatedly undercut reciprocal and hermetic relations in favour of relations that are asymmetric and public. Though the dream of mutuality has an intense hold on the ways we imagine communication from Plato on, several elements in the Christian tradition offer dissemination as a mode of communicative conduct equal or superior in excellence to dialogue' (Peters, 1999, p. 53).

Peters while recognising the hegemony of dialogue in much Western thinking on communication makes a robust defence of dissemination:

There is, in sum, no indignity or paradox in one-way communication. The marriage of true minds via dialogue is not the only option; in fact, lofty expectations about communication may blind us to the more subtle splendours of dissemination or suspended dialogue. Dialogue still reigns supreme in the imagination of many as to what good communication might be, but dissemination presents a saner choice... Dissemination is far friendlier to the weirdly diverse practices we signifying animals engage in and to our bumbling attempts to meet others with some fairness and kindness' (1999, p. 60).

Peters did not write about public relations but he was very much interested in the practice of communication in political, economic and socio-cultural arenas. It should be noted that a key focus of Peter's work is to expose the problems inherent in the promotion of dialogue, dialogic models or symmetrical communication as a cure for the communication ills which confront human beings at the interpersonal or organisational level in modern society. It should be made clear that Peter's did not argue that dialogue is necessarily bad or that it can never be ethical but he questioned whether dialogue is the best approach to most of the communicative relationships people find themselves engaged in politically, socially and even interpersonally.

2.3 Public relations, dissemination and reconciliation

Stoker and Tusinski (2006) argue that 'Peter's work has the potential of liberating public relations from an unhealthy infatuation with dialogue and its antecedents, such as symmetrical and reciprocal communication' (p. 158). They use Peter's work to question the

foundational assumptions of 'dialogic' public relations by, as they put it; 'examining the philosophical roots of dialogue and two-way symmetric communication' and they conclude that this 'deconstruction of dialogue exposes moral cracks and contradictions in the concept and its application to public relations' (p. 158). Although it may seem heretical to much public relations theorising they suggest that Peter's analysis shows that 'dissemination can enhance freedom, responsibility, diversity, and reconciliation' (Stoker and Tusinski, 2006, p. 158). Furthermore they argue; 'Reconciliation, a new model of public relations, is proposed as an alternative to pure dialogue. Reconciliation recognises and values individuality and differences, and integrity is no longer sacrificed at the altar of agreement' (p. 156). If one accepts this perspective according to Stoker and Tusinski (2006):

[T]he goal of public relations changes from finding agreement to discovering differences. As differences become transparent ... they can be reconciled in a way that places a high value on our common humanity. Using this framework, we engage people or publics in communication ... because as human beings, we value our relationships with other human beings. The outcome of this type of relationship is a different kind of change, one not of adaptation or adjustment in response to outside pressures, but constitutional change in who we are and how we perceive ourselves – which then leads to changes in the way we interact and communicate... This new approach emphasises reconciliation through dissemination and engagement' (p. 171).

Stoker and Tusinski (2006) also echo Peter's concerns about reciprocity becoming an obligation rather than a willing gift:

'[P]ublic relations infatuation with dialogue may create unrealistic expectations for organizational and individual communication. Indeed, adherence to dialogic approaches, such as the two-way symmetrical model, though well intended, may actually cause public relations to slip into simple quid pro quo relationships. 'Dissemination can be just and dialogue unjust. More important than the mode of communication is the morality of communicators and their willingness to recognise and reconcile differences... the goals of symmetrical communication or dialogic communication are commendable but unreasonable. The common ground sought by competing parties is not as important as the common principle of truth, freedom, liberty, and human rights that both espouse' (p. 174).

Stoker and Tusinski (2006) focus on the significance of Peter's work for public relations. In their view a public relations approach which asserts the positive features of dissemination will liberate public relations from the virtually impossible demands of dialogue. They argue that the goal of public relations is to engage with the 'other' while acknowledging diversity and not trying necessarily to come to a common outlook. This makes agreement more difficult in the short term but in the longer term may allow true

agreement to emerge. From this perspective the goal of the communicator is to reconcile oneself to difference while agreeing general principles of humanity.

3.0 Method

The primary data gathering method used in this study is the elite interview; conducted with high-profile politicians, campaign directors, press officers and political strategists of the main political parties in Northern Ireland. The interviews were conducted between 3rd June 1999 and 20th March 2003 and on average lasted 45 minutes, they were semi-structured in format and the interviewees answered all the questions that were put to them. In these elite interviews participants reflected on the PR strategies and tactics deployed and articulated their understanding of political communication and political public relations. The interviewees cited in this paper are: John Hume MP MEP (SDLP leader), Mark Durkan (SDLP Referendum Campaign Director), Conall McDevitt (SDLP Director of Communications), Mitchel McLaughlin (Sinn Féin Chairman), Alex Benjamin, (UUP Referendum Campaign Press Officer), St Clair McAllister (DUP Director of Communications). Participants are listed with their professional roles and political titles held at the time of the Good Friday Agreement.

The interview method, and in particular the elite/expert interview has both strengths and limitations as a research method. Bogner et al (2009) note that ‘Conducting expert interviews can serve to shorten time-consuming data gathering processes, particularly if the experts are seen as ‘crystallization points’ for practical insider knowledge and are interviewed as surrogates for a wider circle of players...expert interviews offer researchers an effective means of quickly obtaining results and, indeed, of quickly obtaining good results’ (p. 2). There are however several issues to bear in mind when conducting elite interviews in Northern Ireland. McEvoy (2006) writing about employing the interview method in Northern Ireland warns ‘the nature of antagonistic politics in a divided society can mean that seemingly straightforward questions can provoke adversarial, sectarian responses’ (p. 185). It is also important to make clear, as L’Etang (2008) points out there is always a risk in conducting elite interviews with participants who are ‘masters and mistresses of impression management’ (p. 323).

In order to triangulate the interview data content analysis of campaign materials deployed by the parties was also conducted. We present our findings below in two sections focusing on the communication approaches of the pro-Agreement groups and the anti-

Agreement groups as articulated by the elite actors. The research questions which underpinned this study were:

- What was the role of public relations in the Good Friday Agreement referendum campaign(s)?
- What public relations/communication models were adopted by the key pro-agreement actors during the referendum campaign(s)?
- What public relations/communication models were adopted by the key anti-agreement actors during the referendum campaign(s)?

4.0 Presentation and analysis of data

4.1 PR strategies and tactics of the pro-Agreement parties

John Hume, Nobel peace prize winner and leader of the SDLP (1979-2001), sums up his party's analysis of the conflict, and strategy for developing a peace process, as follows:

[O]ur proposal was ...that there shouldn't be any victory for either side, therefore that our institutions would respect our differences in power sharing ...When you have a deeply divided society, divided for centuries by prejudice and distrust, in order to erode that distrust and prejudice, the best way of doing it is to work together in your common interests. ...A new society, a new North and a new Ireland will evolve in a generation or two based on agreement and respect for differences.

The approach articulated by Hume emphasizes the acknowledgment of difference and involves reconciling oneself to the idea that productive communication can be based on assenting to general principles while valuing diversity and pluralism. For Hume and the SDLP the very essence of the Good Friday Agreement was that it provided a framework for possible reconciliation between two traditions and one in which the two communities could move forward together. However, the language of reconciliation during the referendum campaign battled at times to be heard above the claims of victories and defeats, as Conall McDevitt (at the time SDLP Director of Communications and later Managing Director of Weber Shandwick Northern Ireland) pointed out:

Most of the parties spent most of their time trying to articulate the Agreement as a defeat or a victory for one side or the other. ...Our strategy was to concentrate on the Agreement, not on the tired rhetoric of victories and defeats. The Agreement was a victory for no one, it was a defeat for no one, that's the whole point and our strategy was very much to hammer that home. ...So, that was our fundamental strategy and from day one we were very anxious to find messages and images that would uphold that strategy.

Their attempts to appeal to all sections of the community were also apparent in the SDLP's referendum literature. They used the symbol of a golden key on their 'Yes' campaign leaflet which contained a statement from Hume that the Good Friday Agreement represented 'your opportunity to leave the past behind and unlock the door to a better future. There is much in this Agreement for everyone'.

Mark Durkan (SDLP Referendum Campaign Director) explicitly used the concept of dissemination to explain the SDLP's communication strategy for a Yes vote when, in an echo of Peter's (1999) idea, he argued that the SDLP's communication approach could be compared with the Jesus and disciples of the synoptic Gospels disseminating the 'good news' in an unselfish or benign way. He notes: 'it was important to go out and *spread the word* in a sense about the Agreement, because an awful lot of the media stuff had all been about the release of the prisoners, policing and the North-South Ministerial Council. We were out to try and make sure people got a fuller sense of all that was in the Agreement'. The SDLP developed a non-triumphalist Yes campaign, strategically designed to tread carefully around unionist sensitivities and thus reduce the fears and suspicions the unionist community held in relation to the Agreement. The SDLP were the only political party whose public relations activities and key messages were designed to appeal to 'all' the people of Northern Ireland irrespective of which tradition they belonged to. A key tactic in the SDLP's PR campaign included the use of third party endorsement, whereby they brought high-profile figures to Northern Ireland from business, the arts and British and Irish politics to endorse a Yes vote. Indeed, as we shall see, the most important third party endorsement of their campaign planned by the SDLP was a peace concert organised in the closing days of the campaign in conjunction with Irish global superstars Bono and U2.

For David Trimble MP (UUP leader) and his campaign team there were some important decisions to be made at the beginning of the referendum campaign in respect to communications strategy and the role of PR within their campaign. For the UUP leader the first issue to be dealt with was the defection of some of the party members, including several key political strategists, to the No camp. Faced with a divided party - many of those who stayed demonstrated little enthusiasm for the campaign ahead - and therefore a potentially disastrous start to the campaign Trimble decided to hire an external media campaign director for the month-long battle ahead. His choice was Ray Haydn who at the time was running a successful PR and media-training agency in Belfast.

One of the first things Haydn changed within the Ulster Unionists' campaign was the leader himself. He knew how the camera could easily distort a politician's public image and

was worried that, for example, Trimble's hair appeared greasy and unkempt on television. Haydn noted: 'No one else would touch the subject in Glengall Street [UUP Headquarters], so I said it. I told him, "David, you've a problem with your hair. You are going to have to wash it every day." He actually took my advice and for the first three days of the campaign he washed his hair every morning' (cited in McDonald 2000, p. 222). In fact a full image makeover was proscribed and although Trimble was at first indignant Haydn eventually persuaded him to also invest in a 'new wardrobe'. Cosmetic changes aside, there were more fundamental difficulties for Trimble at this juncture. As noted above at the beginning of the campaign a large element in his party appeared not to be fully behind him. Haydn made up for this lack of full active support with a well planned PR strategy. He developed a communications strategy based on prioritising media relations and a hierarchy was established with local newspapers and broadcasters at its apex, then the Southern Irish newspapers and broadcasters, then the UK national papers, and at its base were the foreign media. MacDonald (2000) noted that Haydn helped to make it the most professional UUP media campaign in its history and never before had the party been given such national and international media attention (p.223).

Another key area where Haydn's professional influence was felt was during the live televised debates which had been arranged for the party leaders to put forward their arguments on the Good Friday Agreement. For his first live television debate with DUP leader Ian Paisley Haydn armed Trimble with a secret weapon to produce during the course of the debate – a series of photographs of Paisley and DUP colleagues wearing the red berets of the shadowy paramilitary styled Ulster Resistance organisation in 1986. When Paisley accused Trimble of supping with the IRA/Sinn Féin paramilitary devil by signing the Agreement, Trimble produced the pictures. 'What about these, Ian?' he kept shouting at the DUP leader (MacDonald, 2000, p.239). Paisley had been expected to dominate the debate easily but Trimble kept his notorious temper under control and won the debate by listening to Haydn's advice and effectively using the photographs to shield against Paisley's line of attack.

Within the Yes camp there were tensions between the UUP and Sinn Féin over some of the publicity tactics of the latter. One cause of serious friction was the triumphant welcome-home party arranged for the Balcombe Street Four gang who appeared in the middle of the campaign at the Sinn Féin specially convened Ard Fheis on 10th May. The rapturous reception of the IRA prisoners, until recently held in an English jail for terrorist offences, went down badly amongst the pro-Agreement unionist community. De Breadun

(2001) noted the unhappiness this caused amongst unionist Yes campaigners; ‘It was like Christmas for the No lobby’ (cited in De Breadun, 2001, p.158). The Balcombe Street Gang had received early release after negotiations between Sinn Féin and the British Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, Mo Mowlam, and was meant to demonstrate a sign of things to come as prisoner releases had been guaranteed under the Good Friday Agreement. The media publicity surrounding the Sinn Féin Ard Fheis and particularly the reception received by the Balcombe Street Four, (dubbed a ‘PR disaster’ by other members of the Yes camp), certainly did not help unionists to feel any more at ease or reassured. However, Sinn Féin’s Chairman, Mitchel McLaughlin was more circumspect:

If it was a PR disaster, you have to ask yourself who it was a PR disaster for? And would it have been a bigger PR disaster if the Sinn Féin organisation had rejected the Good Friday Agreement? We delivered big time, we went through the pain and we took the brick bats and we took the criticisms, internally and externally. We brought most of our party who voted it through with 93% support, but we also lost people. There was 7% of our organisation that didn’t agree with us and thought that the Good Friday Agreement was not a good deal.

The fact that there seemed to be divisions within the different parties in the Yes camp as the campaign reached its final stages manifested itself in misgivings in unionist public opinion. An *Irish Times* opinion poll one week before the vote suggested 55 per cent of unionists were against the Agreement.¹

It was at this crucial point in the campaign that the SDLP’s strategy of focusing on promotional activity that emphasised inclusivity and reconciliation became highly significant. Bono had been in contact with various members of the SDLP throughout the campaign but going into the final stages he had offered his public endorsement and help. It was an offer gratefully accepted by the nationalist party. The SDLP organised peace concert was the first campaign initiative the UUP campaign felt they could fully join in as partners alongside the nationalist party. Up until this point the UUP had been reluctant to get involved in any joint campaigning or publicity events with the other pro-Agreement parties. Although, UUP press officer during the referendum campaign, Alex Benjamin, claimed his party did vigorously promote the Agreement (at least) to unionists:

The key message was one of reassurance and backing up our point with ‘what we’re doing is the right thing’. We sold it on a number of issues, namely the fact that our reading of the Agreement was that it secured Northern Ireland within the union, gave power back to the people of Northern Ireland and enabled everyone to get involved and participate in politics and have a say in how Northern Ireland was run.

¹ The Irish Times, 15th May, 1998.

When Trimble was told about the proposed concert his first reaction was: ‘Who’s Bono?’ Ray Haydn recalled:

About sixty million people around the world knew who Bono was – except David Trimble. I suppose if it had been Pavarotti or Domingo he would have known. But I jumped at the idea, even though there was huge reluctance initially from many of the old guard – the ones with the Neanderthal attitudes in Glengall Street. I was trying to drag the party into the twentieth century, never mind the twenty-first, and this was the perfect opportunity to do that (MacDonald, 2000, p. 233).

Ultimately the most important aspect of the event was not the concert itself but rather the highly visible symbolic bringing together of the two figureheads of unionism and nationalism in a joint public event. The SDLP’s Conall McDevitt highlighted how pivotal the U2 led peace concert in Belfast was at this particular juncture in the referendum campaign particularly since images of division were starting to dominate media coverage, such as the Sinn Féin Ard Feis Balcombe Street gang appearance in Dublin and a rally in Belfast to celebrate the release of loyalist terrorist Michael Stone. He notes:

We felt it was a very necessary thing at that time because the whole campaign had become dominated by two very negative, very retarded, very old images - one of the Balcombe Street gang at the RDS in Dublin and the other one, Michael Stone here in Belfast, and they began to polarise opinion around them and were leading the referendum debate into a cul-de-sac, into a very large one. So when the opportunity arose to create another image, an image which was forward-looking, which was youthful, which was dynamic, not regressive, old-fashioned and staid, we jumped at it ...and the rest is history. But that was a very important part of fulfilling our strategy. It was a tactical decision taken at the last minute, it wasn’t written down in any plan but it was one that was fully consistent with the overall strategic objective of the campaign.

At the end of the concert Bono of U2 invited John Hume and David Trimble onstage and the two leaders publicly shook hands for the first time. The coming together of Trimble and Hume on Tuesday 19th May at the peace concert symbolised the possibility of a new beginning between unionism and nationalism and it provided a positive image of reconciliation with the vote on the Agreement only three days away. McDevitt claims that; ‘The people wanted Hume and Trimble to stand shoulder to shoulder and say “we want you to vote yes”. Until they got that image they were doubtful, and it was only after that image that things really began to consolidate themselves. In the final week you got a 15% swing back within unionism, which was very critical’. The Bono/Hume/Trimble handshake became the dominant image of the referendum campaign and its importance cannot be overstated, as it was the only major public demonstration of unity between constitutional Irish nationalism

and Ulster unionism during the referendum campaign. The concert stole publicity away from the No camp and the triumphalist hero-worship of the Balcombe Street Four and Michael Stone. In the final phase of the campaign it provided the Yes camp with a positive platform on which to build, and contributed to a clear swing from No to Yes in the final week of the campaign within unionist voters.

4.2 PR strategy and tactics of the anti-Agreement groups

The anti-agreement alliance developed a number of key messages and slogans, two of which were pivotal during the referendum campaign. St Clair McAllister, Director of Communications for the DUP, provides an illuminating insight into the process (and importantly, the thinking) behind the creation of their first core message or key slogan of the campaign *Ulster Says No*:

The slogan came up as a combined effort. I remember we were sitting talking about this and we were saying that we had to tell people that there was nothing wrong with saying No. One thing I put forward - if you analyse it - most of us sitting around that table were all parents... You actually have more often to tell your child No for its own good, more often than you say Yes. No to drugs, No to drink, and people think No is a very non-constructive word. I put forward the case that it was probably a more constructive word than saying Yes.”

McAllister also explained how the second and subsidiary message or theme was arrived at:

When you cut away all the economics etc. what is it that really drives people on? What is it that holds people together? ...Well it's their heart ...by sitting down and analysing the situation and it was very obvious that the heart symbol has been used for a long, long time for various things. It's a symbol of love, a symbol of broken hearts etc. It was also a very acceptable type of symbolism and the obvious thing then was to have a heart-shaped Union Jack with the attendant message 'Have a heart for Ulster.'

During the referendum campaign, heart-shaped lapel pins were sold in the thousands to raise finance for the No campaign. The No camp's key messages were widely regarded by political friends and foes alike as being the best slogans of the referendum campaign, including the SDLP's Director of Communications, Conall McDevitt:

The 'have a heart for Ulster' was the most effective campaign image I have seen in a very long time. It was a very tasteful image in terms of you found it very difficult to be offended even though you didn't agree with it, and it was a very upfront and honest image as well...whoever thought that up did a very good job and their campaign consolidated very well around it.

Although the No camp attempted to soften their image to an extent with the message 'Have a heart for Ulster', this was combined with a strategy of fear which relied upon employing emotive and often apocalyptic language throughout their campaign. This is evident in the DUP's referendum campaign leaflet which informed the reader: 'The Agreement is a staging post to a united Ireland and has come about by abject surrender to IRA/ Sinn Féin. A Yes vote is a vote which the enemies of our Province and those who have surrendered to them are calling for'. It concluded: 'Let the world know that the Ulster people will not be bullied, bribed or butchered into accepting fascist rule. It is suicidal to do otherwise'. St Clair McAllister saw no problems in using such tactics:

I think it's important to use emotive language. It's there, it's part of our being and I have no problem using it. If you're talking about telling lies and using emotive language, then that's a different subject ... I don't believe in telling lies, but I have no problem in having the right position and using emotive language.

Throughout the referendum campaign, the No camp were bolstered by a number of propaganda coups, most notably the release from prison of the Balcombe Street Four and Michael Stone. High-profile UUP members, such as Jeffrey Donaldson MP and Lord Molyneux, also gave impetus to the anti-Agreement campaign after they confirmed they would be abandoning their party and voting No in the forthcoming referendum. However, in the final days of campaigning, just as the pro-Agreement Yes campaign gained a boost from the peace concert which swung support away from the No camp, the anti-Agreement campaign also suffered a public relations disaster when the media captured Robert McCartney UKUP leader publicly haranguing British Prime Minister Tony Blair in the street and subsequently turning on a crowd of women whom he called a rent-a-mob. This event was widely broadcast and gave further ammunition to the pro-Agreement parties about the irrational nature of their opponent's campaign and even brought widespread criticism from fellow anti-Agreement supporters. When the voting figures were counted on the 23rd May the Yes vote was announced at 71.12 per cent. At the count David Trimble proclaimed: 'The people want to go forward... They cannot be held back any longer' (Mc Donald 2000, p.241).

5.0 Analysis and conclusion

Overall it is clear that public relations played an important role in the campaigns for (and indeed against) the Good Friday Agreement, however dialogue or dialogic models of communication as a strategy of bridging division and reaching a common view were largely noticeable by their absence. The SDLP's communication model revolved around

dissemination, as they focused on presenting the Good Friday Agreement's benefits to all. They did not try to claim it was a victory for their party or that it was the solution to all of the problems of division and conflict in Northern Ireland. The UUP bought in professional public relations expertise in the form of Ray Haydn, a Dublin born, Belfast based public relations and media training consultant. He introduced effective, if traditional, communication and media relations strategies, albeit for the UUP they were in many ways radical. Party leader David Trimble was given a 'make-over' to improve his on-camera appearance, media relations was reorganised coherently with clear priorities and Trimble was armed with ammunition for his television battles with the leader of the No campaign, Ian Paisley. The strategy for most of the campaign was to pursue an aggressive advocacy campaign which combated the DUP's argument that the Good Friday Agreement was a defeat for unionists by arguing it was a victory that ensured Northern Ireland's future as part of the UK. Similarly Sinn Féin's primary concern seemed to be to communicate to its own support, thus its main effort was directed into internal communication or securing media coverage which appealed to this constituency. These findings concur with other research which has examined the media strategies of Sinn Féin (Spencer, 2006; Somerville and Purcell, 2011). Much to the chagrin, at times, of the other pro-Agreement parties Sinn Féin organised publicity events designed to confirm to their membership that the Good Friday Agreement had concrete benefits, such as the release of prisoners, to offer them.

Thus, whereas the SDLP embraced the reconciliatory principles of the Agreement and designed their campaign to appeal to both traditions, the UUP and Sinn Féin reverted to selling the Agreement specifically within their own constituencies. As a result, while all three parties were advocating a Yes vote, they were also for most of the referendum campaign operating independently of each other, the fractured nature of the Yes campaigns was set against a singularly strong and emotionally appealing 'No' campaign. However in the end important reconciliatory public relations activities which emphasised a common humanity, most importantly the peace concert with its displays of unity within diversity, contributed to an all-important swing of 15 per cent in support for the Agreement within unionist voters in the final week of campaigning. This was vitally important because the only real hope for the No campaign was to convince enough unionists to vote against the Good Friday Agreement and thus be able to claim that one of the two communities had rejected it and it was unworkable on that basis. It would have been a rejection of the democratic will of the majority community in Northern Ireland and would have been a victory for the anti-Agreement camp. However even this was taken away from the No camp with two key two

referendum exit polls² variously estimating that 55 per cent and 51 per cent of unionist electors voted in favour of the Agreement. Although they refused to engage in the process underpinned by the Good Friday Agreement for a period of time after the referendum eventually the DUP were forced to acknowledge the will of the people and the need to reconcile or accommodate differences. Indeed they are now the largest party in the power sharing coalition government of Northern Ireland.

