

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND WAR: SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE OR UNETHICAL

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ABSTRACT

Grunig (1993) claimed that the adoption of a symmetrical model of public relations (PR) would eliminate most ethical problems in international public relations. This paper examines that proposition, applying it to the public relations of warfare. Examples of public relations related to warfare in this paper show it is not likely that a symmetrical model would be adopted because the purpose of public relations in time of war is to persuade and restrict the flow of information. The history of public relations and warfare is marked by deception and propaganda. It is likely that these patterns will continue into the future.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

In practice, most public relations professionals emphasize the importance of social responsibility and ethics. The relationship between organizations and publics mandates social responsibility, because "an organization's actions have consequences for publics and they in turn affect the organization." Thus, in public relations theory, according to Grunig (1993), "public relations and public responsibility become nearly synonymous terms: public relations is the practice of public responsibility" (p. 146). Nevertheless, many practitioners attempt to fool publics by concealing the consequences of bad organizational actions. However, over time these practices don't result in effective relationships nor benefit the organization (Grunig, 1993, p. 146). When practiced unethically, public relations can "manipulate and deceive," making "decent and rational, unemotional debate" on issues difficult (Grunig, 1993, p. 138).

Models of public relations

Grunig (1993) indicates that the quality of relationships (and ethics) depends on the model of public relations used. In describing the history of public relations in the United States, Grunig and Hunt (1984) identified four models practiced in public relations: press agency, public information, two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical. In his discussion of international public relations, Grunig (1993) added a fifth model: public influence.

James Grunig originally identified two variables that distinguished the models of public relations: direction and purpose (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). Direction describes the extent to which the models use one-way or two-way communication. One-way communication is a monologue because it disseminates information. On the other hand, two-way communication is dialogic because it exchanges information between the sender and receiver. Purpose describes whether the model is asymmetrical or symmetrical. As implied by the names the practice of the asymmetrical model is imbalanced, irregular and incongruent while the symmetrical model is balanced, orderly, regular, and congruent. The imbalance occurs in asymmetrical public relations because its practice is one-sided, focusing on the purveyor of information rather than on all

parties in the communication. Because the asymmetrical model seeks to change the audience and leaves the organization unchanged, it is imbalanced. Symmetrical communication is balanced, adjusting the relationship between the audience and the public.

Later Grunig added a third and fourth set of variables (Grunig, Grunig & Dozier, 2002). The third variable is the use of mediated or interpersonal forms of communication. The fourth is the extent to which the practice of public relations is ethical. Grunig discovered the third variable as he examined public relations as it is practiced internationally. He found that in other countries public relations practitioners used interpersonal relations to develop and extend their connections. When he applied this discovery to his four models, he realized that each form of public relations could be practiced either interpersonally or through the media. In many cases both interpersonal and mediated communications were combined. He also realized that ethics played a factor in all four models. While symmetrical communications are inherently ethical, the other three forms could also be practiced ethically, depending upon the rules followed by the practitioners.

The press agency model is a one-way, asymmetrical model that uses the media to persuade its audience. The approach uses favorable publicity in the news media to change the audiences' outlook of the client. Often the publicity is misleading and hype. When it is, it is unethical. In the 1800s, P.T. Barnum used press agency effectively as he fabricated stories about Jumbo the elephant, the midget Tom Thumb, and George Washington's 100-year-old nurse maid. Publicists commonly used press agency to promote celebrities in sports, movies, politics, and business.

The public information model of public relations, like the press agency model, uses one-way asymmetrical communication, mainly in the mass media, to persuade audiences of organizational viewpoints. Practitioners disseminate relatively objective information to the media through press packets, containing news releases, newsletters, brochures and other corporate data. At the beginning of the 20th century organizations hired journalists as public relations practitioners to counter charges of muckrakers (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). The practitioners prepared press "handouts" to explain business activities and inform the public of the good things associated with the organizations. The work of Ivy Lee, who practiced public relations in the early 1900s, typified the public information model. While press agency often uses propaganda and deception, the public information approach is generally honest and truthful (Grunig & Grunig, 1992). Characteristically, it is more ethical than the press agency model. Both models are one-way asymmetrical, neither using research nor strategic planning.

The two-way asymmetrical model is distinguished from press agency and public information because it uses research. Practitioners both seek information from and give information to their publics. It uses persuasion as the primary means of communicating to audiences. It uses either interpersonal or mediated communications and can be either ethical or unethical. While two-way asymmetrical public relations can be ethical, the persuasive goal of the model makes ethical practice more difficult. Edward Bernays, a nephew of Sigmund Freud, practiced this scientific approach in the period following World War I. He used the theories of propaganda, persuasion, and "engineering of consent" to manipulate audiences. "The secret of successful manipulation," according to Bernays, "was in understanding the motivations of people and in using research to identify the messages most likely to produce the attitudes and behaviors desired by an organization" (Bernays cited in Grunig and Grunig, 1992, p. 288).