This paper has presented empirical research on an important historical moment in Northern Ireland's history and arguably the history of both Britain and Ireland. This case study of public relations and its role as a key public opinion tool has allowed the authors to reflect more widely upon the usefulness of public relations/communication models. As we have seen there is plenty of evidence of a heavy investment in PR but little evidence of any attempt to embrace the model of PR which is held up in much contemporary theorising about PR practice as the most ethical and most effective model, the dialogic or two-way symmetrical model. Arguably the SDLP's strategy of open dissemination and reconciliation was the most effective and most ethical PR/Communication approach in the context of winning support for the Good Friday Agreement. This is a significant finding and leads us to consider the usefulness of the concept of dialogue in PR practice, particularly political PR practice where influencing public opinion is the key aim. Organisations which have different ideologies and cultures and indeed who have fundamental disagreements will often find it unrealistic to engage in dialogue. Indeed a 'fake dialogue' arguably produces a 'fake consensus' and ultimately 'fake agreement'. Undoubtedly a case can be made for dialogue as a communication approach in some circumstances and settings (in psychology, in organisational communication and in education perhaps) but whether dialogue is practical or even appropriate in the PR arena it is highly questionable.

As demonstrated in this paper, the dissemination and promotional activities of various actors/political parties during the course of the referendum campaign – in particular the SDLP – were aimed at engaging with the 'other', reconciling differences and agreeing on general principles of humanity. Indeed, it was dissemination approach to PR and communications during the course of the referendum campaign – rather than a dialogic approach – which allowed the Agreement a chance to live, and with this life, create from strong foundations the subsequent conditions whereby the people of Northern Ireland could conceive of a realistic vision of peace.

² The Sunday Times, May 24th, 1998 and RTE May 23rd, 1998

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Saint Hildegard von Bingen's public relations activities

Cylor Spaulding and Melissa D. Dodd
University of Miami, Coral Gables, Florida, USA
Email: c.spaulding@umiami.edu; m.dodd4@umail.miami.edu

Abstract

Purpose: The purpose of this paper is to provide a historical account of the early public relations activities, specifically explicating the concept of the promotion of devotion through art, of Hildegard Von Bingen, a revered 12th century abbess.

Design/methodology/approach: This research employs a historical narrative based solely on secondary research and author interpretation.

Findings: Strong interpretive evidence suggests that many of the activities, including art as a method of devotion, of Hildegard can be described within the framework of what is modern day public relations.

Practical Implications: Implications of this research are applicable in extending the existing timeline for public relations, especially given the lack of a female historical figure apparent in the existing literature.

Originality/value: This research not only identifies the early public relations activities of Hildegard, perhaps the first female public relations practitioner, but also, explores the concept of promoting religious devotion through art, specifically, as a public relations function.

Keywords: Public relations, artful devotion, Hildegard Von Bingen, women in public relations, female practitioner

Paper type: Viewpoint

Introduction

In 1988, Pope John Paul II wrote, "The Church gives thanks for all the manifestations of the *feminine* genius which have appeared in the course of history, in the midst of all peoples and nations; she gives thanks for all the charisms that the Holy Spirit distributes to women in the history of the People of God, for all the victories which she owes to their faith, hope and charity: she gives thanks for all the fruits of feminine holiness" (cited in Benedict XVI, 2010). More than two decades later, this same quote was used by Pope Benedict XVI to describe the devotion of Saint Hildegard Von Bingen (1080-1179), a revered 12th century abbess.

Hildegard is perhaps one of the earliest female practitioners of public relations, most notably through her contribution to religion via artful devotion, i.e. the concept of promoting

religious devotion through art. It has been noted that the traditionally accepted timeline of public relations, which begins with showman P.T. Barnum, is revisionist in nature because it neglects the tactics and strategies employed by early historical figures, more specifically the tactics and strategies of religious institutions and their leaders (Brown, 2003; Tilson, 2006; Croft et al., 2008; Watson, 2008). Thus, messianic communicators such as Saint Paul (Brown, 2003), Saint James (Tilson, 2006), and Saint Swithun (Watson, 2008), and promotional campaigning on behalf of religious institutions, such as for Glastonbury Abbey (Croft et al., 2008), have begun to be examined in a public relations-specific context. However, leaders of religious institutions have traditionally been (and continue to be) male, and hence, historical research has focused only on male figures. This research presents Hildegard as one of the first prominent female figures in the Catholic Church, identifies her early public relations activities, and explores the concept of artful devotion in hopes for inclusion of one of the first female public relations practitioners to the historical record. This is particularly important in that Aldoory (2007) noted that the explicit examination of the perspectives of women in public relations is necessary because not only do women comprise 70 percent of the professionals (Toth, 2001), but also, the inclusion of women's contributions "increases the likelihood of Excellence in public relations" (p. 407). This, in turn, could also allow for a historical role model of sorts for the modern-day female public relations practitioner.

Saint Hildegard von Bingen

To many faithful, Hildegard Von Bingen is referred to as St. Hildegard, though her canonization was never completed. Owing to the fact that she remains one of the most prominent women of her time and within the Catholic Church and the numerous miracles she is credited for, many still refer to her as a saint. Hildegard was well-traveled for a woman of her time; however, her birthplace and final resting place are remarkably close to one another. Although significantly less is known of Hildegard's early life than her later life, historians have largely agreed that she was born into a noble family in Bermersheim (in what is now Germany) around 1098 A.D. (Flanagan, 1990). As the tenth child of the family, Hildegard's destiny had already been determined upon her birth. A tradition of the wealthy and pious of the time, known as oblation, was to tithe a family's tenth child to the Church; thus, Hildegard's family raised her until the age of eight, whereupon she was sent to live with Jutta, a noted ascetic in the region (Maddocks, 2001). Accounts vary as to whether Hildegard joined Jutta in a convent immediately or whether she resided with Jutta on her family estate

until the age of fourteen or fifteen, joining the convent at that time (Maddocks, 2001). Regardless of the controversy surrounding the age she joined the convent, the fact remains that Jutta was the individual most responsible for Hildegard's initial religious education, which created the foundation for her later views and acts of devotion, particularly the emphasis on devotion through art. As a result of Jutta's increasing fame in the region, the monastery to which she was attached as an anchoress became increasingly popular with her would-be disciples, forcing the expansion of the monastery and the creation of a small convent (Flanagan, 1990).

Prior to the expansion of their order into a form of a convent, though, Hildegard and Jutta obeyed the rules laid forth by St. Caesarius of Arles (470-542) and reinforced by the Council of Mainz ruling of 813, which dictated rules of enclosure for holy women, in that nuns must remain enclosed on the grounds of the monastery and even abbesses must be accompanied by and gain approval from a male superior in the Church if they ventured out of the protection of the holy grounds (Maddocks, 2001). Nuns and anchoresses who were attached to a monastery, like Jutta and Hildegard were, would have been walled away from the men in a small cell or a separate building and kept mostly to themselves, approximating burial away from the world to keep themselves in holy contemplation until their death.

Following Hildegard's profession as a nun in 1113, little is known of her time in the growing convent at Disibodenberg until 1136 when Jutta died and Hildegard succeeded her as head of the convent (Flanagan, 1990). This accomplishment alone was not enough to gain her the fame which she has acquired at present. It was not until 1141 that Hildegard began to distinguish herself from other holy women and abbesses of the time. Though she had experienced intense visions since she was a child, at the age of 42, Hildegard also began to receive divine commands to record what she saw (Flanagan, 1990). Despite the commands, she still hesitated to write down her visions, doubting the veracity of them, until she became wracked with a sickness that she interpreted as God's displeasure at her inaction. Modern doctors and scholars have speculated that Hildegard's visions and sufferings were the result of extreme migraines (Maddocks, 2001), but the monks and nuns who surrounded Hildegard saw them as divine visions. Hildegard's first work, *Scivias*, took ten years to complete, but even before its completion, she had already begun to receive significant attention from outside the convent and monastery. Notably, the abbot of Disibodenberg informed the Archbishop of Mainz of Hildegard's work, and he then alerted Pope Eugenius III, who sent a commission to Disibodenberg to learn more about Hildegard and her visions (Flanagan, 1990). After the commission returned to the Pope, who was in attendance at the Synod of

Trier, with portions of *Scivias*, he commanded her to make known any and all of her visions from the Holy Spirit (Flanagan, 1990); this action effectively made her the first woman to be accepted as an authority on doctrine within the Christian church, and approval from the Pope granted her authority over theological issues (Jones and Neal, 2003). Her recognition by the Pope, though, was not achieved without some additional help, which Hildegard recruited herself in the form of St. Bernard of Clairvaux. Though it is possible Hildegard may have achieved papal approval without Bernard's assistance, her friendship with him via letters and Pope Eugenius' role as Bernard's protégé certainly assisted in encouraging the Pope's favorable decision (Maddocks, 2001).

At the same time Hildegard was drafting *Scivias* and gaining papal approval, she was also executing the successful, though difficult, task of separating her convent from the monastery at Disibodenberg, and moving it to nearby Rupertsberg. She managed to achieve this despite the disapproval of the Abbot of Disibodenberg once a local, influential noblewoman intervened on her behalf (Jones and Neal, 2007). Shortly after the move to Rupertsberg, Hildegard completed *Scivias* in 1151, followed by her other two books of visions--*Liber vitae meritorum* (1163) and *Liber divinorum operum* (1174), which was only completed five years before her death in 1179 at the age of 81. While these works were in progress, Hildegard also managed to increase her visibility and message throughout the region through correspondence with nobility in the region and a series of speaking tours throughout the area, which was an unusual thing for a woman to do during that era (Flanagan, 1990). At the same time, the convent at Rupertsberg was expanding rapidly, due to Hildegard's fame, and it was unable to accommodate the increasing number of faithful. Sensing the need to accommodate an ever-growing convent, Hildegard undertook the founding of a new sister convent at Eibingen in 1165 (Flanagan, 1990). The convent at Eibingen is still fully functioning to this day, adding one more facet to Hildegard's legacy.

Though Hildegard's books of visions are her most famous textual works, she has also received renown in new age movements for her *Causae et Curae*, a work on holistic healing, and *Physica*, a text on the healing power of nature, both of which were completed during her period of prolific creativity (1151-1158). Though, many of the cures and science Hildegard writes about in the books, like using a lion's ear to heal deafness (Flanagan, 1990), have been disproved by modern science, the books are revolutionary both as some of the first scientific writings from a woman, their relatively frank discussion of sexuality, and for the practicality of some of the remedies she offers. Despite her prolific writings, Hildegard's renown in modern times owes largely to her vast catalogue of musical compositions. Importantly,

though Hildegard is generally accepted as the author of all of her musical contributions, there is debate among music historians as to whether Hildegard herself physically composed all eighty works or simply lent her name to them to give them more credibility. Similarly, there is debate as to the actual origin of the illustrations in her visions texts, and scholars are unsure whether she illustrated all the texts herself or instructed others on how to portray her vision. Since there is no conclusive proof as of yet that she is not the composer and artist for all of these works, for the purposes of this paper, it is assumed that she composed and illustrated all of the works credited to her.

In fact, she is credited by modern musicologists as the earliest named composer, with compositions beginning around 1147 and continuing through the remainder of her life (Maddocks, 2001). Hildegard's entire musical body of work consists of approximately eighty songs, which are collectively known as *Symphonia armonie celestium revelationum*, and one of the first musical morality plays, *Ordo Virtutum*, which experts have speculated may have been composed for and performed to commemorate the move to Rupertsberg (Maddocks, 2001).

Methodology

The public relations activities, specifically the artful devotion, of Hildegard are best detailed as a historical narrative based solely on secondary research. Although there are risks involved with a sole reliance on secondary sources, i.e. secondary sources treated as fact, the examination of a 12th century historic figure necessitates this type of methodology. Thus, the remainder of this examination notes the limitation of research based on secondary sources, yet cautiously proceeds to identify the public relations activities of one of the earliest female practitioners identified to date with an emphasis on art as a devotional public relations tool.

Public relations activities

Since the concept of public relations in the modern sense of the term did not exist during Hildegard's time, it is unlikely she understood that many of the activities she undertook on behalf of the Church constituted public relations functions. However, Hildegard's work on behalf of the Church, though divinely inspired, adheres to many public relations activities used today in campaigns.

It is important to note that Hildegard's illuminations were possibly nothing more than a front for allowing her to fully release her artistic nature that had been pent up for too long or even to advance her own personal agenda, noting that being not only female, but also, part

of the Church during this Medieval era undoubtedly did not lend to creative exploration or fulfillment of personal desires, for that matter. Regardless, a discussion of the reality of her visions is beyond the scope of this research. Thus, despite the underlying reasons for her visions, be it God's will or otherwise, Hildegard propelled herself to a person of great reputation within the Catholic Church through her visions, first in the form of relationship building via persuasive letter writing to key opinion leaders.

In 1146 or 1147, Hildegard sought ecclesiastical approval of her visions, writing to the influential Bernard of Clairvaux (later, St. Bernard), indicating that only he, as a "certain monk" was privy to the secret of her visions" (Baird, 2006), thus beginning her continuous and influential letter writing campaigns for the promotion of herself and her convent. As she awaited a response from Bernard, Hildegard subsequently wrote to Pope Eugenius III, emphasizing the shortcomings of her gender while seeking papal approval for her writings. The following excerpt best explicates the persuasive nature of Hildegard's letter writing campaign, specifically in leveraging her gender and God's will while flattering the pope:

O gentle father, poor little woman though I am, I have written those things to which God saw fit to teach me in a true vision... Therefore, I send this letter to you now, as God has instructed me. And my spirit desires that the Light of Light shine in you and purify your eyes and arouse your spirit to your duty concerning my writings, so that your soul may be crowned, which will be pleasing to God. In their instability, many people, those wise in worldly things, disparage these writings of mine, criticizing me, a poor creature formed from a rib, ignorant of philosophical matters.... (Baird, 2006, p. 22).

Indeed, Hildegard strategically and persuasively targeted those key men of influence who could afford her the support she needed to proceed with her art. Likewise, the strategic targeting of formal opinion leaders and/or those who could have potentially been opponents in Hildegard's case are traditional public relations strategies used as endorsement and/or to initiate dialogue with key stakeholders. It is important to also note that Hildegard had previously sent the Pope some of her writings for his approval, the modern equivalent of sending product samples to opinion leaders in order to generate word-of-mouth marketing. Baird (2006) states, "And, even before the completion of [her first work in 1151], her reputation had spread abroad, apparently by word of mouth, and she had become widely recognized as prophet and seer" (p. 23). Hildegard found fame and a widespread reputation from her relationship with these formal opinion leaders, the celebrities of their time. It is noted that even today church leaders remain formal opinion leaders who have the potential to

influence everything from consumer purchases to deciding who to vote for in elections. Further, communication and relationship-building with the papacy could be considered medieval media and/or government relations, as the majority of “mass” texts produced were religious in nature and published and distributed by the Church.

It is likely the validation of Hildegard’s visions was a public relations tactic on behalf of both the abbot of Disibodenberg, where Hildegard served as the head of the convent within the monastery, and Pope Eugenius III. Both the abbot and the pope could see the obvious benefit the Church would receive from having a visionary within its walls, but the abbot certainly understood the increased attention a seer was likely to garner his abbey, which also meant an increase in visitors and donations. Though Hildegard could have published her visions without papal approval, she would have risked being labeled a heretic and neglected to gain the significant endorsement of legitimacy the Pope lent to her visions. Upon papal approval, Hildegard had effectively become the first woman to be accepted as an authority on doctrine within the Christian church with authority over theological issues (Jones and Neal, 2003). Though, as has been mentioned, the Pope may have endorsed Hildegard without St. Bernard’s intervention on her behalf, her simultaneous search for approval and assistance in persuading the Pope, illustrated her resourcefulness in gaining an influential endorsement, which is similar to what happens in modern public relations campaigns when key influential endorsements are sought for products or causes.

Though Hildegard used letter writing campaigns as a tool to gain endorsements for her role as a seer, they also became an effective tool in rallying additional support to her causes, Hildegard’s letter writing campaigns did not always produce the desired results, particularly when her young protégé, Richardis von Stade, was named abbess of another religious establishment against Hildegard’s wishes. This initiated a significant epistolary effort on Hildegard’s part, using both her effective persuasive writing techniques, incorporating a prophetic tone, to convince Richardis’ family, local nobility and ecclesiastical authorities (including the Pope) of the importance of Richardis to the Rupertsberg convent; meeting with little success, however, the letters quickly shifted toward a more apocalyptic tone, particularly noting how God would not look favorably on the movement of Richardis and could possibly punish the authorities who moved her (Jones and Neal, 2007). Hildegard’s letter to Richardis’ mother, the Margravine Richardis Von Stade is an excellent example of her employment of persuasion mixed with divine threats. The letter begins by saying, “I beseech and urge you not to trouble my soul so grievously that you make me weep bitter tears, and not to lacerate my heart with terrible wounds on account of my most beloved

daughter Richardis and Adelheid” (Baird, 2006, p. 41), but ends with the veiled threat “...beware not to become the ruin of their souls, for, afterward, although you would not wish it, you would grieve bitter groans and tears” (Baird, 2006, p. 41). Though good practitioners today would not employ veiled threats to journalists or influencers for fear of reprisals, it is evident that Hildegard felt secure in her status as an ecclesiastical authority to make grand proclamations about divine reprisals, and she was often taken seriously. In fact, in a letter from the Pope, he even acknowledges her influence and fame as a divine authority, saying “We rejoice, my daughter, and we exult in the Lord, because your honorable reputation has spread far and wide that many people regard you as ‘the odour of life unto life’ [II Cor 2.16]...” (Baird, 2006, p. 45). The Pope was not alone in his regard for Hildegard, and as she worked diligently to spread her reputation and that of her convent, she received letters from numerous tortured souls seeking her advice, and even bishops and other Church authorities turned to Hildegard for advice on issues affecting their and their loved ones salvation. In some sense, these letters written to Hildegard by citizens and Church authorities are the equivalent of fans writing to their favorite celebrity and actually receiving a personal response, which can only serve to spread her reputation as the recipient will inevitably share her advice and letter with those close to them. Not only was Hildegard actively engaged in an epistolary campaign with Church members and average citizens, but her letters to the secular celebrities (royalty) of the time were particularly heeded as they sought a dialogue with the famous Hildegard. Letters between Hildegard and Frederick Barbarossa, emperor of Germany, Eleanor of Aquitaine and King Henry II of England have been uncovered, but they are not the only nobility with whom Hildegard corresponded, though they are the most well-known to modern audiences. Hildegard’s authority allowed her to speak to the nobles in ways many others would not have dared, including scolding Frederick for acting like a boy or madman, but this familiarity only began after their initial friendly exchange whereupon Hildegard sent him a letter congratulating him on his ascension to the throne (Baird, 2006).

Though her letters were significant in raising her profile throughout the region, Hildegard’s other activities, displayed her keen insight into the publicity machine by understanding the need for face to face interactions and events to capitalize on her reputed talents. For example, Hildegard became aware of a case of demonic possession in a woman named Sigewiza when the abbot of the local monastery asked for Hildegard’s advice in the case, since he was unable to exorcise the demon (Phillips and Boivin, 2007). Hildegard requested that Sigewiza stay at her convent, so the nuns would be able to watch over her and work on curing her illness; Hildegard took that opportunity to announce to the community at

the Festival of Maria that Sigewiza would be healed forty days after the festival (Phillips and Boivin, 2007). Hildegard used the forty days to prepare for the healing and then conducted the successful exorcism on the fortieth day, whereupon Hildegard fell ill for forty days and wrote letters to her Archbishop detailing the success of the treatment (Phillips and Boivin, 2007). Though in all likelihood, Hildegard did truly cure Sigewiza of her illness through the extensive care she provided during her stay at the convent, what is most important to understand from a public relations perspective is Hildegard's opportunistic use of a community-wide festival to announce a great potential accomplishment, which encouraged the community to both become involved and to spread the news of Hildegard's achievement should it be successful. There seems to truly be no other reason to announce the healing in such a public forum, when she could have accomplished the same end result with only the quiet assistance of the other sisters in the convent. Similarly, after the illness Hildegard experienced following the curing, her immediate missive to the Archbishop declaring the curing a success seems necessary only to further cement her reputation as a revered figure in the Church. The case of Sigewiza is not the only one Hildegard undertook, however, it is particularly illustrative of her ability to publicize her own reputation and abilities and, consequently, gain significant publicity and donors for her convent.

While Hildegard was able to capitalize on certain events like healings and turn them into avenues for public relations, she also was quite skilled in the use of a speaker's bureau as a means of furthering awareness of her own abilities. During her lifetime, Hildegard completed four speaking tours of the Rhineland, as well as visits to several other abbeys and to the court of Frederick Barbarossa. Though to modern people, these travels may seem insignificant, for the time they were a significant undertaking, particularly because the Church did not encourage monks or nuns to leave their abbeys and convents and the devotional activities undertaken there. Additionally, the teachings of St. Paul prevented women from preaching, so for Hildegard to disregard these teachings was an unusual step for a nun, but it was likely she felt her status within the Church overrode that dictate, and that others needed to hear her revelations from God. Hildegard's first journey in 1158 took her to destinations along the rivers Mosel, Main and Rhine; she went south to Lorraine for her second journey in 1160; the period between 1161 and 1163 saw Hildegard again travel down the Rhine to monasteries and on to Cologne and Werden/Ruhr; and her last trip when she was in her seventies took her to three additional monasteries in the region (Maddocks, 2001). While on these tours of Germany, Hildegard mainly offered powerful prophetic sermons to both the Church clergy in attendance and to the assembled public that attended, and she also

made key appearances at notable religious buildings such as the new cathedral in Bamberg was under construction (Maddocks, 2001). Hildegard's sermons during her tour stops focused largely on evil spreading throughout the Church, in particular the clergy who had sought power and wealth, and condemnation of heretical sects that were cropping up in Europe, and which adherents to St. Paul's teachings saw as a portent for the coming of the end of the world (Maddocks, 2001). These sermons served to significantly increase Hildegard's profile both in the Rhineland and in France. There is documentation of letters from communities that were not along Hildegard's tour routes that had heard of the sermons and requested copies for their own use, and the abbot of the monastery she visited at Kircheim even requested a copy of the sermon she gave there so he and his priests would forever be able to look upon her words (Maddocks, 2001). As the most intrepid female religious figure of her time, Hildegard certainly recognized the importance of her appearances both to reaffirming faith in the Church through her open critique of certain aspects of it and to her personal legacy. Hildegard's open critique of certain figures within the Church, primarily for engaging in the practice of simony, had the potential to serve as a reaffirmation of faith in the Church for citizens who had become disillusioned by corruption in the clergy, so for them to discover that other Church insiders were actively campaigning against the practice may have assisted the faith of those becoming disillusioned. With regard to her speaking tours, what is important to note from a public relations perspective is that Hildegard managed to accomplish exactly what executives search for when they embark on their own speaker's bureaus: word-of-mouth buzz, leading to a higher profile for the individual in question, particularly among a larger audience of those not in attendance. In a sense as well, Hildegard became a tool for others publicity campaigns. Toward her later years when she was conducting her tours, all historical accounts point to the fact that Hildegard had become so well-known, she achieved celebrity status in her own right, and was requested to give those endorsements she so sought in her earlier years as a visionary. In fact, Elisabeth of Schönau, a renowned seer and visionary who reached prominence slightly after Hildegard, is known to have turned to the older abbess for advice on dealing with her gifts, and several letters of their correspondence still exist.

As her accomplishments across the theological and art world gained prominence, Hildegard's reputation steadily increased, especially with regard to her accomplishments as a woman during the Medieval Era. Arguably, however, the most important acts she facilitated as a public relations practitioner were those of artful devotion, which both publicized the Church and Christianity and left a living legacy of her over the centuries.

Artful devotion

From the beginnings of humanity, we find the comingling of religion and art. In fact, some scholars posit that historically, art was religion (and vice versa). (See Parker, 2005). For example, ancient art forms such as cave carvings, temples and shrines pay homage to ancient divinities. Today, art as a form of religious devotion continues, as can be seen in mass-produced prints and relics and modern architecture in places of worship. Tilson (2011) applies the term artful devotion to this concept of “art as a tool for advancing some moral, religious, political, or psychological purpose” (Schamber, 1991, cited in Tilson, 2011, p. 189) and/or the use of arts to promote devotion to a holy figure or spirituality.

This idea of art as a tool can be interpreted as a form of public relations methodology as well; for though art in the religious context is meant to outwardly display practitioners’ faith, it also serves the purpose of disseminating messages to an audience. Those who create the art rarely confine it to their own eyes, typically because they feel the need to spread their chosen deity’s message as they see it. In this sense, artful devotion can be equated to the tools in the public relations practitioner’s arsenal. In the same way a press release or media advisory may be distributed to facilitate the sales of a new product or attendance at an event, a piece of devotional art can communicate the creator’s message to outside audiences, and can do so for centuries to come. Though, the message received by the audience may be slightly different than the originator’s, the devotional art will still serve the purpose of maintaining the visibility of the chosen religion, whether to a receptive or hostile audience.

As a form of devotion, the arts can very broadly be divided into a few general categories: music, architecture, film, and mass-produced. Examples in music include bells, Gregorian chant, vocal singing, and instruments, while examples in architecture include cave carvings, statues, and buildings. More modern examples in film refer to motion pictures that seek to promote devotion or morality, such as *Schindler’s List* and *Hotel Rwanda* (just to name a couple), and examples in mass-produced art refer to oil paintings turned mass-created prints and replicated relics. Thus, from 7th century Gregorian chants and early cave drawings at Maharashtra, India, which has been designated a World Heritage Site, to the recent 2011 “Vatican Splendors: A Journey Through Faith and Art” (<http://vaticansplendors.com>) exhibition at the Fort

Lauderdale Museum of Art and entire modern orchestras such as the National Cathedral Choir in Washington, D.C.

<http://www.nationalcathedral.org/arts/index.shtml>) or the Mormon Tabernacle Choir of Utah (<http://mormontabernaclechoir.org>), as well as thousands more, devotion to religion through art spans centuries to the earliest artistic pieces known to mankind. Indeed, then it is clear that, “there remains in human beings a deep hunger for images, sound, pictures, music, and myth, (Stone, 2000, p. 4) and there is a transcendent value in the language of beauty, which speaks to man’s intelligence and heart (Benedict, 2006, p. 14) in an approach to truth mediated through the expression of art or of history and culture (Bertone, 2006, p. 14)” (cited in Tilson, 2011).

In Christianity, artful devotion has largely taken the form of music and religious artwork. Hildegard, in particular, was one of the most prolific adherents to artful devotion in the history of the Catholic Church, which also made her one of its most prolific public relations practitioners. Her artful devotion came in the form of the previously mentioned more than 70 original musical compositions, more than 8 books (including illustrations), 70 poems, and a liturgical drama, *Ordo Virtutum*, which incorporated significant portions of original music. Through her art, Hildegard was able to form her own complex understandings of her religion and beliefs and disseminate them in a form that may be palatable to even non-believers, thus creating extremely effective and evergreen public relations tools. According to arts writer, Peter Catalano (1998), Hildegard’s art “...urged a spiritual awakening marked by an ‘outpouring of the prophetic spirit’ in which art and spirituality would awaken people from their slumber” (Radical Features section, para. 4). “Awakening” people to see God in everything and everyone is the basic idea behind Hildegard’s music and poetry, artwork and books of visions, thus “awakening” can also imply raising awareness and generating publicity.

Prior to the completion of her first work in 1151, Hildegard’s reputation preceded her: She had, at that point, “against all odds, gained the approval of the pope, accompanied by the encouragement to continue with her writing” (Baird, 2006, p.23). Between 1141 and 1152, Hildegard wrote three volumes of her visions (*Scivias*, *Liber Vitae Meritorum*, and *Liber Divinorum Operum*) of which *Scivias* is the most well-known and widely read, and gained papal approval from Pope Eugenius III to continue recording her visions as being divinely inspired (Flanagan, 1995). Combined, the three books of visions become a trilogy, concerning creation, redemption, and salvation.

The books of visions, though devotional and illuminated with numerous miniatures, actually could be seen as a method of laying the basis for ideas her musical compositions attempt to express via the human voice, which she understands to be a holy tool for the worship of God. Similarly to her visions that she recorded, Hildegard composed her music via “audial vision” and sang what came to her in these visions (Catalano, 1998), which means that Hildegard saw her music as an extension of her messages from God that she simply put into a more devotional form. Some music scholars have even noted that Hildegard’s actual compositions are written in ways uncharacteristic of composers of the time in terms of their demand on singers’ vocal ability. As Catalano (1998) points out, Hildegard believed that words true meaning would be revealed to singers and their souls via the bodily vibrations the music created within them and Hildegard scholar Matthew Fox agrees, saying “...I have observed that everyone who sings her music either gets high, faints, or leaves the class. Hildegard is not just talking about body and spirit; in her music, she brings spirit out of body” (cited in Catalano, 1998, para. 3). The spiritual experience that Fox references is speculated to be the exact intention Hildegard had when she created her masterworks of music, and when she wrote *Ordo Virtutum*, which mingles her spiritual music with a morality tale about resisting temptation and redeeming oneself in the eyes of God. The most revealing fact about Hildegard’s thoughts regarding the role of music become obvious in *Ordo Virtutum*, when one notes that Devil is the only role in the entire play which is entirely spoken; this point alone clearly illustrates that Hildegard viewed music and the human voice as the most meaningful way of showing devotion to God—having the Devil sing would be a blasphemous act for someone as spiritual as Hildegard.

Though Hildegard may not have initially intended her acts of artful devotion to promote the Church and Christianity, this is exactly the purpose they ended up serving. On some level Hildegard understood the power of art as a tool, since her references to God striking her down with an illness until she recorded her visions, imply that she recognized the purpose of writing her visions was for dissemination to others in some form. Hildegard certainly did not discourage her works from being shared and even provided copies of her sermons to those who requested them, and encouraged the distribution of her books of visions.

Though Hildegard’s method of artful devotion may not be the way many people would choose to express their devotion to their faith, for her it meant the most direct connection with God that she could achieve. Hildegard may have wanted others to access her works and find God in them, but no one will find the identical God that she found in them—

the simple theories of communication evidence that this would never happen. Another person's experience may be very close to the creator's, but ultimately no other person will experience a devotional artwork in the exact way the creator does, no matter how geared for a mass audience the work may be intended to be. Some religious leaders might see this concept of interpretation as a negative, but in actuality this is what allows humanity and religion to evolve and progress. In this capacity to initiate new lines of thought and create a dialogue around devotional art, the concept of artful devotion helps to progress religious institutions, though perhaps in ways they never anticipated.

First female practitioner/conclusion

For all of her numerous accomplishments, including her more secular ones in the form of her books on nature and healing, Hildegard remains unknown to many people, unlike some of her male contemporaries. Hildegard scholar and author of *Illuminations of Hildegard Von Bingen*, Matthew Fox, stated "If Hildegard had been a man, she would be well known as one of the greatest artists and intellectuals the world has ever seen" (cited in Anderson, 2010, para. 20). Perhaps, this parallels research surrounding the glass ceiling and salary gap for women in public relations (See Toth, 2001 and Aldoory, 2007). Importantly, from a strictly historical approach, primarily men comprise the accepted timeline for the public relations profession. Thus, Hildegard represents a highly achieved woman of her time who performed various public relations activities on behalf of the Catholic Church (relationship building with key opinion leaders and stakeholders, reputation building strategies and tactics, dialogic communication, and artful devotion, in addition to various public relations tactics). But also, she can now be regarded as one of the first female public relations practitioners and a historical role model for modern women in public relations as we see that she was able to break through what could be considered the metaphorical *brick* ceiling of her time.

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The practice of public relations in building national unity: A historical view of the Kingdom of Thailand (1237-1932)

Napawan Tantivejakul & Prichaya Manmin
Chulalongkorn University, Bangkok, Thailand
Email: napawan.t@gmail.com; Prichaya_manmin@yahoo.com

Introduction

Thailand is located in the center of the Southeast Asian mainland. It was known as The Kingdom of Siam until year 1939 and the name has been changed to “Thailand” which means the land of free ever since. The Thai people are mostly homogeneous even though consisting of different origins. Thai people are bound by a common language (Thai) and their faith in Buddhism. The country has long promoted freedom of religion, and all religions are actively in practice. In addition, Thailand is the only nation in Southeast Asia that has never been colonized by the western powers (World Factbook, 2011). Going back to early thirteenth century, there were a number of tribes occupying the land where Thailand is now located. The Thai tribe in the north firstly established a small state that later became the first Thai kingdom, Sukhothai. Sukhothai was established in 1237. During Sukhothai Era, Thai alphabet was created, elements of Thai fine arts and architecture emerged. After the decline of Sukhothai, Ayutthaya came to power in 1350 and continued to be the center of Southeast Asia Powers for more of 400 years. Later, Thonburi was established as a new capital of Thailand, ruled by only one King - King Taksin, then the capital was moved to Bangkok or Krungthep (Plainoi, 2010). Prior to the Kingdom’s transition to present-day constitutional monarchy, Thailand was governed as an absolute monarchy in which the king had full power and control over the country in positive ways.

The royal institution has been respected and admired by all Thai citizens. The king, through his power, formed national unity by establishing a unified ideology and perspective (Sattayanurak, 2005). From the public relations point of view, the king ideology was built and publicized through various communication tools that helped maintain and reinforce the importance of Thai's Monarch and religion in building the nation. This paper is aimed to express the appreciation to the Thai Kings’ wisdom and great ability in using public relations in leading and ruling the country and maintain national unity, identity and independence through time.

According to modern public relations perspective, the PR practice in Thailand just evolved in 1932 when the country's political system changed from absolute monarchy to constitutional monarchy (Ekachai and Komolsevin, 2004). Nevertheless, this paper is an attempt to review public relations practice used before the democratic monarch. In this paper, the concept of public relations hold refers to the communication for earning publics' or people's understanding, and acceptance as well as ways of making people believe and support the monarchy based on the interest of nation. Consequently, the practice of public relations carried out by the Thai kings, as rulers and communicators during the four eras of Thai history or the eras of absolute monarchy; the Sukhothai Era, Ayutthaya Era, Thonburi Era, and Rattanakosin Era will be reviewed. However, the scope of this paper is limited to public relations for building national unity in order to serve 2 purposes which are maintaining peace and preserving independence of the country during the western's imperialism time. Public relations for national unity during times of war and invasion by neighboring countries are not included in this paper.

It can be seen that Thai kings used various public relations communication, activities and events in embracing the people's faith and reinforcing the nation's unity all through those 694 hundred years of absolute monarchy. To communicate to their citizens during all four eras, the Kings used religious and faith as means of performing unity of the nation. For the fourth era of Rattanakosin, the nation was struggling with the attempts of the European countries to prevail the Thai Kingdom. Thai Kings wisely utilized various types of communication, activities and events, which could be inferred as tools of modern public relations, to communicate with the European stakeholders to keep the freedom of the kingdom. The use of communication tools to achieve unity among Thai stakeholders and to maintain the good relationships with European stakeholders will be reviewed based on Grunig's four models of public relations ; namely, Press Agency/Publicity Model, Public-Information Model, Two-Way Asymmetric Model, and Two-way Symmetric Model.

National unity, national identity and the Thai king

National unity is about cultural orientations, situations and institutions, and how individuals are brought together to cooperate towards the same national goals (Emerson, 1966, cited in Tyler and Kent, 2006, p. 343). National identity refers to a group of people with the national goals sharing the recognizable distinction. National identity is fundamental in developing national unity. Therefore, in order to create loyalty and unity in the country, national identity

should first be established. The shared meanings need to be socially constructed. Once formed, national unity and identity can be developed and maintained through relationship building tools, which are considered to be the main factor in building a nation. Because building a nation is a dynamic human process, and public relations methods can create, maintain and change relations between citizens, rulers and other involved individuals (Tyler and Kent, 2006).

National identity, as defined by the National Identity Committee of Thailand, is the unique characteristics of a country, which include the citizens, land, autonomy and sovereignty, government and control, religion, king, culture and integrity (Thepsittha, 2008). These characteristics are categorized into four main institutions; namely, nation, religion, monarchy and democracy (The National Identity Office of Thailand, 2011). Since this paper focuses on national cooperation during pre-democracy period, only the three prior institutions which are nation, religion and monarchy will be discussed.

The Thai monarchy is accepted as an extremely significant institution in Thai society. The King has brought stability into the country, been a shield to protect the country from potential foreign invasion. He is a leader who promotes education, continuously updates ruling system and develops on Thai cultures, literature and arts. In addition, the monarchy is a symbol of unity, holding on together, and the support for national and religious institutions. The King is Buddhist and administers his kingship based on Buddhist teachings while accepts and supports other religions at the same time (The National Identity Office of Thailand, 2011). The king of Thailand, as the country's ruler, is regarded as the one who maintains and looks after the national institution, religion and monarchy (Suksamran, 1999). Communication and public relations is, therefore, essential to the co-existence of the three aforementioned institutions.

Public relations as communication tools and Grunig's four models

The term “communication” is associated with the concept of building national identity and unity. It is identified as an important part of nation-building program whereas communication channels are referred as tools that help unify citizens together, especially in times of crisis or threats (Taylor and Kent, 2006). In this modern time, various techniques or tools of public relations were utilized for a communication campaign; such as, interpersonal communication, art, literature, speeches, opinion leaders, staged events, publicity and others. These techniques are actually basic human communications that have been used to persuade

people to accept the authority of government or rulers since ancient time (Wilcox and Cameron, 2006). The analysis of the communication objectives and natures (one-way or two-way) is based on Grunig's four models of public relations (Grunig and Hunt, 1984). Firstly, Press Agency/Publicity Model is a public relations model that aims for propaganda function. Partial or half-true information is used in this model. The communication nature is one-way. Secondly, Public-Information Model is the public relations model that aims to disseminate the information not needed to be for persuasion purposes with one-way communication nature. Thirdly, the Two-Way Asymmetric Model, similar to Press Agency/ Publicity Model, is the public relations model aiming for persuasion, however, scientifically. Two-way communication with feedback is used to change attitude effectively. The communication is in favor of the organization. Therefore, this model uses one-sided communication. Fourthly, the Two-way Symmetric Model is the public relations that aims for mutual understanding between the organization and the publics. Feedback is also important in this model with two-way communication in nature.

The study of Ekachai and Komolsevin (2004) stated that during the beginning of democracy in Thailand, the public relations practiced by the Thai government was the press relations/ publicity model aiming at informing and persuading people to accept the westernized democratic system. Tracing back, in Thai History of Public Relations, the beginning of PR in Thailand was the inscription of King Ramkhamhaeng of the Great of Sukhothai era (Lapirattankul, 1994). Since the beginning of PR, our reviews of related works have shown lack of evidence of PR history from Sukhothai Era until the beginning of mass communication in Thailand. Moreover, most PR research based on Grunig's four models is found only in the recent studies of public relations organization within the area of communication management in different contexts and countries using the quantitative methods (Grunig, Grunig, and Dozier, 2002). Even though Grunig's four models were typically used to describe ways in which contemporary public relations is practiced by the press and practitioners (Grunig and Hunt, 1984), due to the fact that Thailand did not have the press until King Rama III of Rattanakosin Era (Lapirattankul, 2006), this study is, therefore, an attempt to employ Grunig's four models as a broad frame of analysis in categorizing public relations practices used in the past based on the concept of public relations earlier referred as "the communication for earning publics' or people's understanding, and acceptance," the purposes of communication – to persuade or to perform- and its natures of communication flow – one way or two way.

Public relations for national unity during each era

This paper studies the use of public relations for national unity during different eras of Thai history prior to the transition towards constitutional monarchy, beginning from the Sukhothai era (1237-1438), Ayutthaya era (1350-1767), Thonburi era (1767-1782) then the Rattanakosin era prior to the transition towards constitutional monarchy (1782-1932). In order to better understand each era and period, the paper begins with brief explanation on the background and geography of each era followed by the detailed discussion of public relations models and communication tools used by each monarchy in creating national unity in the country. The discussion of each era's stakeholders will also be provided.

Sukhothai era: Communicating through stone inscription and literature

Sukhothai Kingdom (1237-1438 A.D.) was centrally located in the northern part of the Chao Phraya River. The majority of people during this period earned a living through agriculture. The community had a leader and had close relationships with upper organizations. The system during this time reflected a *patriarchal society* in which a large number of people lived together like an extensive family. The leader, who was called the *Father* (Pho Khun in Thai), ensured the well-being and security of the people. After the reign of King Ramkamhaeng, the Khmer system of government was adapted. The status of the leader was gradually changed into godlike king in later years (Srising, 1975). Relationships with other countries were considered limited during this period. Contacts were only made with neighboring countries, such as Ceylon (Sri Lanka), Mon ethnic group, Malays, Khmer, China and Thai Lanna.

People during the Sukhothai period were given freedom to choose their sources of income and access to justice (Piyapan, 1995). Though a small community, they believed and trusted the system and structure. People believed in spirits and Buddhism played a major role on their ways of life (Pannarong, 1985). In Sukhothai period, national identity and King's ideology as *Dhamma-Raja* (righteous king) were introduced. There were two kings during this period who were widely accepted for their intelligence and their abilities which influenced national unity. The first was King Ramkhamhaeng the Great who created the Thai alphabet as a national identity and the means of communication. The other is King Lithai used religion, ideology and beliefs in connecting different cities together. (Pramualwit, 1974; Maekarat, 1989).

Evidence of Thai alphabet, image-building tools and Dhamma-raja in the inscription of King Ramkhamhaeng the Great

The Inscription of King Ramkhamhaeng the Great, discovered during the fourth reign of the Rattanakosin era, was a green rectangular stone with the tip in curve. It was believed to be the first alphabet of Thai. The inscriptions were on all four sides of the stone and were divided into three parts as follows. The first part explains the background and duties of the king, beginning from the time he was born until he was enthroned. The second part discusses various events which include the custom, culture and traditions of Sukhothai city, such as the construction of Wat Mahathat (Mahathat temple) and the creation of the Thai alphabet. The third part is about the vicinity of Sukhothai, as well as an admiration of King Ramkhamhaeng the Great's honor and his kingship (Jitrapapas, 2009). Although the writings are only 124 lines long, the contents cover various academic areas which include law, political science, economy, social science, history, geography, linguistics, literature, religion and traditions (Chulalongkorn University, 1984). The inscriptions were created as a means to admire the works of King Ramkhamhaeng the Great which follows the principles of public relations in terms of image building as a rightful ruler for the king. As Pongsripien (2009) stated, the inscriptions were "intended to inform the public on the superior qualifications of the King as a ruler, and his knowledge in both the physical and spiritual worlds." The inscriptions are good words for kingship and portray the image of King Ramkhamhaeng the Great as the ideal leader. The events inscribed on the stone served as an evidence to later generations to understand how national identity was created through the Thai alphabet and communication channel that was used between King Ramkhamhaeng the Great and the citizens (Srising, 1975).

Dhamma-Raja means a ruler who follows the Buddhist teachings of righteous in mind (Kalyanamitra, 2007). According to the inscriptions, communication in this patriarchal society enabled the king to directly deliver Buddhist teachings to the people. A stone board was placed in the forest for monks to pray and give sermons. This was a regular activity practiced in the society. Occasionally, the King would be the one to pass on Buddhist teachings to the public (Na Bangchang, 1990). Not only did the Dhamma-Raja show in the inscription, it also strongly showed in the portrayal of Thai King as *Bodhisattva* in King Lithai period.

Worship of the kingship as bodhisattva and literature: “the Traibhumikatha”

The King Lithai period was the time when the king was considered the *Bodhisattva* who led people to pass the cycle of birth and death, and kept the country at peace. The King used religious belief to combine territories and create relations with nearby countries and involved parties, including the citizens, leaders of each city or Khun and neighboring countries. Religion and beliefs were the main channel used in the strategy of connecting communities from different cities through religious teachings and beliefs (Maekarat, 1989). The strategy included teachings about the history of Lord Buddha which focused more on miracles; emphasis on building foundation was shifted from intelligence towards faith; and teachings on the acts of doing good and bad, and how it would affect reincarnation. These teachings were expected to develop conscience and the fear to sin in people so that people would be able to distinguish between right and wrong, which was important in Thai society (Na Bangchang, 1990).

Most importantly, the Three Worlds of Phra Ruang or “The Traibhumikatha,” considered the first book in Thai literature was written during this time (Supasophon, 1962), and it is also the first holy book in Thai language that portrayed Buddhism in terms of earth science (National Telecommunication Commission, 2010). The construction of religious sites and Buddha’s footprint, ordination and royal writing of the Three Worlds of Phra Ruang helped promote King Lithai to be the opinion leader in doing good and developing cities to become one main stable land of the Sukhothai era (Cheykeewong, 2010). The book attempted to convey the king's rightful ruling through dharma and to instill the image of Buddhist King to the public (Maekarat, 1989). It helped emphasize King Lithai’s being an excellent leader in three ways: firstly, the king’s intuition and in-depth knowledge on religion, secondly, King Lithai’s leadership and his ability to combine works from philosophers and monks, and thirdly, practices and principles of heaven and hell in describing the relationship of people in society.

From the public relations tools above, the king was allowed to be established an ideology as the Bodhisattva and to effectively govern the people through Buddhist teachings through the literature, the Three Worlds of Phra Ruang. This created strong followers of Buddhism and resulted in the living in peace and cooperation among people. The people lived in unity bringing stability to the land of Sukhothai. The King’s method of using Buddhist teachings in governing and communicating with the people built a strong foundation

for people to trust in the Thai monarchy system and religion.

Evidence from inscriptions helped understand the flow of communication process in Sukhothai as a top-down communication, from the king to the citizens. The communication promoted the kings into becoming an opinion leader and ruler called Dhamma-Raja through literature as well as Buddhist teachings illustrated the press agency/publicity model. As stated in Pongsripien (2009), the locals were allowed to pass complaints to the King by ringing the bell in front of the palace. Sometimes, the administrators were called upon to listen to these complaints. The king's consent to hear and discuss with citizens and leaders along with his encouragement of two-way communication with stakeholders; namely, the citizens, administrators and governors of surrounding cities can be the evidence showing an exchange of information and interaction among the people, leaders of cities, and the king which can be typified as the Two-way Asymmetric model.

Ayutthaya era: Public relations through literature and religious ceremonies

The Ayutthaya era (1350-1767) existed for 417 years. It was established in 1350 and was destroyed by the Burmese military in 1767 (Sukapanich, 1980). This era was a long-lasting era and was ruled by 33 kings from 5 dynasties. The Ayutthaya area has greater geographic advantage over other areas because it is located where three rivers meet, namely Chao Phraya river, Pa Sak river, and Lopburi river. Ayutthaya is like an island in which it is surrounded by water. Therefore, the Ayutthaya area has access to both agriculture and the sea. Its access to the sea enables greater trade with other countries, as a result, it was considered one of the wealthiest areas in Southeast Asia (Kasetsiri, 2003).