Unlike the two-way asymmetrical model, the two-way symmetrical approach uses research “to facilitate understanding and communication” instead of finding messages that can motivate and persuade publics (Grunig and Grunig, 1992). The two-way asymmetrical model works well in the absence of conflict. On the other hand, the two-way symmetrical model, which is based on strategic planning, manages conflict by creating understanding between the organization and its publics. It bases public relations on negotiation and compromise. The model is symmetrical because both the organization and practitioner may change their behavior as a result of a communication program. Because the organization is prepared to change to meet audience expectations, its actions are almost always ethical. Both interpersonal and mediated communications may be used in this approach. Two-way symmetrical communication is one of the nine principles that identify “excellence” in public relations (Vercic, Grunig, & Grunig, 1996).

Grunig’s studies of international public relations have identified the four models in use in other countries as well as in the United States. In addition, his studies of international PR identified a fifth model, personal influence. Personal influence uses personal contacts and relationships to get special treatment for clients. Often the practitioners are former members of the media, government, or political groups. By using previous relationships or establishing friendships with key people in government, politics, activist groups, or the media, practitioners can get favorable policies or coverage for their clients. The model is most often asymmetrical and its practice may be unethical. When practiced ethically, however, it may be viewed as symmetrical because it uses interpersonal relations rather than personal influence (Grunig, 1993).

“Asymmetrical—and unethical—public relations seems to have been prevalent in international public relations throughout history, especially during times of conflict” (Grunig, 1993, p. 147). Propaganda, which is “one-sided, usually half-truthful communication designed to persuade public opinion,” is a characteristic of asymmetrical public relations as practiced during warfare and in international politics. The terms, “promoters, propagandists, and lobbyists,” fit the press agency, two-way asymmetrical and personal influence models of public relations, respectively (Grunig, 1993, p. 149).

Propaganda and Public Relations

Propaganda, according to Jowett and Heath (2004), “often blends seamlessly with legitimate public relations practices” (p. 656). Sproule (1997) defined propaganda as “the work of a large organization, nation, or group to win over the public for special interests through a massive orchestration of attractive conclusions packaged to conceal both their persuasive purpose and lack of sound supporting reasons” (p. 8). Jowett and O’Donnell (2006) focused on propaganda as a communication process when they stated: “Propaganda is the deliberate, systemic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behavior to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist” (p. 7). Both public relations and propaganda, according to Jowett and Heath (2004) “stem from a common desire to affect the attitudes and perceptions held by people ... toward an infinite variety of subjects, in order to shift opinion and beliefs in a desired direction” (p. 652). Propaganda is viewed in negative terms because of its historical association with religion, warfare, and politics. Public relations is a legitimate activity that

"enhances the images and perceptions of a wide variety of institutions" (Jowett & Heath, 2004, p. 652).

However, Grunig (1993) admits that some of his models of public relations (press agency, public information, and two-way asymmetrical) may use tactics that are characteristically described as propaganda. When persuasive techniques are used to manipulate, public relations borders on and may even cross over into propaganda. Propaganda is one-way communication aimed on one hand at defeating or paralyzing the enemy and on the other hand at persuading a country's citizens to support its war efforts. Some forms of public relations are obviously propaganda. Only symmetrical communication is immune from charges of being propaganda.

Ellul (1965) claims that people who have been subjected to the complete forces of propaganda admit that propaganda is effective. However, "those who see it from afar, who are not directly subjected to it, who do not witness opinion-changes caused by propaganda ... fail to see the true propaganda practiced on them" (p. 287). He says this is the reason American socio-psychologists deny the effectiveness of propaganda, but admit that public relations is successful. Public relations, he claims, is the form propaganda takes in the United States.

The mass media become the agents of propaganda in times of war. "Lacking a substantive knowledge base or a theoretical framework through which to organize knowledge, journalists became the faithful recorders of a fragmented, factual reality described by official sources" (James, 1991, p. 45). In peace time up to 50 percent of news stories find their basis in public relations (Brown, 2009). During wartime those figures are likely much higher. Without complicit media co-operation, it's impossible for public relations to do its job.

Government Use of Public Relations

In times of war governments use public relations to persuade the public of the need for wars and to support them. As Smith (2004) writes, "Democratic nations, in particular, must win the support of their citizens before committing armed forces to battle, and maintain that support for the duration of hostilities and beyond" (p. 893). However, while the connection of public relations to war is apparent, it also has "raised ethical questions about the means and ends of public relations in the pursuit of war" (Smith, 2004, p. 893). "Excellent" public relations is aimed at resolving conflict and encouraging change rather than supporting the goals of war.

According to Smith (2004), trends in the nature of warfare have changed the public relations of combatants. Traditional warfare among nations or groups of nations has been replaced with civil wars where ethnic, religious, economic, or racial groups fight other groups in the same country or region. Factions that can control the media can influence public opinion regionally. Similarly, they work through the international media to apply international pressure on their opponents. International coverage of regional wars has increased with the global reach of media organizations, like the BBC and CNN. The need for public diplomacy has increased as nations increasingly see the need to make their viewpoints known in the court of public opinion. Whether statements are from government leaders or information officers the goal is the same: to get the media to accept and publish the official line.