The Ayutthaya territory covers a vast area in which the population was large and the ruling system was complicated. Therefore, people were categorized into two classes: the ruler and the ruled. The group of rulers consisted of the king, members of the royal family, nobles and abbots. Those who were ruled were divided into two sub-classes. The first was general citizens while the other group comprised of slaves (Piyapan, 1995). In addition, the system of governance in Ayutthaya was *Deva-Raja* (Faculty of Humanities and Social Science, n.d.) which was adapted from Brahmanism called the principles of divine kingship. This type of system establishes the king as a divine being, not an ordinary person. This system inhibited the king to associate with civilians and ordinary persons.

The king introduced Brahmanism into the kingdom as a tool of promoting his political power through divine kingship (Na Bangchang, 1990). This system was passed on

throughout the kingdom through various Brahmin activities, literature and other strategies. This way, the king possessed ultimate power and received the highest level of respect, comparable to a god. Important public relations tools that were used in promoting divine kingship throughout the Ayutthaya era were the poetry on giving oath to the king, the drinking of the water of allegiance, and historical records. One of the most well-known kings during that era was King Trilokanart who, besides transforming the ruling system which lasted until the Rattanakosin era and establishing the ranking system in which the ranking of nobility and legal system were changed, had strong faith and religious belief and used Buddhism to create a unified country by merging the territories of Sukhothai with that of Ayutthaya.

Lilit Ongkanchangnam and religious activities as means of communication for retaining autonomy

Lilit Ongkanchangnam is a Thai literary work in which the author and the exact time it was written is unknown. It is believed to be written during the beginning of the Ayutthaya period. This poem is often used during the drinking of the water of allegiance, a ceremony to demonstrate loyalty to the king, which takes place twice a year, specifically the third day of lunar month 5 and the thirteenth day of lunar month 10. This ceremony had been practiced from the Ayutthaya era through the Rattanakosin period until it was changed during the transition from an absolute monarchy to a constitutional monarchy in 1932. The Drink an Oath of Allegiance is a royal decree in which the Brahman reads curses to angels and evil spirits throughout the ceremony. During the ceremony, officials swore their loyalty to the king (Lertpanichkul, 1989). The letter used was Khmer although the content was in Thai. The ceremony was conducted in Khmer, Sanskrit and ancient Thai for effects of power and sacredness. This age-old literature reflected the attempts of kings at that time in maintaining their power through psychology alongside governance (Tantipimol, 1995).

The appraisal of King's bravery and prestige through royal annals

The royal annals are historical writings that have been used during the Ayutthaya era up until the Rattanakosin period. These records included the activities of the king during the Ayutthaya period, and were influenced by Hindu literature in which the king was descended from heaven. These royal annals were written by royal scholars and are considered highly sacred. The majority of the contents involved the admiration of the king and the dynasty that

possess super powers with good deeds included. Revisions to the annals were made every time there was a change in kings and dynasties. These revisions were based on political motives because the chronicles were used as an evidence of the king and dynasty's righteousness (Hantrakul, 1986).

Emphasis of the King's rightfulness through the story of Gautama Buddha as Vessantara and sermon ceremonies

The story of Gautama Buddha as Vessantara was introduced to the people of Ayutthaya as a consequence of two important events during King Trilokanart's reign. The first event was the transforming of the ruling system in Ayutthaya and the second was the merging Sukhothai area into Ayutthaya territory. The story of Gautama Buddha as Vessantara was about a compassionate king, and was written by a poet from the royal palace. The main concept was about giving alms and how Bodhisattva was born into the world and became Vessantara. During the life that was prior to being born as Buddha, Bodhisattva gave generous amounts of alms. The most important chapter in the story was the *tossaporn* (ten blessings) which was the first chapter, and the other important portion was the last chapter. The direct mention of the name of King Trilokanart was a method of emphasizing the equality between Lord Buddha and Vessantara. Sermons were delivered within a day. Therefore, people were especially attentive during the sermon of the first and last parts in order to receive the greatest merits (National Telecommunication Commission, 2010). Therefore, the use of Buddhism together with religious writings influenced stakeholders in accepting King Trilokanart as the divine king with the rights to rule and merge the two territories together. This method was continuously used by the latter kings throughout Ayutthaya period.

During the Ayutthaya period, the Buddhist teachings and Brahman teachings were combined in order to develop the ideology of an ideal king. This combination resulted in a Buddhist-Brahmanist society in which the concepts of divine kingship was used alongside with Buddhism (Na Bangchang, 1990). People started to develop their beliefs from the merit and sin towards believing in dharma and reincarnation. It was believed that people who were born kings made a lot of merits and gave alms in the prior life. This belief of dharma resulted in the acceptance in the inequality of society which in turn leads to peace in the country (Tanthai, 2007).

Stakeholders of public relations during the Ayutthaya period were lords, nobles and

government officials who played important roles in bringing unity into the country. Since several attempts were made by the soldiers in order to gain the position of king of Ayutthaya, it was important for the king to create connections with lords and nobles. (Lertpanichkul, 1989) Therefore, the Drink an Oath of Allegiance can be considered as a public relations tool that is used directly with nobles and rulers. The sacredness of the ceremony, including the verses and curses used creates fear towards the power of the king. The royal annals served as an evidence of the king's rightfulness as a ruler because it provided the details on the heroic acts of the king and dynasties. In addition, future generations are able to learn and understand Thai history through these annals. The Story of Gautama Buddha as Vessantara is a literary work that was used as a tool in communicating with nobles, general citizens and other internal stakeholders. All the aforementioned tools use the one-way, top-down communication, and can be referred to Press Agency/Publicity Model since the kings were distinguished as gods, and the people were not allowed to directly interact with the kings.

Thonburi era: Rebuilding unity through religion restoration and trade policies

The only ruler during the Thonburi era was King Taksin the Great (1767-1782). Although many wars occurred throughout his time on the throne, King Taksin the Great brought changes into the country after Thailand lost the war against the Burmese troops in 1767. King Taksin reigned for 15 years and passed away in 1782 (Plainoi, 2010). When Ayutthaya was burned down by the Burmese and only the ruins remained, the capital city was moved to Thonburi. Thonburi was chosen as the new main city because of its location that is close to the sea with fortresses on both sides of the sea. The city had borders allowing control over boats entering and leaving the territory. Therefore, with this ideal location, enemies needed to have warships in order to invade the city, making it easy for locals to escape (Piyapan, 1995). During the Thonburi period, it was essential to build the morale of locals. Therefore, main people who were able to bring unity into the country were the locals themselves. King Taksin the Great used religious strategies as a means to build the people's morale (Supasopon, 1999). In addition, the King made war with other countries in order to prove the dynasty's stability and strength, and at the same time to create awe in the people (Mas-udee, 1989) as well as to exercise the use of public relations in announcing his aggressive trade policies (Piyapan, 1995).

There were many wars taking place during this period. Therefore, the majority of

public relations tool used was the top-down Press Agency/Publicity model. The emphases of communications were given more on wars, restoration of religion and the well-being of people (Plainoi, 2010). This built King Taksin the Great's reputation as a ruler and leader in religion and economics (Piyapan, 1995). The concepts of public relations during this time were, therefore, based on religious activities and trading policies. Aside being incentives and motivators to the locals, the King's policies showed that the capital and surrounding cities were strong and were moving towards peace in the country. At the same time, the King and religion were present to make the country even stronger and more united.

Rattanakosin pre-transition period: Communications to retain national identity and survive imperialism

The Rattanakosin period prior to transition to constitutional monarchy (1782-1932) was ruled by seven kings (King Rama I – King Rama VII). The method of ruling was a mixture of divine kingship and Buddhism. The period of the first three kings of this era was when Buddhism was being restored back to how it was originally practiced (Na Bangchang, 1990). The critical point during the era was the reformation of governance in the city of Siam due to the imperialistic invasion by western powers which took place during the years of King Rama IV and King Rama V of the Rattanakosin era.

King Rama IV was the leader during the imperialism period, disseminator of the Thai national identity, restorer of religion, and founder of the Thai alphabet which was first created during the time of King Ramkhamhaeng the Great of the Sukhothai era, and he introduced printed media as a means of communication with the people (Lapirattankul, 2006). While King Rama V led the country of Siam through a major transition in the ruling system, His Majesty traveled to western countries to show western powers the development capabilities of Siam. The parties mainly affected with the changes during this period were the local people and those who were involved by the attempts of western nations to colonize Siam. Public relations for national unity during this period were aimed at building sense of nationality through religion and the Thai alphabet as well as the use of printed media and publicity as communication tools which will be stated in the following details.

Changes in communication method to more two-way communication

Ever since the Ayutthaya period, communications between the king and the people was a one-way, top-down communication. Although the ruling system during the Rattanakosin period was absolute monarchy, communication between the king and people was not as tense as the prior era. For instance, King Rama IV abolished the traditional way of protection by not allowing citizens to get close to the king. Instead, the King allowed people to receive him during his royal visits to various places (Piyapan, 1995). In addition, those who wanted to make an appeal for justice were able to do so directly without being punished (Cheykeewong, 2009). King Rama V would also occasionally make unofficial visits to receive first-hand information of people's problems and well-being (Tam Roy Pra Putthabat, 2009). This method of communication is, to a certain extent, considered to be a Two-way Asymmetric model because the King also received feedback from the citizens as well.

Development of national identity through promoting rights to religions and Thai alphabet

King Rama IV played an important role in restoring Buddhism by releasing a law that ensured the appropriate behavior of monks (Bunnak and Inkum, 2010). The King considered the scientific aspects of Buddhism by looking at both the rational and realistic sides of the religion, hoping to maintain Buddhism during times when there were several threats from the western world (Na Bangchang, 1990). Aside from maintaining Buddhism, the King also promoted other religions in Thailand when he donated land for constructing Islamic mosques and Christian churches. The King's support for other religions built good relations between the King and religious leaders (Bunnak and Inkum, 2010), who were definitely one of the country's internal stakeholders. People were free to worship the religion they wished to believe in, and this openness to different religions kept western nations from using religion as an excuse for colonizing the country. With this vision, the King unified people from different ranks and religions together by working with philosophers and interpreted the inscriptions of The Inscription of King Ramkhamhaeng the Great. And this is the starting point for Thais to study the history of their own country. Thai alphabet, created during the Sukhothai era, was announced to the public to promote the country long history and to reinforce the national identity (Laksanasiri, 2006; Bunnak and Inkum, 2010).

Use of printed media technology in communicating with the people

In the time of King Rama IV, printed media were used as the source of communication. The King used printed media for people to be informed and accept the regulations established by the King as the ruler of the state (Bunnak and Inkum, 2010). The announcements were printed at the Luang Aksorn Pimpakarn Printing House, which was the first printing house in Siam. This enabled announcements to be printed out in large quantities and reach people in larger areas when compared to prior times (National Telecommunication Commission, 2010). The King placed much importance to ensure that people rationally understand what was being communicated to them. Printed announcements and government gazettes, therefore, started with the reason and necessity in making the announcement, followed by what people were expected to do. The majority of announcements were concerned with the welfare of people. The government gazettes were used for announcing the law so that everyone would consistently understand and comply with it (Bunnak and Inkum, 2010).

Managing relationships with western nations to maintaining sovereignty

One of the most important events during King Rama IV's reign was the increase in the influence of western powers on Asia. In 1842, China was under the control of the west, Burma lost the cities of Yangoon and Bago to England in 1852, and in 1854 Japan was forced to open its country to the United States (National Telecommunication Commission, 2010). The King realized that a strategy should be established to manage the influence of western nations, and therefore decided to build alliance and foster interdependence with various countries (Royal Thai Navy, n.d.). Knowing what western countries wanted, the King opened up the country to trade and maintain relations with these countries as they were one of the nation's external stakeholders. In order to balance the power of these countries towards Siam, trading treaty was made with multiple countries rather than depending on only one, starting with the Bowring Treaty with England, followed by those with the United States, France, Denmark, Portugal, the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden, Norway, Belgium and Italy. These agreements were made under the name of the ruler of Siam and the president or ruler of each trading partner country (Bureau of Science and Technology Information, 2004). It was the intention of the King to communicate that the status of the King of Siam was equal to the leaders of western countries. The King's strategy of balancing each western country's power over the Kingdom of Siam through trade was aimed to keep the welfare of the country in a positive manner rather than the use of force.

Developing country in various areas to raise its civilized image

The period of King Rama V of Chakri Dynasty was the time when western countries expanded their powers over the Asian region. The King used diplomatic policy to make agreements with western countries and gave up a part of the country's land to those countries (Royal Thai Navy, n.d.). In order to prepare people in the country, one of the nation's internal stakeholders, for changes and development towards a civilized country, the King changed the system of ruling and development. The King abolished, improved some laws and justice system, promoted education for general people, established training centers for teachers, sent Thai students to study in Europe, constructed the water system, and established the communications and transportation system, such as trains (Public Relations Office Region 3 Chiang Mai, n.d.), which became the major vehicle for disseminating news and information the Thai people in rural areas. The King's decision to the development of infrastructures and other information areas in the country was a way for the King to communicate to western countries that the Kingdom of Siam had the ability to survive on its own – a communication aimed at retaining the country's true independence.

Visiting western powers and using publicity to lift up the country's image

In addition to the development of the country, the King also kept ties with foreign countries by visiting Europe two times in 1897 and 1907. For the first visit, King Rama V stayed in Europe for 9 months. His majesty's long stay without chaos showed the King of Siam as having a high and respectful absolute power in Siam country. The journey was successful in terms of acceptance by the European (Watananguhn, 2003). The important reason why Siam and the King were widely accepted by these countries was because of the publicity given to the growing ties the Kingdom had with other countries through western printed media.

Historical records reveal that during his first visit to Europe, King Rama V received a great deal of media attention. The main focus of the news was on the tight relations between the King of Siam and two western emperors - Tsar Nicholas II of Russia and Kaiser William II of Germany. The King's photos with the emperors were published in various newspapers which created acceptance of the King. European countries welcomed the King's arrival and travel in Europe with great hospitality. England, Germany's enemy, and France being Siam's rival, closely followed news and analyses concerning the King's visit. The King's visit at that time proved that the King of Siam had equal prestige as compared to European kings. The King used his visits to Europe as a communication tool in maintaining the Kingdom's

sovereignty and independence (National Telecommunication Commission, 2010).

The uses of public relations during the reigns of King Rama IV and V were similar to those of the Sukhothai, Ayutthaya and the beginning of Rattanakosin eras in terms of using religion in building relations with internal stakeholders for the nation's unity. However, during their reigns, the Kings also aimed at creating people's conscience towards their country by publicizing the Thai alphabet founded from the Sukhothai era, creating a new system of alphabet, and controlling Buddhist teachings to be within scientific limits. This could be typified as the Press Agency/Publicity Model. When the King used printed media in communicating with stakeholders, his communication method could be typified as the Public-information model. This method enabled the King to communicate with local stakeholders in an accurate and efficient manner. In addition, to communicate better with people in different places, the Two-way Asymmetric model was also implemented as when King Rama IV allowed citizens to make direct complaints, and King Rama V made his unofficial visits throughout the country.

Aside from communicating with internal stakeholders, communications were also made with external stakeholders, which were imperialist countries. Communications made with this group were intended to show that the King was able to bring development to the kingdom, and that the status of the King was equal to kings or the governed parties in the west (National Telecommunication Commission, 2010). The type of communication stated in this paper could be referred to the Press agency/publicity model such as when he used foreign media during his visit to Europe to build up the image of the great king of Siam (Chulalongkorn University, 2011). The King's reputation and prestige was acknowledged in western countries that the King was from Southeast Asia. It was from the King's abilities that kept the Kingdom from being colonized by western countries and retained the country's independence until these days.

Conclusion, limitations, and suggestions for further study

Throughout these four eras, it could be seen that public relations practices are related to the continuous power of the king as a ruler resulting in the national unity of Thailand. According to the three main institutions of national identity's characteristics; namely, nation, religion, and monarchy or royal institution, various communication tools were utilized to build and maintain the ideologies of the king in each era. The royal institution based their communications on religion by evolving people's beliefs since the Sukhothai era until the pre-

transition period of the Rattanakosin era. The evolution in communications occurred together with changes in society and the population as portrayed in the phrase “royal institution is related to religion, and religion is connected with politics” (Suksamran, 1999).

During the Sukhothai era, when the population was still low, communication was based on Buddhist religion. Religion was used to bring stability to the royal institution and Sukhothai Kingdom. Tools that were used included stone inscriptions and the writings of The Three Worlds of Phra Ruang. During the Ayutthaya period, the population increased and the territory expanded. The King therefore communicated through Brahmin teachings by instilling in the people the belief that the King, through merit, is a divine being. The system of governance during the Ayutthaya era was absolute monarchy. Consequently, events and strategies that were used included the Drink of an Oath of Allegiance, and literatures such as the Royal Annals and Mahachartkamluang for the King to be perceived as a god, the source of power, and this also created awe in the people. Communication during this era was based on Buddhism and this influenced people to believe that acts of good and bad will affect a person’s next life. The teachings explained that people were born unequal in the current life because of the difference in amount of merits a person made in the past life. This belief resulted in people’s ability to accept inequality in the society. The governance through Buddhist teachings and divine kingship was a major trait of the King during that time. This method was used until the end of absolute monarchy in the country in 1932 A.D. However, during Sukhothai, Ayutthaya, Thonburi and the years of first three kings of Ratanakosin, the internal stakeholders, which included the citizens, nobles, and government officials, seemed to have greater influence upon the throne's stability than others. The use of Buddhism, Brahmin holy activities and literatures to persuade acceptance of the king's rightfulness were effective on this group of stakeholders according to the rules of religion and expectations of society. The external stakeholders such as neighboring countries that tried to invade the country through wars are not discussed here since building the nation unity in time of wars is not included in this study.

During Ratanakosin era, especially the reigning period of King Rama IV and King Rama V, the external stakeholders which were western nations became more powerful and threats of the nation's independence. Since the western stakeholders had varying thoughts, beliefs and religions, the traditional form of public relations was not effective. This led to the modification of the King’s strategy to increase ties with foreign countries and bring development into the kingdom with the objective to show that Thailand was as equally

developed as western countries. The two Kings used various forms of public relations and covered almost four models of Grunig (1984), except the Two-way Symmetric model. The reason for this exception is because the perception of the King as a divine being made it difficult for citizens and the King to communicate. The most commonly used form of communications during all four eras was the Press Agency/Publicity model, which used communications through religion. This model was effective in creating an ideal belief towards the King.

It can be seen from this event that the main foundation in creating national unity is the ability to build interrelation among the three main institutions; nation, religion and the monarch as suggested by the National Identity Office of Thailand (2011). Historically, in addition to the political, cultural, and social systems, religions with the combination of Buddhism and Brahmanism have been the most important factors that formed the ideologies of the king and belief system in Thailand. Such factors helped create unity in the country. The communication channels each king used were dependent on the situation of each era. Some examples of these channels include stone inscriptions, religious events such as the oath to the king, the donation of the king's land for building temples, churches, and mosques, and other religious ceremonies, historical records, literatures, the use of opinion leader, local and international visits, publicity and printed media.

Due to the fact that the royal institution has been the heart and soul of Thai since the beginning of the 700-year of Thai history, the Kings have made a great deal of contribution for the country and the people of Thailand to maintain the country's unity and the well-being of its people. This paper is just the beginning of the series of public relations practices by the King to build national unity.

The paper is able to compile only few major social events and artifacts in Thai history that have typically been mentioned in widely-used historical documents. Events mentioned in this study are limited to periods in history when public relations were utilized by the Thai monarchy to create national unity only. In fact, searching through piles of historical documents, we came to the realization that with regard to Thailand's long history, it is somewhat difficult to cover all events and tools that involved public relations due to constraints of time and archival resources. It is also important to note that more research needs to be thoroughly conducted for each era or even for a particular period of a king who acts as a ruler as well as a communicator. Moreover, since this paper excludes the cover of public relations for national unity during times of war and military invasion by neighboring

and other powerful countries, there are more rooms for further study in this area as well. Therefore, this paper is only the beginning of the study of Public Relations evolution during the pre-democracy time of Thailand.

As proposed earlier that this study is an attempt to use Grunig's four models as a frame in analyzing communication purposes and natures during hundreds of years in the history of Thailand based on the concept of public relations as communication. We have come to conclusion that the four models also have its own limitations as Grunig and Hunt (1984, p. 21) once stated that the four models were used to make sense of public relations communication activities and cannot fit perfectly to all public relations communication. Thus, we propose that apart from Grunig's four models, other theoretical conceptions and models could be applied to be concurring with the context of Thailand's historical public relations evolution as also suggested in the work of L'Etang (2008) that, apart from the four models, other models of PR practice could be used in studying PR history of other cultures.

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Public relations in Vietnam: History in the making

Loan Thi Hong Van,

PhD Candidate, University of South Australia

vanth001@mymail.unisa.edu.au

Introduction

Scholars across the globe attempt to study public relations in their contexts. Research on public relations in various countries of Asia particularly of Southeast Asia is still emerging. This paper presents the background to public relations in a Southeast Asian country (Vietnam) where scholarship is emerging and history is in the making. Public relations in Vietnam in this paper is reported as a review of the literature forming a part of my doctoral research. My research is one of the few empirical studies which explore the current state of Vietnamese public relations practice. Data analysis is currently in process. However reviewing the data the researcher can identify a snapshot of evolving practice. Public relations in this paper is discussed in two parts: before and after the *Đổi Mới* policy (also called *economic reform* or *renovation* policy) in 1986 by the Vietnamese government. Since 1986, the public relations profession has begun to re-evolve when Vietnam's economy was transferred into a market economy and a lot of international corporations set up and began their business in Vietnam. The economic development has led to the appearance of the public relations industry in this country. My discussion about public relations is presented in the part *Public relations in Vietnam*. My outlook for the industry will be found in my summary. In order to provide an understanding as to why and how the public relations progression emerged, this paper briefly introduces the Vietnamese context including the political system, economic development, media environment and Vietnamese culture from the early to present time, as follows:

Vietnamese context

Political system

Vietnamese historical records indicate thousand of civil conflicts and combats against foreign invaders during its history. The Chinese controlled the country for one thousand years until the 9th century. In the middle of the 19th century, it was dominated by the French and then by the Japanese. In 1945, the Communist Viet Minh seized the power from the Japanese

and declared the country's independence on 2 September. A year later, the French continued to rule until the French defeat in Vietnam in 1954. Then the Geneva Agreements (also known the 'Geneva Accords') were signed at the same year in which the French troops withdrew from the country and Vietnam temporarily divided into two regions: The North was controlled by the Communist and the South was supported by the United States. In 1973, the Paris Peace Accords were signed in which the United States withdrew its troops from South Vietnam. The nation reunified the two regions in 1975 under the control of the Communist Party of Vietnam. The country has been named the Socialist Republic of Vietnam with its capital as Hanoi, in the North of Vietnam (Nguyen, 2009).

After 1975, the country's economy fell into crisis as the Vietnamese government pursued a closed-door policy and business and global trade were not encouraged. Eleven years later, since the 6th Congress of the Communist Party the government began to promote the *Đổi Mới* policy with the focus of economic reform. The country introduced a market economy and began to join with the global economy. Vietnam has established diplomatic relations with 171 nations and economic cooperation with 165 countries and territories in the world. In 1995, Vietnam and the United States re-established their diplomatic and economic relationship after a twenty year hiatus. Permanent Normal Trade Relations (PNTR) were promulgated for Vietnam by late 2006 by the United States government. Vietnam joined with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) in 1995 and the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) in 1998. It became a World Trade Organization (WTO)'s member in January 2007 and a non-permanent member of the United Nation Security Council for the period 2008-2009. Vietnam is a member as well as a host to interregional forums for the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM, which consists of the European Commission, the members of the European Union and ASEAN, Australia, Russia and New Zealand) in 2004 and 2009. The country today still remains a one-party state with the central role of the Communist Party of Vietnam in the politics and society. Even though the party still adheres to the ideological orthodoxy (Marxism), the priority focus of the country is economic development (Socialist Republic of Vietnam, 2011).

Economic development

The *Đổi Mới* policy has changed Vietnam from a centrally-planned to socialist-oriented market-based economy ('a socialist oriented market-based economy' is a term in Vietnamese which is called by the government). The country has welcomed foreign investment, trade, tourists, business people as well as stimulated exports and increased the competitiveness of

the local economic structure, both state-owned and private. The economic reform process has helped the country to escape poverty, to establish the initial foundation for an industrialized economy and maintain a high economic growth rate (Asian Development Bank, 2011). For example, the gross domestic product (GDP) of Vietnam reached 8.2 percent in the period 1991-1995 compared to 3.9 percent in 1986-1990. After 1995, the average annual GDP was from 7 to 8 percent, with the highest as 8.5 percent in 2007. Vietnam has emerged as one of the fastest growing economies in the world. The poor household ratio dropped from 70 percent in 1980 to below 10 percent in 2010 (Vietnam. Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2011; BBC Vietnamese, 2010). According to an annual survey in 2007 by Asia Business Council, Vietnam was ranked as third amongst Asian countries after China and India in terms of foreign direct investment (FDI) attractiveness (Asia Business Council, 2007). The economic development, foreign investment in Vietnam and the opening of the Vietnamese economy to global markets led to the need for public relations to promote products/services in business companies in the country. However, Vietnam's economy has also been impacted by the global financial crisis (GFC) (2007-2010). The GDP dropped into 6.3, 5.3 and 6.8 percent in 2008, 2009 and 2010 respectively (Asian Development Bank, 2011). But the economy is in the recovery period. The FDI inflows in 2010 still increased and the FDI forecast in 2011 is positive (Business Monitor International, 2011). Public relations in Vietnam may be thus influenced by the world economy and the GFC.

Media environment

Vietnamese media has been controlled by the Vietnamese government and the Communist Party. All media outlets are owned by and under the control of the party and the government. The role of the media is mainly to support the Vietnamese government policies. So, for information which relates to the government policies, Vietnamese journalists often collect it from the government sources and report it without any argument. The government today allows the establishment of private media organizations in some fields such as film studios, program production, advertising, cartoon productions and media training. Even though there are limitations in reporting sensitive political and economic problems, journalists today can report about crime and official corruption. But in general, freedom of the press is not good in Vietnam (Reporters without Borders 2010). Hence, the government's control of the media may bring challenges for public relations in Vietnam.

Economic development in Vietnam and information technology globalization have resulted in an increasing number of people who use satellite television broadcasts and the

Internet. Compared to 17.5 percent (of the Vietnamese population) in 2007, the internet penetration rose 26 percent in 2009; this number is slightly lower than China (27%) but higher than Philippines (25%), Thailand (24%) and Indonesia (13%). Vietnam is one of the fastest growing internet nations in the Asian region and amongst nations with highest internet user growth rates in the globe. In the period 2000-2009, the internet growth rate in Vietnam reached 10882 percent. This figure is much more than China (1500%), Indonesia (1150%), Philippines (1100%) and Thailand (600%) (Internetworldstats, 2011). This means that although press freedom is not completely available in Vietnam, blogs and social networks are used by a great number of Vietnamese people and have become an essential part of the internet life in this nation (Cimigo, 2010, p. 23). The rapid growth of the Internet and the great use of blogs and social networks in Vietnam promise great opportunities and challenges for public relations in this country in terms of internet-based activities (i.e. the use of social media in public relations).

Culture

Vietnam is located in the centre of Southeast Asia with its population of 86.9 million in 2010 (Vietnamese government 2010). Its economy is a traditionally agriculture-based economy. Because of the hot and humid weather and the high rainfall zone, rice is grown in Vietnam from three to four crops a year. Vietnamese culture thus belongs to 'wet rice culture' (Tran, 1999). Approximately 70 percent of the Vietnamese population lives in agriculture sectors (IFAD, 2011). Their lives depend on nature so their characters tend to be 'flexible' and 'improvisational'. A traditional family in Vietnam is an extended family in which different generations live together in one household in villages. This results in 'village culture' whose characteristics are 'harmony', 'affection', 'loving', 'kind', 'respect', 'face-saving' and 'avoidance of conflict'. The village culture also led to the importance of kinship. That means the relationships amongst people in the same village and hometown are more important than other relationships. Personal relationships thus are strongly focused in and important to Vietnamese culture. They are important to public relations practice and all aspects of Vietnamese life. Due to the long history of external combats with different invaders and of political and economic connections with many countries, Vietnamese culture has been influenced by many various cultures such as Southeast Asian, Chinese, Indian, Japanese, French, American, Russian and East European. The influence of Confucianism which belongs to Chinese tradition does not emphasise the importance of women in society, but the role of Vietnamese women has become important because of the impact of French culture

from the middle of the 19th century (Tran, 2004). Despite the foreign influences during the long history, Vietnamese people have retained their native and traditional customs. But they also tend to be in ‘harmony’ with other cultures. Different religions in Vietnam harmoniously live together. Most Vietnamese people practice ancestor worship and have an ancestor altar at their home. Filial duty is a focus of Vietnamese culture. Thus, ‘peace loving’ and ‘tolerance’ are two of characteristics of Vietnamese people (Tran, 1999). Today, more than fifty percent of the Vietnamese population is below 35 years old (Cimigo, 2010, p. 12). Due to the influence of external culture in the economic development process, the living style of Vietnamese young people has been changed. Vietnamese culture today is also influenced by other cultures because of the open economy (Duckett and Miller, 2006, p. 84).

Public relations in Vietnam

From a challenging political environment and rapid economic growth where the Vietnamese culture values relationships in a culture rich in traditions, the public relations profession is emerging and taking its place. For an understanding as to why and how it has evolved, public relations in Vietnam is described and discussed in two paragraphs: before and after the *Đổi Mới* policy by the Vietnamese government.

Public relations in Vietnam before the *Đổi Mới* policy 1986

Propaganda has been used significantly throughout the long history of invasions. Research found evidence about the Tayson peasant rebellion using propaganda in 1771 to ‘mobilize the tradition of the *Chinh nghĩa* (just cause) and of mass involvement in a common struggle’ (Cull, Culbert, and Welch, 2003, p. 419). In the wars with French and Americans in the 20th century, the Vietnamese used propaganda as an effective tool for their purpose. Recognizing the importance of propaganda for the wars, the leaders of the two sides used propaganda machine to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of Vietnamese peasants. During that time, many important campaigns were carried out for the aim of fundraising, encouraging people joining the army and reducing illiteracy rate in the country. For example, in 1945 the campaign of illiteracy elimination was launched by Mr. Ho Chi Minh (President of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (1945-1969) and it was promoted continuously from 1956-1958 for the people in the North (Vietnam. Ministry of Education and Training 2006). *Dân vận* (means public relations in politics) moreover had used by the Communist party in the north in this period (and also in Vietnam today). Ho Chi Minh defined *Dân vận* as ‘a large canvass of people into the people force to conduct tasks given by the government and political

organizations' (Ho Chi Minh National Political Academy, 2004, p. 9). *Dân vận* included activities such as propaganda to encourage the people's contributions and support for the party. The purposes were to build and develop the party's policies and political programs. The Communist people had understood that their success depends on their *Dân vận* activities. From 1954 to 1975, in South Vietnam, public relations activities were found in Saigon through 'press briefings' about war information (Hallin, 1992). The term 'public relations' was mentioned in books related to communication and journalism for undergraduate students in the South before 1975. Public relations was taught by several universities in South Vietnam in the early years of 1970s (Huynh, 1975). After the reunification of the two regions—North Vietnam and South Vietnam in 1975, the Communist government has used propaganda to extent 'the rigidly ideological educational system of the North' and 'promote the supremacy of the party' (Cull, Culbert, and Welch, 2003, p. 419). Between 1975 and 1992, all the public relations programs in the South of Vietnam were suspended and no public relations course was taught in Vietnam. Most governmental organizations in Vietnam after 1975 have propaganda departments which only inform and propagandize the governmental decisions and policies to their publics (Dinh, 2008, p. 84).

Public relations in Vietnam after the *Đổi Mới* policy 1986

The first course of public relations after the *Đổi Mới* policy was taught at Ho Chi Minh City Open University, in the South of Vietnam in 1993 (Huynh, 1994). The textbook named 'Public Relations in Business' by Huynh Van Tong was published in 1994. Between 2004 and 2005, the first two foreign books of public relations were translated into Vietnamese as 'Public relations (Frameworks)' by Frank Jefkins and 'The Fall of Advertising and the Rise of PR' by Al Ries and Laura Ries. By the end 2006, one of the first academic conferences about public relations was organized by the Academy of Journalism and Information in Hanoi. The conference was named 'Opportunities and Challenges in Public Relations Education'. Most speakers in the conference said public relations in Vietnam was in its infancy. There was a need of public relations knowledge in practice. Academic programs of public relations were important for Vietnam at the present (Academy of Journalism and Information 2007). As a result, after the conference, the first program of public relations for undergraduate students was introduced at the Department of Public Relations and Advertising in this academy. By the end 2010s, a program named 'Bachelor of Communication' was conducted at RMIT Vietnam (the Asian hub of RMIT, headquartered in Australia) (RMIT Vietnam, 2011).

The public relations profession has been re-introduced in Vietnam since 1986 when the Vietnamese government promoted the economic reform policy. This policy has impacted on the economy of Vietnam. The country has made a shift from a highly-centralized planned economy to a market economy. The disbursement of foreign direct investment thus has been rising in Vietnam. As a result, many international organizations including public relations firms were established in Vietnam. These corporations have used public relations to promote their products and services. The appearance of international companies in Vietnam has also increased the competition amongst business companies especially between Vietnamese and International companies. Public relations need in the market therefore has been increased. In addition, many new processes such as reduction of governmental subsidies, liberalization, privatization and competition required new approaches to deal with the change. This led to the appearance of the public relations industry in the country. Public relations knowledge and experience can be disseminated through these international companies. Many Vietnamese people may study public relations from the marketing and public relations departments in international corporations in Vietnam. Many Vietnamese students moreover who went abroad for studying may bring public relations knowledge to Vietnam and spread it through their domestic public relations firms. Related to domestic agencies, Public Relations BiCultural Consulting or PUBCOM was established in 1995 at Hanoi and Max Communications was in 1997 at Ho Chi Minh City (Vietnam's largest city) (McKinney, 2000, p. 23; Vietnamnet, 2005). John Baily & Associates (Australia), Ogilvy Public Relations (belongs to Ogilvy & Mather, an international advertising, marketing and public relations agency which is owned by the WPP Group), Leo Activation (belongs to Leo Burnett), and the JWT Vietnam (belongs to J Walter Thompson, one of the largest advertising and marketing communications firms in the world) were four of the first international agencies which provided public relations services in Vietnam in the middle-1990s. The clients of these agencies are mainly international business corporations such as Nestle and Dutch Lady Company. However, some of their clients left them to become clients of Vietnamese agencies due to cheap fees. Some of international agencies (i.e. John Baily & Associates) thus withdrew from the market because of failure to compete with local agencies and contextual difficulties in Vietnam (Le, 2007, p. 213; Vietnamnet, 2005). Hence, cooperation with a local agency may be a good solution for international agencies in Vietnam. One of the first joint ventures between a local public relations firm, T&A Communication and an international agency, Ogilvy & Mather was set up in Vietnam in 2009 (WPP, 2009).

Considering and evaluating public relations as a profession, McKinney (2000) said that public relations in Vietnam was in its infancy. Investigation in 2007 also found many Vietnamese business managers did not have 'a good understanding of the process of public relations' and most programs are designed in agencies (McKinney, 2007, pp. 46-48). But the fact is that the number of agencies and firms which provide public relations services in recent years is increasing especially after Vietnam joined into the WTO in 2007. Compared to eleven public relations firms in 2006 (McKinney, 2006, p. 19), the number of agencies which provided public relations services reached to three hundred in 2008 (Nguyen, 2008). It can be seen that the need of public relations is rising in contemporary Vietnam. Moreover, in an investigation of FTA (a market research firm) in 2010, in the first 20 leading public relations agencies in Vietnam, there was only one joint-venture. The rest was domestic agencies. This research surveyed 150 business people in Vietnam who used public relations services in agencies in 2009 (FTA Market Research, 2010). This investigation result can be explained as follows: the public relations market in Vietnam may not big enough for international public relations agencies to invest. That means international firms consider cost effectiveness when they intend to set up their business in Vietnam. Second, when the market has not completely developed yet, local knowledge which relates to Vietnamese language, media environment and Vietnamese culture may be very important for conducting public relations in Vietnam. If international agencies bring their public relations knowledge to apply to Vietnam, it may be hard for them to get success. If they recruit local people (local people often understand local knowledge but they lack public relations knowledge) and then train them to be public relations professionals in terms of working for them, it may take time and costs. Domestic agencies may understand local knowledge deeper than international agencies. They therefore may provide public relations services better than international ones. Lastly, clients which international agencies served may not in Vietnam. That means their offices or public relations departments can be outside Vietnam. The organizations may intend to explore the Vietnamese market before setting up their official companies in this country. That can be also a reason why these clients were not in the investigation by FTA (2010).

In Vietnam, lobbying is also in its infancy. However, the Vietnamese government today begins to recognize its importance. For example, the government used lobbying to get success in terms of the PNTR by the United States government in 2006. For the first time of its history, the Vietnamese government rented a professional lobbying agency to conduct this campaign. Vietnamese government leaders furthermore organized many meetings to exchange information for the purpose of gaining the United States parliamentarians',

business leaders' and others' understandings and supports (Dinh, 2008, pp. 149-163).

Lobbying was also utilized for the campaign of becoming the WTO's member in 2007 and some campaigns after that to promote Vietnam's image for tourists and business investors (Dinh, 2008, p. 230). But in general, lobbying is still a new activity in Vietnam. The most important reason for lobbying in Vietnam is to set up personal relationships with government people.

As analyzed in the part *Vietnamese Culture* that personal relationships are a strong focus in Vietnamese culture. In order to get success in public relations in Vietnam it needs to establish personal relationships with possible publics including media and government people (McKinney, 2000, p. 24). Media relations is considered as important for conducting public relations in the country. Establishing the connection with journalists is one of the main duties of public relations practitioners. In addition, the phenomenon of payment in public relations is found in practice (McKinney, 2006, pp. 19-20). Public relations practitioners have to prepare 'tips' for journalists when they attend press conferences which are conducted by agencies/companies. The payment is also given for media offices if they want their news releases in Vietnamese newspapers. Because of Vietnamese government-controlled media, public relations information published on Vietnamese media is controlled by the government (McKinney, 2006, pp. 19-20). This practice can bring difficulties for international agencies in Vietnam. So, understanding Vietnamese public relations will help them to be successful in conducting public relations in this country. However, understanding it is different compared to accepting its characteristics such as payment in public relations as international agencies do not view payment for journalists as their policy or acceptable to their practice. There is a conflict between their policy and their goal in terms of getting success in Vietnamese market. Joint-ventures between Vietnamese and international agencies may be a good solution but these ventures are delicate. Issues relating to local knowledge (i.e. payment for journalists and establishing personal relationship with media people) can be practised by a Vietnamese agency. Vietnamese agencies can also resolve their problems regarding to public relations people because not many Vietnamese practitioners have good public relations knowledge (McKinney, 2006).

Conclusion

Economic growth in Vietnam after the open-door policy by the government is one of key reasons which have resulted in the public relations development. But the controlled-media environment and the phenomenon of payment in public relations practice can be major

causes that make it difficult for international public relations agencies/organizations in Vietnam. The concept of public relations borrows from the West but is practised in Vietnamese style. Understanding the local knowledge and establishing personal connections with possible partners including Vietnamese media people are two of key principles for doing public relations in the Vietnamese way. Public relations in Vietnam in the current period is emerging. The need for public relations and the professional industry is increasing because of Vietnam's economic growth, the rebound of FDI inflows in 2010 and its prospect in 2011 (Business Monitor Online, 2011). Internet-based services in public relations (i.e. the use of social media) will expand due to the high internet growth rate in Vietnam in recent years (Cimigo, 2010).

My research indicates that public relations is a growth profession but there is much more that needs to be understood. My qualitative research shows Vietnamese public relations will be putting its own mark on the profession. This will be reported in further publications. For now, Vietnamese public relations is history in the making and I am pleased to be part of that history. I would like to acknowledge my supervisors Dr. Jane Hiscock and Dr. Joy Chia for their support and guidance in preparing this paper.

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The evolution of evaluation – the accelerating march towards the measurement of public relations effectiveness

Tom Watson, Professor of Public Relations
The Media School, Bournemouth University
Poole, UK BH12 5BB
Email – twatson@bournemouth.ac.uk

Introduction

Public relations measurement and evaluation has long been a major practice subject. From the late 1970s onwards it has been identified as an important issue for research and practice implementation (McElreath, 1980, 1989; Synnott and McKie, 1997, Watson and Noble 2007; Watson 2008). The evolution of public relations measurement starts much earlier, with some suggesting that media monitoring practices can be identified from the late 18th century onwards (Lamme and Miller, 2010). It is, however, from the beginning of the 20th century, when ‘public relations’ began to be widely used as the description for a set of communication activities, that measurement practices can be identified. This paper traces that development which parallels public relations’ holistic beginnings through to its transformation into a communication practice which has strong publicity influences. Along the way, there has been the worldwide expansion of public relations practices, services and education; the growth of measurement and evaluation services; and the influence of academic thinking.

The paper uses a timeline narrative to describe and discuss the evolution of public relations measurement and evaluation over more than a century. In many ways this evolution has similarities to the development of public relations as an emerging and then extensive communications practice. Like public relations, it starts with elements of both social science research, especially opinion polling, which was used in planning of activities and of a practice emphasis on publicity through media channels. By mid-20th century, the emphasis had moved more towards a publicity-led practice. Media analytics became far more important than social science methods. However, by the beginning of the 21st century, the balance was moving back towards greater sophistication in measurement and the wider alignment of public relations communication objectives with organisational objectives, especially in corporate public relations where new techniques such as scorecards (Zerfass, 2005) are being used. Ironically, this area of public relations is adopting whole-of-organisation (holistic) approaches to organisational communication similar to those promoted in the 1920s and 1930s.

The beginnings

The timeline starts before the term, public relations, came into use. Lamme and Russell's monograph, *Removing the Spin: Towards a new theory of public relations history* (2010) argues that from George Washington onwards, US presidents monitored newspapers in order to gain intelligence on what was being said about them and the views of fellow citizens. In the 19th century, many industries and groups also tracked media coverage and public opinion. They ranged from railroads to temperance societies and evangelists. In the US and UK, news cuttings agencies were established in the latter part of the century. From some of these, we can see lineage to today's international computer-based evaluation companies.

At the end of the 19th century, the focus of public relations-type activity was on press agency and publicity (Cutlip 1994). Amongst the early so-called 'great men' of public relations in the US was Ivy L. Lee who formed the first professional public relations advisory firm, Lee and Ross. Lee changed from being the advisor to railway baron John D. Rockefeller, infamous for his anti-union activities, to a spokesman for the importance of recognising public opinion. He also, according to his biographer Ray E. Hiebert, considered that his activity was nondefinable and nonmeasurable. It existed only through him and was thus not comparable (Hiebert, 1966).

Another 'great man' was Edward L. Bernays, whose importance came later in life as he was considered controversial and a self-publicist by many contemporaries in the first 30 years of his career (Ewen, 1996; Tye, 1998). He presented public relations as an applied social science to be planned through opinion research and "evaluated with precision". Ironically, there is very little discussion of evaluation in Bernays' books and papers. His first book, *Crystallizing Public Opinion* in 1923, set the foundations for a systematic approach to public relations (Pavlik, 1987). Contemporaries were often critical of Bernays but his views on public relations as a planned communication practice had a strong influence on later US practitioners from the 1950 onwards, notably the 1955 edited book, *The Engineering of Consent*. Apart from Bernays' often-overlooked wife Doris Fleischmann, there were no 'Great Women' in public relations and she was not given equal recognition despite being a formidable advisor. Indeed, texts for the first 50 or 60 years of last century only write of 'PR men'.

In the 1920s, the journalist and commentator Walter Lippmann's book *Public Opinion* had a major influence on all forms of communication. He identified the role of public opinion in legitimising governments and organisations. This was taken up by the nascent public relations sector and Arthur Page, in particular, adopted opinion research to benchmark public

and consumer attitudes for AT&T, which led to a consistently strategic approach to all forms of communications in this telecommunications giant. Page created a “public relations laboratory where PR successes and failures were gathered, studied and the lessons learnt passed on to his colleagues at AT&T” (Broom and Dozier, 1990, p. xi). This approach continued after his retirement in 1947 until the telephone monopoly was broken up in the late 1970s. It is notable, however, that AT&T was not measuring the results of communication activity (outcomes) (Tedlow, 1979). The prevailing view in the US from the 1920s to late 1940s was that if the planning, based on sound opinion research was correctly done, then results would follow. In 1937, *Public Opinion Quarterly*, the first academic journal that touched on public relations was published, and in its pages early academic papers and professional discussions on public relations can be found. Edward Bernays’ article, ‘Recent trends in public relation activities’ in its initial edition is considered to be the first article about research in the field (Pavlik 1987).

1930s and 1940s

By the late 1930s, a wide range of measurement and evaluation methods were being used in the United States, notably by various levels of government. Brandon Batchelor, writing in 1938, gave two examples of the monitoring and interpretation of media publicity.

The Roosevelt Administration gives close attention not merely to the technique of publicity dissemination but also to the manner of its reception. In other words, it watches carefully all changes in the political attitudes of a community. The sum of these numerous local impressions constitutes, of course, a barometer of national opinion that possesses great value. (p. 212) [The method of data collection is not identified by Batchelor]

He also discussed Toledo Associates, which was a “cooperative publicity effort, sponsored by local business interests” set up to promote the city of Toledo, Ohio during the Great Depression.

Toledo’s experiment in cooperative industrial publicity became an unqualified success. Ninety-one per cent of more than 72,000 clippings, representing newspaper circulations totalling more than one and half millions, were regarded as favourable to the city’s interests (p. 214).

So it can be seen that at high level, measurement and evaluation was taking place using methods that are still in place today.

Although publicity had always continued as a practice, it was seen as a delivery subset of public relations. The mid-century view, expressed by Griswold and Griswold (1948), was that public relations was a management function to create relationships and “earn public understanding and acceptance” (p. 4). Plackard and Blackmon (1947) separated public relations as “the administrative philosophy of an organisation” which “stems from corporate character and over-all operations” from publicity which was “the art of influencing opinion by special preparation and dissemination of news” (p. 14). Communication or publicity were thus delivery and dialogue processes but not public relations itself. That view changed quickly as consumer products were developed and notions of corporate and product brands grew. Public relations lost that holistic concept and became typified by publicity practices. L’Etang (2004), writing about the 1960s, summarised the changed situation as: “business managers saw public relations as a cheap way of getting media coverage in comparison with advertising.” The impact on public relations measurement and evaluation was a move away from the social science-led emphasis on public opinion research to a more pragmatic analysis of media coverage, which was to dominate the second half of the 20th century.

From early times, PR practitioners and organisations had monitored press coverage of their and others activities. In 1942, Harlow wrote that public relations practitioners and their employers “should not be impressed by sheaves of press clippings” (p. 43) as a volume indicator of what was going on. Most books on public relations across the initial 40-50 year period discussed measurement of the volume of coverage, its length in column inches and whether it was positive or negative. The creation of the clippings or cuttings book became an art form with thick card paper on which clippings were mounted. Plackard and Blackmon gave this advice in 1947: “The publicist must learn the art of “pepping up” publicity results. Publicity clippings as such are not sufficiently interesting to show to a client. However, they can be dressed up or dramatized in unusual ways” (p. 299). Examples given included “trick photography” by blowing cuttings up and then printing large sheets of folded card on which they were placed; graphic presentation of cuttings beneath newspaper mastheads; and displays on large display boards, especially in hall corridors to emphasise the volume.

The UK

Public relations by mid-century was well-established in the United States, but in the UK, it was a post-World War 2 phenomenon. The first press agency, Editorial Services, had been set up by Basil Clarke in London in 1924 (L’Etang 2004) but the establishment and real growth of public relations came as a result of journalists and propaganda experts coming out of

government and the armed forces in 1945 with knowledge of news management and propaganda methods. The Institute of Public Relations (IPR) was set up in 1948, mainly by governmental communicators in information officer posts as the first step to professionalise their area of activity (ibid.). The first IPR conference was in 1949 and the first British book, a 'how-to' guide entitled *Public relations and publicity* by J.H. Brebner, appeared in the same year.

From its outset, issues of evaluating public relations were discussed in the IPR's *Journal*: mostly as methods of collation of cuttings and transcripts, and how to do it cheaply (J. L'Etang, personal communication, January 10, 2011). Unlike the US with its interest in social sciences and university education, there was a strong anti-intellectual streak in the IPR. This was expressed by its 1950 President Alan Hess who inveighed against "a tendency for too much intellectualisation and too much market research mumbo-jumbo" (L'Etang, 2004, p. 75). The IPR was not to produce its own book on PR until 1958 and training support for members was slow to start.

Evaluation scholarship

The first edition of Scott Cutlip and Alan Center's long standing and still published PR text, *Effective Public Relations*, addresses measurement and evaluation mainly through the routes of public opinion research. Some commentators (notably Lindenmann, 2005) consider that the first edition of 1952 was the first scholarly book to mention the measurement and evaluation of public relations programmes. In later editions, they introduced their PII (Preparation, Implementation, Impact) model of planning and measuring PR programmes. It was the most widely taught process model until the late 1990s.

Analysis of the 'program research and evaluation' sub-section of Cutlip's bibliography of public relations research shows that of the 159 articles listed from 1939 to the early 1960s, the largest group (67) were concerned with opinion research, including employee studies (Cutlip, 1965). This was followed by a cluster of papers with topics such as public relations, promotional activity (including advertising), publicity research and measurement (31) and research methods and surveys (28). Media measurement (including press, film, TV, radio and mass media in general), which was soon to become the dominant area of public relations measurement and evaluation, had only produced 15 papers in a quarter of a century. Within the range of papers, there was little discussion of the methodology of measuring public relations activity or programmes, with the main emphasis on objective setting based on opinion research. Cutlip's summaries did not offer any

references to specific methodology, other than one example of a rating system. The bibliography thus demonstrates the change in the practices of public relations and its measurement at the period of change from the social science-led approach to planning to the publicity-led communications that have been identified by L'Etang (2004) and others.

But it's very difficult

Despite the emphasis placed on measurement by the IPR in the UK and leading US texts, many pre-1980 texts reveal great reluctance by practitioners to evaluate the outcomes of their activity. Although Bernays' view was that public relations practice was an “applied social science” (Hiebert, 1988, p.265), it is hard to disagree with James Grunig's comment in 1983 that this was an inaccurate statement. Practitioners, he said, are "not scientists at all although they should (but few do) use theories and research on public relations and communications” (p. 28). To illustrate the reluctance of the times, here are some statements drawn from the literature ranging from the 1930 to the mid-1960s. Some say, like Ivy Lee, that PR can't be measured whilst others like Marston, whose textbook was widely used, say they can't be bothered.

“The counselor works to better a firm's reputation, but the improvement can rarely be satisfactorily measured” (Tedlow 1979, p. 160 writing about 1930s and 1940s).

“Few practitioners will claim they can prove their efforts have paid off for their clients or companies” (Finn, 1960, p. 130).

“Most public relations men, faced with the difficulty and cost of evaluation, forget it and get on with the next job” (Marston 1963, p. 176).

“Measuring public relations effectiveness is only slightly easier than measuring a gaseous body with a rubber band” (Burns W. Roper, cited in Marston 1963, p 289).

In the UK, views were very similar. The first is from James Derriman, later a president of the IPR in 1973-74. Two others come from the most prolific British writers of PR texts – Frank Jefkins and Sam Black, the latter becoming an honorary professor at Stirling for his role in establishing its MSc in Public Relations.

“It is often hard to assess (achievement of objectives) with precision or identify effects of public relations” (Derriman 1964, p. 198).

““Results” is something of a dirty word in PR” (Jefkins, 1969. p.219).

“The results of public relations activity are very difficult to measure quantitatively ... it may be uneconomic to devote too much time and too many resources” (Black, 1971, p. 98).

The reluctance to evaluate was a feature of studies of public relations practice over coming decades. Watson (1994) found similar attitudes in a large-scale study of UK practitioners which included comments such as: “PR is not a science; most practitioners are inadequate; clients are too thick,” and “the best evaluation of results is when the client is pleased, satisfied, happy and renews the contract. All else is meaningless” (Appendix 2). Although practitioners expressed the desire to evaluate, the reality was that they lacked the knowledge, time and budget to undertake the task, much like their predecessors 30 years earlier.

1950s and 1960s

The Institute of Public Relations published its first book – *A guide to the practice of public relations* in 1958. Although it stated that public relations is “an essential part of management” (p. 17), the book was mostly concerned with craft aspects such as writing, media relations, event creation and management. It gave one short paragraph to monitoring press enquiries and handed the chapter on market research to a non-PR market research specialist. In a slightly later book, then IPR President Alan Eden-Green, writing the foreword in Ellis and Bowman’s *Handbook of Public Relations* in 1963, posits PR as being “primarily concerned with communication” (Ellis & Bowman, 1963, foreword). Other texts at the time also focus on processes, but not planning, measurement or outcomes.

In Germany, Albert Oeckl in 1964 was proposing three methods of research – publics and how they use media, content analysis and research on media effects. He was much more linked to the Bernaysian social science of PR than were UK practitioners.

However, beyond texts and articles, Advertising Value Equivalents (AVE) was used to put a value on media coverage, which emphasised the craft nature of PR. The first warning against AVE came in a 1949 edition of the *IPR Journal* (J. L’Etang, personal communication, January 10, 2011). Plackard and Blackmon (1947) also refer to it in the US, with both indicating that it was an established practice by mid-century. It didn’t, however, surface in professional or quasi-academic literature till the late 1960s.

Increasing discussion

The late 1960s and the 1970s were periods when books and articles addressing public relations evaluation started to appear. *Measuring and Evaluating Public Relations Activities* was published by the American Management Association in 1968. It had seven articles on methods of measuring public relations results. It is notable that it came from the American Management Association, and not a public relations professional body. Soon after, Robinson's *Public Relations and Survey Research* (1969) was published. Pavlik says that "(Robinson) predicted that PR evaluation would move away from seat-of-the-pants approaches and toward "scientific derived knowledge" (1987, p. 66). He added that Robinson was suggesting practitioners would no longer rely on anecdotal, subjective measures of success, such as feedback from personal contacts or winning awards; they "would begin to use more systematic measures of success, primarily social science methods such as survey research" (ibid.). Academics then began taking the lead. A conference in 1977 at the University of Maryland chaired by James Grunig, partnering with AT&T, was followed by the first scholarly special issue, 'Measuring the Effectiveness of Public Relations,' in *Public Relations Review's* Winter 1977 edition, which featured papers from the conference.

Rise of PR service industries

US industry veteran Mark Weiner has recently commented (M. Weiner, personal communication, February 16, 2011) that a key reason for the introduction of measurement services was that industry growth in the 1960s and 1970s could support it. By then, the US public relations consultancy networks pioneered by John Hill of Hill & Knowlton (Miller 1999) and Harold Burson of Burson-Marsteller were widening their spread of offices and services to work for US-owned multi-nationals. They needed world-wide monitoring and management systems that gave systematic data back to HQs. Consumer public relations rapidly developed in the 1950s and 60s in the post war economic boom, aided by the widespread access to television which had also fostered advertising's expansion. University studies which had started in the US in the 1940s, although Edward Bernays claims to have taught the first public relations class at New York University in 1923 (Bernays, 1952) were growing in North America and other countries. These developments led to the emergence of the service industries, especially in the measurement of PR activity. One of the first evaluators was PR Data, which was formed from an internal General Electric operation by Jack Schoonover and the first to use computer based analysis – using punch-cards and simple programmes (Tirone, 1977). It was soon followed by other providers, mainly press cuttings

agencies who became evaluators. The UK development in this field did not, however, come for another 20 years.

1980s – Academic input

Following on from the initial conference and academic journal discussion late in the previous decade, US journals came alive in the 1980s with papers from leading academics such as Glenn Broom, David Dozier, James Grunig, Douglas Newsom and Donald Wright. From the consultancy side, Lloyd Kirban of Burson Marsteller and Walter Lindenmann of Ketchum were prolific and drove the subject higher on the practitioner agenda, whilst from the media analysis side, Katie Delahaye Paine announced her first publicity measurement system in 1987 and went on to establish the Delahaye measurement business. In the UK, White (1990) undertook the first study of practitioner attitudes amongst member consultancies of the Public Relations Consultants Association (PRCA) and offered recommendations on ‘best practice’. In 1990 *Public Relations Review* had a seminal special edition on evaluation, ‘Using Research to Plan and Evaluate Public Relations’ (Summer 1990). Widely cited, it showed that measurement and evaluation were consistently part of academic and professional discourse. All these authors emphasised the need for public relations to be researched, planned and evaluated using robust social science techniques, particularly Broom and Dozier’s *Research Methods in Public Relations* (1990).

1990s – Pace increases

As the 1990s proceeded, evaluation became a major professional and practice issue that was addressed by research and education activity in many countries which produced books, methods of analysis and proliferating international initiatives. In the US, the Institute for Public relations Research and Education (now the Institute for Public Relations, IPR), harnessing Walter Lindenmann’s enthusiasm, published research and commentaries on establishing objectives and assessing results. The International Public Relations Association (IPRA) published its Gold Paper No.11: *Public Relations Evaluation: Professional Accountability*. In Europe, the German public relations association and the International Communications Consultants Organisation (ICCO) held a pan-European summit on evaluation in 1996, while the Swedish PR body, Svenska Informationsforening, moved ahead of the debate at the time to report on Return on Communication, a form of Return on Investment that considered the creation of non-financial value through communications.

The 1990s was also a decade when Quality Assurance (QA) approaches to production and BS5750 or ISO9000 became part of management language and discourse. Companies with QA certification wanted their suppliers, including public relations advisers, to also have the same standards of operation. The first UK consultancy to gain BS5750 was Countrywide Communications (now Porter Novelli) in 1993 (P. Hehir, personal communication, April 9, 2011), but other consultancies were slow to follow as the new QA standards were prepared for production-oriented businesses, rather than service industries like consultancy. To promote the discussion, a spin-off from the IPRA, the International Institute for Quality in Public Relations (IQPR) was formed and prepared the Quality in Public Relations paper. It included a section on measurement and evaluation as integral to the management of a public relations operation. By the end of the decade, the PRCA developed the Consultancy Management Standard (CMS) with the assistance of a leading international QA certification body. This took the place of BS5750/ISO9000 as it had been prepared with the aim of improving the management and operations of consultancies, a different emphasis to the early QA certifications. It included an assessable commitment to the systematic use of measurement of programmes, thus embedding practices within the consultancy sector. CMS has been adopted world-wide by industry organisations.

The late 1990s also saw the launch of large national campaigns to promote best practice in measurement and evaluation. Lindenmann's paper on public relations measurement was widely used in the US. It established the terminology of three stages of evaluation – Output, Out-take and Outcome - that are almost universally used (Lindenmann 2005). The public relations consultancy bodies, PRCA in the UK and ICCO, its international offshoot, published their own booklets and were followed by other industry bodies separately or cooperatively. The major initiative in the UK was *PRE-fix*, a partnership between PRCA and IPR (UK) with *PR Week*, the weekly trade magazine. It ran for three years and was accompanied by seminars, research, online resources and best practice case studies. AMEC, then the Association of Media Evaluation Companies, was formed as a UK trade body. It is now the International Association for Measurement and Evaluation of Communications with members in 38 countries, which also indicates the expansion of the measurement and media analysis service industry. In the US, the IPRRE formed the Commission on Public Relations Measurement and Evaluation in 1999, which plays a major role in undertaking practice based research and disseminating it.

New century

In the first decade of the 21st century, other influences came upon PR planning, research and evaluation. Kaplan and Norton's business book, *The Balanced Scorecard* (1996) which proposed greater integration between organisational functions and sharing of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) had an influence on corporate communications. Approaches based on scorecards (Zerfass 2005) have moved the emphasis of evaluation of corporate communication away from the effects of media towards the development of communication strategies more closely related to organisational objectives where KPIs are measured, rather than outputs from communication activity. There were further industry educational initiatives in the UK with the CIPR preparing a version of its previous document that targeted Media Evaluation. The service business of media measurement and PR effectiveness evaluation grew rapidly, mainly with corporate clients.

The first decade ended with the adoption of The Barcelona Declaration of Measurement Principles at the European Measurement Summit in June 2010 (AMEC, 2010). This statement of seven principles of measurement of public relations activity favours measurement of outcomes, rather than media results, and the measurement of business results and of social media, but rejects AVEs as failing to indicate the value of public relations activity. It was a benchmark of basic measurement and evaluation practices and an attempt by the measurement service industry to define tenets of media analysis before addressing the challenges of both social media with its emphasis on 'conversation'. The Barcelona Declaration demonstrates that PR measurement and evaluation is big service business and a long way from the cuttings agencies of 50 to 100 years ago.

Conclusion

The journey of public relations evaluation has circularity with the Barcelona Declaration, which benchmarks the importance of setting objectives and measuring outcomes, thus offering similar thinking to that of Lee and, in particular, Bernays in the 1920s. During the more than 100 years outlined in this paper, the fascination of practitioners with media relations strategies and tactics has remained consistently prominent. Methods described by Batchelor (1938) and Harlow (1942), such as frequency, reach, and tonality of media references are widely-demanded practices in measurement and evaluation, although social media brings new challenges for practitioners and the measurement services sector. However, academic discussion of measurement and evaluation took more than 70 years to gain traction, with the 1970s being the starting point. By 1990 the range of methods for research into the

effectiveness of public relations has been well-established and excellently presented in Broom and Dozier's seminal text (1990). Yet despite extensive discussion in academic journals and books (Broom and Dozier, 1990; Stacks, 2002; Watson and Noble, 2007), no applied theory of public relations measurement and evaluation has been developed. Methods have been adapted from social sciences and market research, but no theory proposed.

Practitioners have also shown reluctance to adopt proven methods. As Watson (1994) and Wright et al. (2009), amongst other researchers, have found, practitioners still talk more about evaluation than actually practice it. Gregory's 2001 article, "Public relations and evaluation: does the reality match the rhetoric?" is an appropriate rhetorical question and summary of the situation after a century of public relations practice. Perhaps this signifies an immature profession, which is unconfident in its practices. One example is the widespread use of AVE, which has been condemned as invalid since the late 1940s and is damned by the Barcelona Declaration of 2010. Yet it was found to be in use by more than 40% of respondents in an international survey in 2009 (Wright et al., 2009). The evolution of AVE and its beginnings (some time before 1947, when Plackard and Blackmon refer to it) is a subject for further research as this initial study has not identified the source(s).

The limitation of this paper, which uses a timeline narrative, is that it provides mainly description of a century of development within the length constraints of an academic paper. However, it sets out the story of the evolution of public relations measurement and evaluation which appears to parallel development of the main procedures and growth of public relations as an international communication practice. Now that the 'length' has been established, more research can be devoted to the 'width'. As well, the paper has focused on the United States and the United Kingdom with only passing a reference to Germany and none at all to other countries in which public relations started in the first half of the 20th century. Future research should also address these other nations and communication cultures.

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Exploring the origins of careers in public relations

Heather Yaxley, Bournemouth University PhD student
hyaxley@bournemouth.ac.uk

*“Professions are shaped as much by the persons who work in them as they are by the body of knowledge the professions represent. Public relations is no exception.”
(Harlow, 1981, p33)*

Introduction

This paper aims to contribute towards historical knowledge of public relations (PR) by exploring the origins of careers in the field through a study of those working in its early days within the US and Britain. Documented histories of PR to date have used biographies to consider the emergence of the occupation rather than looking at the nature of careers in the field. Neither has PR been paid attention by those outside the field who specialise in the study of professions (L’Etang 2004).

The development of PR in Britain was largely unstudied until L’Etang’s extensive consideration of its professionalization in 2004, although a US history had been narrated (Nolte 1979, Harlow 1981, Grunig and Hunt 1984, Crable and Vibbert 1986, Cutlip 1994, Cutlip 1995, Ewen 1996). Literature in respect of work in PR has “widely ignoring career development factors” (Wolf 2006 p175). At the same time, although there is a long history of career studies, knowledge of changing career paths is in its early stages (Valcour et al. 2007) and there is little understanding of the reality of “how careers are actually played out” (Schein 2007 p575). Therefore, a study of the historical development of careers in PR offers a new area to be explored.

The concept of a career is defined as “a succession of related jobs arranged in a hierarchy of prestige, through which persons move in an ordered (more or less predictable) sequence” (Wilensky 1961, cited Arthur et al. 1999 p4). This idea of progress and advancement implies pursuing a career brings benefits (such as personal development, greater income or higher social status). A more “straightforward definition of a career is synonymous with the work-life history of an individual” (Mitch et al 2004) raising the question of whether or not the origins of PR offer a career rather than simply constituting a job (“a paid position of regular employment”

OED 1989), which would lack the sense of direction over time which is evident in a career, or an occupation (“holding a place or position” OED 1989) which reflects how or where someone’s time is being spent in isolation from any previous or subsequent employment.

This exploration of the development of PR as a career uses qualitative content analysis (Daymon and Holloway 2002) of biographies and other published narratives of those who worked in the field in its formative years. As inductive research it aims to identify themes, threads and patterns to illustrate the tapestry (Collin 2007) of the first careers in PR.

However, histories of PR have tended to focus on “a few colourful personalities” (Cutlip 1994 pxvii) seeming to reflect Carlyle’s notion of the history of great men (Kerry and Hill 2010) meaning the careers of the majority of those working in PR (including women) are not acknowledged, recorded or studied.

Emergence of careers – enterprise and agency

The history of the emergence of careers stresses the importance of societal economic and demographic changes (Baruch 2004) with the commercialisation of the English economy in the 16th century creating “a rising group of enterprising rural gentry, yeomen, and artisans” which, along with the existing merchant class meant “a broad sector of English society was becoming prosperous, powerful, and independent of traditional restraints in a newly commercial society” (Block 2002 p39). These changes offered new working opportunities beyond those prescribed by a person’s “inherited career” (Lowenthal 1998 p33) where “a person is born to his trade and station” (Hughes 1928 p756); although family occupations tended to continue across generations into the mid-19th century (Moore et al 2007).

The documented US history of PR places press agency (seeking press exposure on behalf of a client) as the primary precursor of the field in the early 19th century (Grunig and Hunt 1984) highlighting two prominent “practitioners of this art” (Sietel 1998 p27): Amos Kendall and Phineas T. Barnum. Cole’s biography of Kendall (2004) does not list either press agent or public relations within his career synopsis, highlighting that he was a “jack-of-all-trades” who “in almost all of these occupations” was “swept up in the revolution in communications” (p4). Kendall “found a career in the burgeoning field of political journalism” (Cole 2004 p54),

before being asked by President Jackson to undertake a role in which he “earned the title of the first presidential public relations man” (Endres 1976 p5). However, this claim is based on Endres equating the tasks Kendall undertook, with “common public relations activities” (Grunig and Hunt 1984 p20) performed by White House personnel of the 1970s, not any historical use of these titles. Kendall’s later career involved a return to journalism (Manning and Wyatt 2010) and championing the Western Cherokee as a litigator (Karsten 1997). It would seem that those crafting histories of PR used Kendall as a role model on the basis of linking his skills to the modern occupation, whereas Cole did not observe his communicative tasks as indicative of a distinct PR occupation.

As with Kendall, P.T. Barnum has been appropriated in the history of PR on the basis of his ability to “drum up free newspaper exposure” (Seitel 1998 p29), although he is seen as a “brash huckster” (Harris 1981 p3), albeit whilst being acknowledged as a “master publicist” (Crabbe and Vibbert 1986 p98). Outside of PR texts, Barnum is termed a showman (Cook 2005), rather than a press agent, with his career reflecting an entrepreneurial nature progressing from “itinerant hawker” (p7) to a businessman whose “enterprises included a staff of thousands; separate publicity, advertising, and acquisitions departments: corporate mergers every few years; and brand recognition on four continents” (p7). Within Barnum’s career press agency appears to be a skill set, rather than it, or PR, being the focus of his occupation.

Looking for patterns in the careers of Kendall and Barnum, both demonstrated an innate skill in communications and an opportunistic entrepreneurial approach, reflecting the social context of the times as “America was filled with jacks-of-all-trades who lacked the proper training for the new specialized occupations that were springing up (Cole 2004 p54). As such, neither man was unique in their field (politics and entertainment), and so their use as examples of press agents as antecedents of PR practitioners, seems arbitrary.

The function of being an agent reflects the medieval occupation, *commenda* (who managed trade between merchants), which Weber (1889) related to contemporary ideas of the agent as an intermediary acting between two parties. This can be seen in the role of the first advertising agents who worked for newly launched newspapers as early as 1786 in London (Tungate 2007). The first US advertising agents, established in Philadelphia in 1841 (Hower 1939) and New York in 1842 (Tungate 2007), initially represented the media rather than advertisers (Fox 1997)

before taking commission as “independent space brokers” (p14) meaning these early agents were primarily negotiators rather than communicators. L’Etang (2004) claims “a significant proportion of the early (*PR*) consultants began their careers in advertising agencies that subsequently developed public relations departments or subsidiaries” (p101).

The earliest use of the title “press agent” is traced by Henry (1972) to W.W. Duran (probably Durand), the third top executive within John Robinson’s Circus and Menagerie in 1868 (although Stoddart (2000) dates the high profile use of publicity in the circus arena to London a century earlier). Stout (2005) stated Durand was formerly city editor of the Louisville Courier-Journal, whilst Russell and Bishop (2009) note he had experience in the London circus; demonstrating an early link between US and British press agency.

Biographies of early circus press agents reveal various career paths. For example, Richard F “Tody” Hamilton was a newspaper reporter and owner, who became press agent and general manager for the New York Aquarium in 1876 before working for Barnum from 1886 until retiring in 1907 (New York Times 1916). John Burke was “a stock company actor, manager of a tent-show dramatic troupe, and newspaper editor” (Russell 1979 p301), before spending the remainder of his career as press agent for Buffalo Bill Cody. Press agency seems to have been undertaken opportunistically at this time, although as an occupation rather than a transitory job. Indeed, Dexter Fellows spent his long career exclusively as a circus press agent, (Time Magazine 1936), with his career continuing well into the 20th century. Not all press agents were regarded as hustlers; Charles Stow, the son of a Pennsylvania judge, who preferred to be called a circus writer, often left the negotiation for placing his copy in the press to other agents which improved his popularity with journalists (Stout 2005).

The press agency occupation was found within many organizations by the late 19th century (Stoker and Rawlins 2005). For example, Canadian born William B Sommerville, a “faithful press agent” (Russell and Bishop 2009 p95), was employed as superintendent of the press service of the Western Union Telegraph in the 1880s and 1890s. Opening the inaugural International History of Public Relations Conference, Russell (2010) suggested the historical path into the occupation in the US could be dated to the 1870s, with journalists working for the Associated Press Agency gradually becoming organisational advocates, known as press agents. Regardless of

whether press agents represented a promotional or journalistic point of entry, Cutlip (1995 p179) notes the Fourth Estate in 1898 wrote: “press agents have become a necessary adjunct to nearly all commercial enterprises”, with the first firm created to provide press agency services, The Publicity Bureau, established in 1900 (Cutlip 1994).

Both the advertising and press agent types of commenda indicate a mediation role between newspapers and client organizations as the antecedents of a career in PR. The position as an arbitrageur (middleman) demonstrates the entrepreneurial qualities frequently required in a disordered uncertain society (Chell 2008) which was the situation in the US at this time (Putnam 2000). The commenda represents a simple, flexible form, positioned by Harris (2009) at one end of a continuum which ranges from an individual merchant, through an agent (representative) arrangement, to partnership, corporation and ultimately the state. The nature of early work and careers in PR would appear to be located, and even develop along this continuum. For example, James Drummond Ellsworth held positions as a newspaper reporter between 1884 and 1900, working simultaneously as a press agent prior to joining the Publicity Bureau where he progressed from “writer to manager and then to a limited partnership” (Cutlip 1994 p19). He had responsibility for the AT&T account before being hired in 1907 to work with the company’s recently appointed chief executive, Theodore Newton Vail, as the head of a newly create AT&T information department (Ewan 1996); where Ellsworth worked until he retired in 1930 (Heath 2005).

Such new career opportunities are generally traced (Baruch 2004) to the Industrial Revolution in the 18th/19th centuries, prior to which 80-90 per cent of the UK population worked in agriculture within rural communities, shifting to the majority working in manufacturing and similar urban occupations by the middle of the 20th century. A similar change was evident in America (Putnam 2000) as a result of urbanization and migration. This is the social context in which the occupation of public relations emerged (Harlow 1981) with the term first used in 1882 and Bernays originating the phrase ‘public relations counsel’ to describe a communications professional in the 1920s (Grunig and Hunt 1984). L’Etang (2004) observes these authors present an “evolutionary model” (p10) of a largely US history of PR which remains dominant in literature (Nessmann 2000).

Beyond media relations

The focus on press agency as the antecedent of careers in PR ignores a wider perspective of the occupation, despite its origins being “as old as civilization” (Grunig and Hunt 1984 p14). The administration of exhibitions in the 19th century is one example where those who demonstrate relevant skills are not included in PR texts. Large, formal expositions were used to educate the public since the late 18th century, becoming regular features in Europe and the US from the early 19th century (Unger 2007). The creation of the “World Fair” took such expositions to a new level requiring expert administrative and publicity skills. In this field, one notable figure is civil servant, Henry Cole, who was the “galvanic force” (Wilson 2003 p128) behind the Great Exhibition in London in 1851, responsible for ensuring the event was promoted at a level that had not been seen before (Briggs 1981). Similar talents were evident in Sir Philip Cunliffe-Owen, a protégé of Cole who in turn mentored Claude Johnson at the end of the 19th century (Oldham 1967). Although Johnson never had a job title as press agent or public relations officer, he reflected strategic competence in the field. His career included gaining acceptance for the motor car as secretary of the Royal Automobile Club before joining C.S. Rolls as a partner. His talent for business organization built the reputation of the company and its vehicles using a range of promotional techniques including creating innovative driving guide books with the editor of The Car magazine, establishing a school for chauffeurs and owners of Rolls-Royce cars, and commissioning Charles Sykes to design the Spirit of Ecstasy “Silver Lady” mascot, the most famous in the world (Oldman 1967).

Publicity and promotion were key aspects in the success of the world fairs. The 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago, which celebrated the 400th anniversary of Columbus's discovery of America, attracted 27.5 million visitors (Unger 2007) and featured a department of publicity and promotion headed from 1890 by Pennsylvanian journalist (and former army officer), Major Moses P Handy (Cutlip 1995). At the St Louis fair of 1904, the "press exploitation" bureau had a domestic and foreign division, the former alone employing “76 persons, including 26 full-time reporters and editors, 6 stenographers, and numerous clerks” (Rydell 1993 p22). However, the biographies and careers of those involved in the exhibition field in Europe and the US in the late 19th and early 20th centuries have not been considered to any extent in the PR literature. The administrative and publicity skills they gained

may have equipped others, as in the case of Johnson, to develop career paths from what could be considered a PR role into senior management.

Professionalization of modern careers

The development of PR is typically presented as a series of eras, even when it is recognised that history “moves in a seamless web” (Cutlip 1994 pxvii). The dominant US history (Grunig and Hunt 1984) has been divided into five distinct eras: the public be fooled (from mid-19th century), the public be damned (late 19th century), public information (early 20th century), propaganda and persuasion (mid-20th century), public understanding (late 20th century). Nessman (2000) separates the historical development of PR in Germany into three phases (18th/19th century to early 20th century; 1914-1945; from 1945 onwards) whilst L’Etang (2004) considers six overlapping periods in British PR history between 1914 and 1998. Presenting history as a discontinuous narrative has been criticised in favour of recognising that development continues over time, and reveals evidence of overlap or repetition (Murphie and Potts 2003).

Developmental models in career theory present stages relating to an individual’s life-span progress or directional patterns of careers within organisations (Dalton 1989, Deer and Briscoe 2007) but have not considered historical phases in particular occupations. One developmental aspect in respect of occupations can be found in studies of the nature of work and status in society (Broadbent et al. 1997). Goode (1969) reports the “industrial society is a professionalizing one” (p266); although the professions (a concept dating to early medieval times) existing prior to the Industrial Revolution were seen as occupations for gentlemen (Prest 1987).

The more modern definition of a profession as “an occupation in which a professed knowledge of some subject, field, or science is applied; a vocation or career, especially one that involves prolonged training and a formal qualification” (OED 1989) is seen as signifying “the shift of certain occupations from mere occupations into professions... to accommodate the needs of industrial England and the United States” (Oleson and Whittaker 1970 p183). The reason for such aspirations is likely to be that the profession has been seen as “the prestige show” (Hughes 1952 p424), with the effort of “middle class occupations” (Hughes 1960 p56) to achieve professional status alleged to be in part about social advancement in terms of both an

individual “getting into an occupation of high prestige” and “the collective effort of an organized occupation to improve its place and increase its power, in relation to others”.

Although press agents continued to operate, practitioners in the early 20th century sought to differentiate their own work as being more ethical and strategic, a professional development aspect that is narrated in PR histories. In contrast to the likes of Barnum and Kendall, later practitioners originated from a higher social class that had benefitted from increased gentrification, urbanization and rising educational standards. The two highest profile practitioners of this time in PR literature are Ivy Ledbetter Lee and Edward Bernays. Hiebert’s biography of Lee (1966) records that he came from an affluent background and had attended Princeton University, where he gained journalism experience providing news to Associated Press. Unable to afford to complete his education as a lawyer, Lee obtained a post-graduate qualification in journalism before moving to New York in 1899 and obtaining employment as a financial reporter for three major publications (the mark of a professional journalist). Hiebert (1966 p15) distinguishes Lee from fellow journalists and “circus hawker” press agents as being as gentlemanly and ambitious, undertaking a postgraduate course in political science and literature at Columbia University. Lee’s move into PR occurred by chance when, after abandoning his journalism career in 1903, he was offered a publicity opportunity, subsequently becoming press representative of the Citizens Union (Cutlip 1994). Lee’s career continued as an independent press agent before becoming a junior partner in the third US PR agency, with George Frederick Parker. Lee is credited with taking a professional approach issuing a Declaration of Principles in 1905 that is claimed to be “the starting point of modern public relations” (Hiebert 1966 p12) and the “profession of practice” (Cutlip 1994 p44). However, this praise ignores earlier sophisticated use of public relations (Russell and Bishop 2009) and Lee’s approach in treating truth as “something that can be merchandised to the public” (Ewan 1996 p80).

In career terms, Lee went to work full-time as publicity director for the Pennsylvania railroad in 1908 (taking the path from press agent to in-house practitioner earlier trod by Ellsworth), before gaining international experience and then returning to a senior management position at the railroad in 1912, claimed to be “the first known instance of a public relations person being placed at the management level” (Cutlip 1994 p54). He was then appointed in 1914 as full-time counsel to John

D Rockefeller before setting up his own agency in 1915 (Cutlip 1994). Lee's career continued as the head of an independent consultancy, gaining greater income and higher social status (Cutlip 1994) through a client list comprising high profile individuals, large and powerful corporations, and foreign countries. His focus shifted to "analyzing public opinion and giving counsel on public problems" (Hiebert 1966, p6), thereby making a strategic contribution to his clients as an "independent professional agent" (p7) and "pioneering the new vocation" (Cutlip 1994 p153) of PR. This positive career perspective contrasts, however, with criticism of Lee's involvement with German businesses before the 2nd world war (Russell and Bishop 2009).

Russell and Bishop (2009) argue that Lee represents the occupation of publicist which they believe reflected a change to organizations taking initiative to provide publicity information, which they do not see as an evolution of press agency nor a replacement for it. Indeed, Stoker and Rawlins (2005 p178) observe that "by 1919, publicity became less informative and more manipulative", which supports a continuity of history with overlap and repetition, rather than discrete phases.

The 80-year-long career of Edward Bernays crossed several of the boundaries presented in PR histories, although he is most closely associated with propaganda and persuasion (Grunig and Hunt 1984). Bernays claimed to have "created and named the profession of counsel on public relations" (Cutlip 1994 p160) and was active in each of the five processes that L'Etang (2004 p17) details as necessary for an occupation to achieve the status of a profession:

1. emergence of the full-time occupation
2. establishment of the training school
3. founding of professional associations
4. political agitation directed towards the protection of the association by law
5. adoption of a formal code.

Despite advocating a professional status for PR, Bernays' own career was similar to those who predated him in the field. Bernays (1965) outlines a privileged upbringing in New York attending private schools and college albeit leaving prematurely in 1912. He then began his career as a writer, reporting he found "the pull of communications" to be "compelling" (p39), but left to travel to Europe, where,

despite finding employment, he soon returned to New York. As with earlier pioneers, it would seem Bernays was restless and sought jobs rather than a specific career. He also reports his move into the PR field was due to chance; firstly in gaining an opportunity at a medical publication where he accidentally gained experience in securing publicity for a play which became a cause celebre. Again Bernays abandoned his work to go travelling to Europe before deciding to become a newspaperman on his return to New York. As he was not successful in securing an opening, he took a temporary job promoting a charity and then wrote to the leading theatre booking agents Klaw and Erlanger where he became a press agent in 1913 until 1915, before being offered a partnership at the Metropolitan Musical Bureau where he handled promotion of concert tours (Cutlip 1994). The 1st world war led to Bernays' employment in the Committee on Public Information (CPI) where he gained international publicity and media experience (Ewan 1996). Bernays remained in PR and soon opened his own office where he sought a higher status for his work, by drawing on work by contemporary writers such as Lasswell and Lippman in the 1920s and 1930s (L'Etang 2004) and publishing his own books to demonstrate expertise in PR counsel; notably responding to Lippman's call for specialist communicators who would brief the media to educate the public and influence public opinion on behalf of government and commercial organizations.

Finding his forte, Bernays (as Lee was also doing at the time), built a career from this point as a PR counsel, gaining increasing status and affluence through the nature of his clients' work. He adopted a scientific approach through the psychoanalytic insight of his uncle Sigmund Freud and began teaching courses at New York University in 1923 (Lazere 1987). The establishment of training in the field had started in 1920 at the University of Illinois, being introduced by Josef F. Wright, the university's newly appointed publicity director who was "motivated by a desire to bring prestige to his calling"; since "there was little demand for Wright's "Publicity Methods" course" (Heath 2005 p689). Indeed, there is a lack of discussion in histories of PR of those who attended such courses, and the relevance for early careers of gaining a specialist education is not apparent.

Bernays continued a "crusade of some 70 years to bring understanding and acceptance of the public relations counsel" (Cutlip 1994 p181), continuing to campaign for licensing (one of the steps towards a profession identified by L'Etang 2004) past his one hundredth birthday. Although his own career path did not differ in

most respects from his predecessors in the field, Bernays undoubtedly reflected “a general tendency for occupations to seek professional status” (Wilensky 1964 p141). Indeed, his own work demonstrated the linkage observed by Malatesta (2011) between the modern development of professions and the emergence of political and business clients. Malatesta (2011) observes this development led to professionals working less frequently as individuals and more commonly in partnerships, within professional firms or as employees as “an increasing percentage of professionals work in complex organizations” (Wilensky 1964 p146). Harlow (1981) notes an increased numbers of PR practitioners led to the formation of the American Council on Public Relations in 1930.

This progressive professional continuum can be seen in PR practice in Britain as well as in the US in the early 20th century. L’Etang (2004) highlights the contribution of practitioners working as local government officials in the Britain after the 1st world war, noting the beginning of professionalization and a call for the establishment of a “press gang” (p22) in response to media and public criticism; although such proposals were not implemented until a decade later. It appears that such moves were instigated by existing officials, with members of the Institute of Public Administration taking responsibility for improving relations with the public. L’Etang (2004) observes “existing narratives of the origins and development of the public relations occupation are largely American” (p9) and presents an alternate origin for the occupation in Britain. Miller and Dinan (2008) agree that many early British practitioners began their careers in the service of government; arguing British intelligence officers were pioneers of “black propaganda” (p16) who later used their skills in the PR industry. Although L’Etang (2004) cites that over forty people were employed in publicity and press roles in government departments in 1930-1931, she does not indicate any names or specific career paths. One early pioneer was Grierson who studied at university in both the UK and the US where he was exposed to the same kind of thinking about democracy that informed Bernays’ approach to PR (L’Etang 2004). He subsequently adopted documentary making to inform the public and he was employed by the British government in this capacity in the 1930s. Grierson received patronage from Sir Stephen Tallents, who was a “career civil servant” (L’Etang 2004 p35), and had contact with many PR practitioners employed by various British public organizations, such as the BBC, Empire Marketing Board, and Post Office at this time. Although omitting details of the early careers of these

early British practitioners, L'Etang outlines their role in developing the Ministry of Information in 1937 in anticipation of the 2nd world war.

Clearly during the first decades of the 20th century, PR had succeeded in becoming a full time job and, at least in the US, training courses had been introduced and a professional association established. However, other aspects of a profession including gaining protection of the association by law and adoption of a formal code remained matters that were still to be resolved. Nevertheless, financial and other benefits associated with professional status were accrued, at least by those building a high profile as PR counsellors during its early growth period.

Bureaucratic careers

Industrialisation provided new working opportunities in manufacturing, business, retail and government (Harris 1981, Sampson 1995, Putnam 2000) as the creation of large organizations required the management of people which necessitated the identification of those with potential for progression and skills development. In the UK, large companies were first founded in the 18th century, with the modern concept of a manager as an intermediary between owners and workers dating to the 19th century. The precedent for management of these large companies was the army (Sampson 1995) leading to formal, hierarchical structures, with "layers of management" (p26) who "were preoccupied with establishing their own status and security" (p43), albeit through conforming to the organizational system. This mechanization of work was at the expense of the "small merchant and independent artisan" (Putnam 2000, p369) and signalled the emergence of a new bureaucratic form of careers from the mid-19th century.

Although L'Etang (2004) places the origins of PR in Britain within the bureaucratic arena of local and national government, it is not clear the extent to which this embraced a hierarchical career path for practitioners working in the newly emerged field. Likewise, employment opportunities in PR in the US from the late 19th century do not appear to indicate a bureaucratic career path into management roles. One example of such career progress is Sir Miles Thomas who after joined the British army as an armoured car driver in the 1st world war fulfilled his need for an exciting challenge first as a motoring reporter, then as a press officer for Morris Cars

rising through management to senior chairman roles in the car industry before being appointed as chairman of the airline business BOAC (Thomas 1964).

Averill Broughton, a PR and advertising executive with his own firm, authored a book, *Careers in Public Relations: the new profession*, in 1943 to provide career advice and interviews with leading PR executives. As these men had reached senior positions in business and industry, the book provides an opportunity to consider bureaucratic career paths from the 1920s. What is noticeable in the accounts of the PR practitioners (supported by Broughton's own view), is that their career paths do not reflect progression from a junior role or promotion on the basis of specialist PR skills. Broughton notes that many who were established in their careers in PR by the 1940s "backed into the field, as it were, by accident, and sat down. Afterwards it seemed natural enough, and their preliminary experience seemed as though it created public relations opportunity later" (p77), which echoes earlier times. He also notes that those considering a career in PR in the 1940s "should begin to prepare for it and work toward that end", recommending they should gain a broad education and experience in journalism and/or business administration before being appointed to a senior position. Those who practice the techniques of PR are seen as support staff incapable of pursuing a career path into management.

Women's work

As well as employing managers, the 19th century companies were staffed by clerks and secretaries who were originally predominantly men. Indeed, "the workplace was increasingly constructed in a male idiom" (Simonton 2006 p261), although Sampson (1995) observes in the early years of last century, "the arrival of women in the offices which was the beginning of the real social revolution" (p55), with two inventions notable for the transformation of their employment opportunities: the typewriter and the telephone, which were deemed particularly suited to the skills of women (Simonton 1998), who were employed to undertake business communications activities under the direction of more senior male colleagues.

Women were not expected to follow a career path, indeed their "promotion prospects were of no concern" (Simonton 1998 p256) with Sampson (1995) claiming the ambition of young women in the early 20th century lay in securing rich husbands

in the workplace; whilst Strom (1995) reports how unmarried women were able to rise to positions such as personal secretary to a chief executive. Indeed, Obelkevich and Catterall (1994) state “historically working women have jobs rather than careers” (p3). However, Sampson (1995 p60) notes that women in the early 20th century “had a chance, at least in theory, to be trained to become a manager” highlighting in particular that “a humble position behind a typewriter in some editorial or publishing office has often been the first stepping-stone to independent journalism, and even to an Editor’s chair”. A view of journalism as the entry point for those working in public relations in its early days is commonly found in literature (Neff 2001, Pearson 2009) raising questions about whether women took this opportunity to progress their careers.

Cutlip (1994) notes few women are represented in narratives of PR’s history, although Harlow (1981) lists several who were active in the 1920s (but without any biographical or further information). One who is briefly mentioned as a publicist is Elizabeth “Bessie” Tyler who promoted the Klu Klux Klan to the media in 1921 (Cashman 1989, Cutlip 1994). Doris Fleischman is one of the few high profile women working in the PR field in its early days, although her profile is largely due to her marriage to Edward Bernays. Indeed, Cutlip (1994) attributes her initial employment as a journalist in 1914 to Bernays, although she rose to be assistant editor writing feminist articles (Ware 2004) before joining Bernays’ firm as a staff reporter in 1919. Retaining her maiden name, her career from that point was primarily behind the scenes as Bernays’ business partner (from 1922), although she continued to champion feminist causes and write books. Indeed, she edited *An Outline of Careers for Women*, and authored a chapter providing advice for women seeking a career in PR (Fleischman Bernays 1935). Here she claims PR’s “ultimate possibilities for women lie in the future” (p385) on the basis that the “profession of counsel on public relations is so new”. When considering whether women should pursue a career in PR, Fleischman reprints Bernays’ existing chapter on careers which addresses the “young man” seeking to become “successful public relations counsel” (p390) rather than presenting any gender specific information. Similarly, although Broughton (1943) provides career advice for men and women, he only profiles the successful careers of men at that time. The role and careers of women in PR in Britain in the early 20th century is not recorded by L’Etang (2004 p115), but she does note their role in the 1960s was to focus on promoting “fashion, household goods, beauty treatment” or

possibly to flatter clients. It would seem that if women worked in the occupation of public relations in its early days, their stories are unreported whilst opportunities for them to develop careers were few.

Conclusion

PR histories present stages of development, yet, from a career perspective, there seems to be more continuity in practice. Despite evidence of the potential for professional and bureaucratic careers, the career paths of the early pioneers and senior executives highlighted in PR literature remained entrepreneurial, opportunistic and primarily commenda in form. Their varying entry points would seem to reflect von Bertalanffy's concept of equifinality; "the ability to reach the same end by following different paths" (Alvarez and Svejnova 2005), with journalism, advertising, corporate experience, government administration and various other jobs pursued prior to entering the PR field.

Those identified as antecedents of PR practitioners in the early 19th century tend to be appropriated though a shared thread of reflecting contemporary skills, primarily in media relations. Indeed, the PR literature has omitted others who may have relevant skills and career paths, such as those who gained experience in the exhibition field.

For men at least, industrialisation offered greater choice in terms of career paths, particularly as a result of increased literacy and education (Stone 1969) which empowered individuals and opened up new opportunities. The rewards of pursuing a career in PR seem to have fallen primarily to those who founded and built up PR agencies, gaining high profiles and securing corporate clients. The experiences and career paths of most juniors employed in support functions is largely undocumented. A few practitioners did progress from an agency role to an in-house position, but promotion within organizations into management functions is lacking in the PR literature (despite examples found in other texts). Indeed, although senior positions were available heading up publicity functions within a range of organizations these were not presented as appropriate for those moving from support roles. Likewise, the role of women and the nature of their careers were limited, with expectations that the majority were employed as secretaries who gave up their posts on marriage.

Overall, the origins of careers in PR lack deliberate focus on seeking employment in the occupation, with most early practitioners entering the field by chance. Nevertheless, the opportunity for others to pursue a career in PR was recognised by the 1930s and 1940s, with courses and publications emerging. It is clear that the tapestry of early careers in PR reflects a common thread of communications and openness to take advantage of the changing times. Otherwise, few patterns can be detected, with individual opportunities than a specific career path being the dominant theme.

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**The development of the image of public relations
in the *New York Times* - 1904-1934**

Lynn M. Zoch, Ph.D.
Radford University
lzoch@radford.edu

Debra R. van Tuyll, Ph.D.
Augusta State University
dvantuyll@aug.edu

Mark K. Dolan, Ph.D.
The University of Mississippi
mdolan@olemiss.edu

Public relations has an image problem. It apparently always has, for even in the earliest days of the 20th century when public relations was emerging as a separate, recognized field of professional practice, journalists and publics alike were either unable or unwilling to accept the distinctions between those who sought publicity just for the sake of publicity and those who sought to link the publicity needs of clients with the news needs of journalists by supplying accurate, truthful information. Some modern scholars and practitioners have argued the field's image problem is something new, but this study found that even the earliest public portrayals of public relations framed the field as populated by plaid-suited, megaphone-toting hacks or sweet young things who flirted their clients' way onto the news pages (*New York Times*, 11 April 1909, sect. 5, p. 9; 1 February 1920, sect. 9, p. 9).

Using the *New York Times* as a lens, this study seeks to show how the emerging profession of public relations was perceived by one of its most important audiences, the press, and how the press' perception helped shape its general perception in a city with a high level of corporate activity. While newspaper content does not reveal much about what individual citizens think about an issue, it does at least offer insight into how the practice of public relations was being framed by one of public relations' most important audiences: the press. This study examines how public relations practice was portrayed in the *New York Times* during Ivy Ledbetter Lee's working lifetime.

Underpinning for the study

Lee was one of the earliest practitioners of public relations as we think of it today. As early as 1905, Lee issued a declaration of principles by which he pledged his publicity firm would

operate, and those included transparency, which he termed as not operating in secret; accuracy; and truthfulness (Hiebert 1965), all concepts with which public relations practitioners and academics of today are familiar. Russell and Bishop, however, note that “previous scholarship on Ivy Lee identifies the ‘declaration’ as a seminal moment in public relations history, while also suggesting that Lee’s legacy is mixed” (2009, p 93). By focusing on how the *New York Times*, the newspaper in the city where many of the primary public relations practitioners of the day, particular Lee, were based, this study analyzes how that newspaper framed the profession, its practices and practitioners during the early years of an emerging field.

Overview of framing

The concept of framing has been attributed to both sociologist Erving Goffman (1974) and to anthropologist Gregory Bateson (1954) whom Goffman credited with originating the metaphor. In the field of mass communication it was William Gamson (1989) who saw similarities between how individuals persuade others to their viewpoint and how the media focus readers’ or viewers’ attention on a specific point of view, and moved an interpersonal communication principle into the realm of public and media discourse.

Robert Entman (1993), whose article on framing in *Journal of Communication* set the groundwork for an increased use of the concept, wrote that “frames select and call attention to particular aspects of the reality described, which logically means that frames simultaneously direct attention away from other aspects” (p 54). Entman further identified four locations where frames can occur in the communication process, that of the communicator, the receiver, the text and the cultural framework. This study places its focus on the text (the *New York Times* as believable source for its readers), and the cultural framework of the early 20th century.

As Entman explained, “the *text* [italics in original] contains frames, which are manifested by the presence or absence of certain keywords, stock phrases, stereotyped images, sources of information, and sentences that provide thematically reinforcing clusters of facts or judgments” (1993, p 52). Framing also organizes in two major ways: cognitively and culturally (Reese 2001). Cognitively it invites the reader to think about something in a certain way, often appealing to psychological biases. Culturally it goes beyond one story, and invites the reader or viewer “to marshal a cultural understanding and keep on doing so beyond the immediate information” (Reese 2001 p 13). By using a period of 35 years this study attempts to touch on both of these aspects of framing.

Research question and method

As noted in Russell and Bishop, most research on public relations history focuses on corporations as well as on the 20th century (Russell and Bishop 2009). We were not interested in corporate public relations alone, but rather in how the media portrayed public relations, the roles that practitioners were described as taking on, and how the tasks associated with public relations were described – basically, how were the practice and practitioners of the early 20th century framed by journalists of the day. Thus, our overall research question was: How did the *New York Times* portray the work of public relations practitioners, and the practitioners themselves, during the early part of the 20th century?

To conduct this study, we searched the *New York Times* index from 1900 to 1934, using Ivy Lee's primary working lifespan in public relations (1903 – 1934) as our timeframe, for articles that mentioned public relations and related practices. During the search, the following recurring key words and phrases emerged as those that, once the articles were found, held relevance to us, and those keywords were used to find additional articles: public relations, public, publicity, news, newspapers, press agent, newsman, pressman, advertising and propaganda. Pioneering figures such as Ivy Lee, George Creel and Edward Bernays were also included in this group of key words and phrases, and the articles were used when the article was about them or the work they did, rather than about the corporation they were representing.

We examined the resulting 106 articles to determine what each revealed about the image of public relations as framed by the *Times*. In this content analysis the words advertising, publicity, and press agent (or agency), for example, were used in many of these articles, as they still are, as synonyms for public relations. While today we recognize discrete differences between tools such as advertising and practices such as publicity, those distinctions were not made until very late in the period under study.

Using a qualitative content analysis, we determined the general theme of each article, how each article defined the field, as well as the tasks and values associated with public relations and which media of the early 20th century were considered appropriate vehicles for its practice. This in-depth analysis additionally revealed the judgments made about the profession by readers in their responses to articles as they attempted to assess its societal, economic and political worth.

The results of this analysis were assessed to determine the image the *New York Times* projected to its reader of the field known today as public relations. The literature on organizational identity defines image as how external audiences perceive an organization with specific reference to their impressions of institutional culture and behaviors. Identity, on the other hand, is how internal audiences perceive the organization (Baker and Balmer 1997; Fombrun

1996; Hatch and Schultz 1997; Marwick and Fill 1907; van Riel and Balmer 1997). Examining newspaper portrayals of a profession is one way to assess the field's image, and, in the case of public relations, such a study will reveal how it is perceived by a key constituent: a member of the elite media.

To guide this consideration of image, the authors considered what kinds of statements would constitute evaluations of the profession's character and behavior. By reading the study's articles, we found six categories of evaluative statements focusing on character or behavior.

Those categories are:

1. **Definition**, defined as descriptive statements about what the profession is;
2. **Value words**, defined as actual judgment statements made about the field by an audience member, in this case either a reporter or, in the case of letters to the editor, a reader;
3. **Value of**, defined as how the societal, economic, political, or commercial worth of the field is perceived by the audience;
4. **Tasks**, defined as the kinds of work a public relations practitioner might undertake. Related to this category is descriptions of who – that is, what sort of person – performs those tasks;
5. **Media**, defined as what sorts of media the profession uses to convey the messages it sends out. This category was included because of the clear connection between public relations and the shepherding of mediated messages from clients to the public;
6. **Values of**, defined as what the field stands for, what practitioners believe in, and their motives.

Tasks and media

The range of activities the *New York Times* attributed to publicity men and women is perhaps best illustrated by its very first and its very last articles in the period under study. The first article, published in August 1900, was little more than a petulant rant about the audacity of an advertising agency that sent out an attractive brochure containing information about several American businesses that had won prizes at the Paris World's Fair. The *Times* writer interpreted the content of this brochure as little more than a conspiracy between the agency and the businesses to swindle free space from newspapers so they could fool the public into thinking something was news when it was not. The ad agency's work was portrayed as that of a hired gun to try to bilk both the public and the press. The press's job, on the other hand, was portrayed as

being to sell, rather than donate, space, and to protect the public from such deceits (*New York Times* 24 August 1900).

The very last article was a story about the state of Ivy Lee's estate. It dealt primarily with financial and family matters, but the story did make reference to Lee's occupation, which it gave as a "public relations counsel" (*New York Times* 30 November 1934, p 16). The very first article in the *Times* about Lee had simply identified him by his job title and employer, "Executive Assistant of the Pennsylvania Railroad Company" (*New York Times* 24 January 1914, p 4). A year later, Lee made the *Times* for a second time due to his testimony on behalf of the Rockefeller empire before the Federal Industrial Relations Commission. The Commission had been created to investigate labor conditions that had led to serious violence in the early 20th century. The commission was just beginning its work when a coal miners' strike at J. D. Rockefeller's Colorado Fuel and Iron Company resulted in the killings of three women and eleven children on Easter night 1914. By 1915, the Commission's investigations had turned to questions of corporate philanthropy and its potential use of "predatory wealth" to change the system of government in the United States and to bring about public opposition to the labor movement (*New York Times* 17 December 1914, p 6; January 28, 1915, p 4).

Lee was called to testify before the commission in late January 1915 about his role in "the publication of the presentation of the side of the Colorado strike from its operators viewpoint" (*New York Times* 28 January 1915, p 4). It was during this strike that Lee had issued the first ever press release, and he had done so to give the mine owner's side of the story. What is interesting about this story is that the paper clearly reports that Lee had the task of presenting the Rockefeller side, but it in no way identified him as a publicity man, an advertising agent, or a press agent. He was simply portrayed as a member of Rockefeller's staff. This was on the same day the committee grilled Rockefeller over how far his foundation might legally go to accomplish that part of its charter which empowered the organization to "do anything and everything it considered proper toward the reform of the American people and of mankind" (*New York Times* 28 January 1915, p 4). A commissioner asked Rockefeller whether his foundation might "circulate propaganda for or against the Workman's Compensation act," to which Rockefeller replied, "I should say not." Rockefeller was also questioned as to whether the foundation ought to be allowed to hire "publicity agents," and he said yes. "I don't see why the Foundation should not have the same legitimate methods of spreading its views as unions or the other organizations you have mentioned," was Rockefeller's response, a response notable not only because he sidestepped the issue of already having a publicity agent on his payroll in the form of Ivy Lee, but also because he very succinctly summarized in his statement exactly the task

of so much public relations work: spreading the view of an organization. (*New York Times* 28 January 1915, p 4).

In the thirty-plus years between the first and last articles, the *Times* attributed a variety of other tasks to the work of press agents and others who worked in the publicity industry. The paper's descriptions of this work were often devoid of value judgments and sometimes even positive. For example, in 1910, the Rev. John J. Burke, editor of *Catholic World*, addressed a group of school children on the use of publicity as a method of social reform (*New York Times* 7 April 1910). *Times* readers had been introduced to this idea about four years earlier in a speech by New York banker Henry Clews (*New York Times* 26 April 1906, p 8). Clews was speaking at the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School of Finance, and in his presentation, he argued that publicity was a certain cure for wrong-doing by business.

"We live in a progressive era, and we are at present passing through a period of salutary business reform," Clews told his audience. "This reform means improvement, and business men of all kinds should help and not retard it. The banking, railway, and insurance communities should, in particular, do all they can to promote it." Business could promote this "salutary business reform" by inviting "the fullest publicity as to their transactions and methods of doing business," Clews believed (*New York Times* 26 April 1906, p 8).

Clews' reference to business reform was probably a reference to the movement to pass the U.S. Food and Drug Act, which President Teddy Roosevelt would sign into law on June 30. Passage of the act was prompted, in part, by the publication in 1906 of Upton Sinclair's influential novel, *The Jungle* (Long 2005). Clews' views on publicity were right on, as modern public relations practitioners are fully aware. Transparency, one of the ethical standards noted in the latest revision of the Public Relations Society of America code of ethics, is indeed a useful means of ensuring that a corporation conducts its business fairly and ethically. Clews was also identified correcting bad business behaviors as a public relations task, a thought that was clearly beyond his time, though a bit later, Talcott Williams, director of Columbia University's School of Journalism, would also mount arguments for transparency when he told a church gathering that, not only was "publicity a cure for public ills," it was the only cure for public ills (*New York Times* 13 January 1913, p 4). Williams' elaboration made it clear that he was defining "publicity" as what happened when newspapers investigated organizations to uncover the truth about them. However, his use of the term "publicity" as something legitimately done was an interesting use of a term Williams' constituents at the *New York Times* had used derisively up to that point.

In general, the *Times* offered readers a fairly accurate and even-handed, even benign, portrait of the kinds of work done by public relations people. A good example is a story about the

campaign Lee waged to get Rockefeller's view before the public regarding the Colorado mine strike. The story described the tasks of publicity men in general, and Lee in particular, preparing memoranda for clients to send out, conducting education campaigns and placing ideas before opinion leaders, listening to and advising clients, directing campaigns and explaining them to clients, advising clients, making suggestions about media, and maintaining portfolios of previous work. The description of the kind of work done during a public relations campaign was absolutely right-on, but the unnamed writer clearly thought something was not on the up-and-up. After describing some of the tactics used in the campaign, the unnamed author pointed out that Lee has since been hired by Rockefeller, and that he had received a \$2,000 loan to cover expenses of the campaign. He tone insinuated that he suspected Lee had been reaping spoils for his work (*New York Times* 17 May 1915, p 4).

Most of the other articles also gave a fairly objective recounting of the tasks public relations people performed. One 1927 story about President Calvin Coolidge's cross-country trip even captured the notion that publicity and public relations were about reciprocal relationships (*New York Times* 3 July 1927, p 20). Across the study period, the *Times* reported public relations tasks to include policing the industry and turning dishonest professionals over to prosecutors (*New York Times* 9 December 1911, p 9); declining to answer certain kinds of questions (*New York Times* 16 May 1915, p 6); telling the truth and making the most of it and discovering all the facts (*New York Times* 24 June 1915, p 12); advocating on behalf of government (*New York Times* 19 December 1919, p 14); impressing a client's achievements on others (*New York Times* 4 April 1923, p 16); expanding modern industry and increasing the public's good will for a company (*New York Times* 17 February 1927).

Negative portrayals of public relations tasks were less common, but they did appear sometimes. Advertising, at that time considered as part and parcel with public relations, for example, was portrayed as tricking youths to "haunts of amusements," and perverting souls (*New York Times* 4 March 1907, p 18) and to find tribute-bringers (*New York Times* 11 April 1909, sect 5, p 9). During World War I, the paper claimed that one of Committee for Public Information Chair George Creel's tasks was to suspend the flow of information (*New York Times* 7 August 1917, p 5).

The *Times* clearly did not see the tasks that public relations people performed as negative in and of themselves. Indeed, as the speech by the director of the Columbia University journalism school indicated, the paper was aware, and showed its readers through its stories, that the tasks of journalists and of public relations people were not always that different from one another. What the paper did find objectionable was the tactics practitioners used and their motivations, and thus

it extended those objections to the industry itself in its stories and editorials that evaluated and defined the field.

Evolving definitions and attitudes

Though the term “public relations” did not appear until several years into the study period, the concept of “publicity” was there from the beginning, and it was not, in opinion of the *New York Times*’ writer, a good thing, but rather an attempt “to fool the public into reading their advertisements under the falsest of false pretenses.” (*New York Times* 24 August 1900). Although it wasn’t until after World War I, the *Times* did develop a grudging respect for the work of “public relations counsel,” the term the paper used to describe Ivy Lee’s work in the story about his estate. (*New York Times* 30 November 1934, p 16). The *Times* used the term “public relations” as a synonym for publicity or press agency for the first time in 1920. The article, according to its headline, purported to analyze the problems that had grown out of the expansion of the field during World War I. In that article, the *Times* defined the practitioner as a “super press agent” whose job was to create a “harmonious path” for his clients.

During this period this *Times* also began to distinguish between advertising and public relations. The story observed that most countries had created “committees on public information” during the war to supplement the work of their diplomatic corps. Following the war, the public information offices, what the paper termed “the frankly propaganda organizations,” had been dismantled, an idea that opened the possibility for Foreign Offices to get into the business of handing out “public information” so that a people might be self governing. Propaganda, the term the paper was using to describe government information, fulfilled a similar function: “Popular government is in the ascendant and public opinion is the power behind the democratic throne” (*New York Times* 5 September 1920, sect 6, p 3).

This was also the first occurrence of a *Times* story which mentioned women as practitioners. “A debonair young miss intrigued her way to the editor’s presence,” one article began. “Chic frocked and coiffured with that nicety which seems to be desirable, she was clearly capable of carrying by direct attack all of the organized defenses intended to protect modern men from the intrusions of the outside world.” Neither office boys nor secretaries were equal to fending off this woman who made her way to the editor’s office to ask for coverage of a church’s mission work. The writer, however, was doubtful that the woman was there on behalf of a church: “The chances are at least even that she told the truth or that at any rate she had concocted an entertaining yarn” on behalf of “the gentlemen who are anxious for publicity in order that the heathen of Mandalay may be converted” (*New York Times* 5 September 1920, sect 6, p 3).

The writer further described the woman as “one of the most recent recruits to a once despised but now respected and prosperous craft,” which had its roots in circus advance men. Her public relations work, “includes many types of effort, some legitimate, some verging on the criminal.” Some in this crowded field were “good press agents” and some were “bad press agents, just as there are shyster lawyers in league with criminals and members of the bar devoted to noble forms of public service” (*New York Times* 5 September 1920, sect 6, p 3). Ivy Lee was the first practitioner the *Times* referred to by name as an “adviser in public relations.” The paper also identified him as a “publicity man” in the same story, thus clearly linking the two terms as synonyms. (*New York Times* 12 February 1921, p 24).

Purporting also to be a history of the field, the article consisted of little more than a polemic, calling public relations people “fakers” and “news liars.” Despite such biases, the reporter defined the press agent as a byproduct of democracy, writing,

Public opinion is said to govern in free countries. Perhaps it does -- it certainly does if it persists long enough. The press agent, the director of public information, the public relations adviser, are each in their degree engaged in making public opinion for the causes they represent (*New York Times* 5 September 1920, sect 6 p 3).

By the early 1920s then, the *Times* signaled an awareness of the growing influence of public relations.

It was also secure enough in its own framing of the field that several weeks later it printed a Letter to the Editor in response to the September 5 article. Written by V.E. Scott, a NY “publicity man of rather extensive experience” who made abundantly clear to the reader the difference in his mind between a “press agent” and a “publicity man”. He wrote “a real publicity man regards himself as an outside representative of the publications to which he sends his stories. All the successful publicity men I know started as reporters on newspapers . . .” and then makes the point that publicity men are reporters in their own way, and their work is welcomed by editors who know “that his reporters can only gather a tithe of the news each day. Hence he welcomes the news stories sent him by the real publicity men and does not hesitate to print them when their news values justifies” (*New York Times* 19 September 1920, sect 6 p 9).

A review of Edward Bernays’ book, *Crystallizing Public Opinion*, contended that its subject was “an occupation which is gradually becoming of overwhelming national importance.” The review, by Herman J. Mankiewicz, referred to Bernays as a public relations counsel, though he added that a public relations counsel was “merely our old friend the press agent, more or less ill at ease in his strange habiliments of psychology and the minor sciences,” which he thought

would not be all bad if the name change brought with it a change in the ethics and manners of press agents. (*New York Times* 6 April 1924, sect 3, p 3).

The *Times*' perspective on publicity work was not evolving as rapidly, however. The paper still mistrusted publicity work, and so it reacted with alarm in 1923 to rumors that President Harding had considered hiring a press agent to help him get his ideas across to the public (*New York Times* 2, 4, 5 April 1923). In an editorial, the *Times* actually praised the president for not being one to "blow his own horn." The paper believed there was no need for the president to have a press agent. "The American people are not without means of forming their own judgment of a given Administration. They are not such fools as to be deceived by the mere beating of a big drum by a hired man" (*New York Times* 5, 11 April 1923).

Five years later, though, the paper signaled its firmer understanding of the social impact of publicity. While the *Times* would publish many more denunciations in the coming years, one article from July of 1928, revealed the paper's newfound respect for the power and value of publicity. The accompanying illustration portrayed publicity as a beautiful, toga-clad woman surrounded by shining clouds. In her hands, she held a laurel wreath, the "bauble" being showed to multitudes of supplicants – including one ermine-clad king -- gathered around at her feet. The article was titled, "Those Who Wear the Toga of Publicity," and was sub-headed "Fame is Thrust Upon Some of Them, but Others Seek it and Become Not Space-Getters but Space-Grabbers," and it contended that some people were famous by their merits -- space-getters, writer Warren Nolan contended. Another group of people had fame because they had sought it and were space-grabbers, or frauds who ought to be embarrassed about calling so much attention to their small, unimportant selves (*New York Times Magazine* 15 July 1928, p 6).

Through most of the 1920s, as attitudes were changing about public relations and press agency, advertising continued to be denigrated. Long-time New York advertising man Felix Orman, well-known for his "story-advertisements" (essentially, feature stories written to tout client businesses) (*The Mail Bag: The Journal of Direct Mail Advertising*, January 1919, p 241), tried to correct this idea during the Great Depression. Orman wrote a letter to the *Times* editors in 1931 that got a large, bold headline at the top of the editors page. In it, he argued that advertising was the key to "work out our national economic salvation." Further, Orman believed frank and open advertising, his term for business communications with the public, could even offer a solution to dealing with the widespread discontent that was leading to growing radicalism (Orman, 1931).

Others echoed Orman's theme, including Thomas H. Beck, vice president of Crowell Publishing Company, in a speech before the Association of National Advertisers. Beck told his

audience that advertising was the country's "surest panacea for [the] Depression," because advertising would stimulate sales, which would help revive the economy (*New York Times* 28 April 1931, p 31).

Others recognized that advertising practices did not always live up to their promise. Joseph H. Appel, chair of the John Wanamaker store board, called in 1931 for a curb on misleading advertising and for the development of a "code of standards and practices," as well as some means of enforcing the code. Appel feared that unethical advertising practices would result in a "steady falling off in consumer response." Only "proper advertising" could benefit business, he believed (*New York Times* 30 October 1931, p 14).

Discussion

To further put these findings in context with the times, it is worth reviewing several contemporary resources that also contained information on how public relations was practiced during this period. George Creel's 1920 book *How we Advertised America: The first telling of the amazing story of the Committee on Public Information that carried the gospel of Americanism to every corner of the globe*, is one of those resources. As confusing to the modern reader as the *Times* in the way it frequently equated public relations, publicity, press agency and advertising the book clearly showed the beginnings of government public information. What is important to sift from this snapshot of the early 20th century is that public relations practitioners of the time used all techniques possible to get their clients' information out, whether the client was the government or a private organization. Creel wrote of exhibitions "that had all the attraction of a circus and all the seriousness of a sermon" (p 142), of advertising experts in charge of publicity, and of using "the medium of bulletins, conferences, and correspondence" to reach Congress and constituents. The Committee used a speaker's bureau of initially more than 10,000, and by war's end of 75,000. He insisted "that the bad should be told with the good, failures admitted along with announcements of success" (p 73), and he developed a central information bureau that dealt strictly with the press.

As contemporary information, the book, which modern readers see as a paean to propaganda, makes clear that the tasks and media used in the practice of public relations as framed by the *Times*, is accurate, although the cultural context of the early 20th century called the very "doing" of public relations into question. While Creel didn't call his activities into question he did make clear that reporters of the times were often suspicious of his activities and motives, and thus felt it necessary to create a Division of News to deal specifically with the press.

Although three years beyond the timeframe of this study, Edward Bernays' article in *Public Opinion Quarterly* (1937) indicated not only the purpose of public relations but attempted to clearly set forth what it is that counselors in public relations do, and a belief structure to which they must adhere. It also showed how the field had progressed in the intervening years since Creel wrote his book. He wrote of the tasks of lobbying, maintaining and developing markets, advertising, developing members of your own organization as symbols of leadership, measuring public opinion, keeping pace with the changed times and anticipating changed conditions (the first mention of issues management), attempting to develop new reputations, advising and aiding in the rebuilding of established reputations that had been blasted, and acting as experts who can keep organizations constantly informed as to the demands of the public. He considered practitioners to be either professional advisors from the outside or officers within the organization, and he believed that for private business to survive it had to be in the public interest.

These changes reflected the change in attitude within the *Times* when it started to write more positively about publicity in the late 1920s and again when it titled Lee as "public relations counsel" in a final article about him after his death (*New York Times* 30 November 1934, p 16). We would be writing fiction, however, if we were to leave the reader with the impression that all was well in terms of the image of public relations in the 1930s. At a meeting of the American Management Association the main speaker, in talking about the relative importance of corporation activities "in the day's news" still said that "advertising is, of course, our first and most direct means of impinging on the consciousness of the newspaper reading public." Only after advertising did he name press relations with newspapers (*New York Times* 3 May 1932, p 38).

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