The connection of public relations to warfare raises a number of ethical questions, writes Smith (2004). First is the contradiction between military goals and public interest. Public affairs officers want to justify military action to domestic and international publics, while at the same time controlling information that might undermine military operations. Only if one can rationalize that the public interest is best served by going to war, do these goals even become credible. When the justification for war is based on misleading and false information, the justification for war is exacerbated further. In these cases the line between public relations and propaganda becomes very thin.

A second factor that affects the ethics of public relations in wartime is when the government and the military seek to influence the content of the media reports or to shape the official statements issued during a conflict. For national security, operational secrecy, and the safety of personnel involved, during wartime government generally has greater ability to restrict information to the media and by extension to the public. However, this can also lead to greater abuses of power and cover-ups.

Problem statement

Grunig (1993) applies the asymmetrical and symmetrical models of public relations to ethics in international public relations. He concludes that two-way symmetrical communication will resolve international conflict. The following questions drawn from his framework for analysis might similarly guide an analysis of ethics and warfare. Which of Grunig's models of public relations direct the practice of public relations during warfare? How do the models affect the ethics of public relations? What role does propaganda play in public relations and warfare? Is it possible to practice two-way symmetrical public relations in a war setting?

A BRIEF HISTORY OF PUBLIC RELATIONS AND WARFARE

Public relations has had a role in warfare from the beginning of recorded history. In ancient Greece, Alexander the Great understood the importance of public image just as the early colonists recognized the need for public opinion in their struggle against England in the American Revolution (Jowett & O'Donnell, 2006). Propaganda efforts of the American revolutionaries were so successful that one-sixth of the total Hessian force fighting for Britain deserted. This brief history examines public relations and warfare in the United States beginning in the 20th Century up to the present time. It is not a complete history, but rather is illustrative of the use of public relations to promote warfare during the past century. It looks at the role of public relations in getting the United States into World War I, the power of film in uniting the nation in World War II, and the marshalling of U.S. public opinion to support both the Gulf War and the current war in Iraq.

The Creel Committee and World War I

During World War I public relations was used as a means of getting a reluctant population to support the war cause. President Woodrow Wilson called on veteran news reporter George Creel to form what became known as the Creel Committee on Public Information (CPI). The committee's use of government propaganda was extremely successful in influencing U.S. and

world opinion and convincing the public to support the war. Among those who served on the committee were Edward Bernays, the nephew of Sigmund Freud, and Carl Byoir, the CPI's associate chair. Both later were to have successful careers in public relations and both made important contributions to the field of PR.

For a public information effort to be successful all government agencies need to be on board in its implementation. Creel and his colleagues sought to tutor their associates in the U.S. government and in its allies to the importance of public opinion in the war effort. One example illustrates this activity. Bernays, who was working in the committee's Foreign Press Bureau in New York, was successful in persuading the Czechoslovakian government to declare its independence on a Sunday rather than a Friday so as to get better press coverage (Sorenson, 1968).

While successful in getting public support for the war, in peace the Creel Committee failed. Creel and eleven associates went to Versailles with Wilson to promote the peace agreement. However, Congressional Republicans accused Creel of manipulating the press. Instead of ignoring the criticism, Creel left press relations to an inexperienced public information officer. The government failed to make its position clear to the press and to the American public. Later Bernays said that if Creel and his publicists had been left to do their work, Wilson would have been successful in informing the American public of his goals and "the course of history possibly altered" (Sorenson, 2006, p. 89). After the war all government public information efforts ceased.

As part of his duties during the war, Byoir built relationships with and directed propaganda toward European ethnic groups in U.S. cities in an effort to get them to support the U.S. war effort. Byoir helped to organize formal groups, one of which was the Lithuanian National Council. After the war, Byoir asked Bernays to develop a campaign for the Lithuanian National Council. In the campaign, Bernays used many of the techniques of the public information model, including sending articles to editors of newspapers, syndicate features and trade papers. Each story helped to emphasize the message that "Lithuania, the little republic on the Baltic, the bulwark against Bolshevism, was carrying on a fight for recognition in accord with the principle of self-determination laid down by President Wilson" (Grunig, 1993, pp. 150-151). Bernays used Freud's concepts of psychology of the subconscious to manipulate public opinion, as he advised presidents from Woodrow Wilson to Eisenhower. In 1954, he directed the use of propaganda to help topple Guatemala's left-leaning government. Those same techniques set the pattern for future propaganda campaigns in Cuba and Vietnam (Tye, 1998, p. 156).

In 1933 the new Nazi government in Germany turned to Ivy Lee, a pioneer in U.S. public relations, for advice. Lee's firm was hired for \$25,000 a year by the German Dye Trust, I.G. Farben, which invited him to Germany to meet Adolf Hitler and propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels. In 1934 Congress investigated Lee, accusing him of being a Nazi propagandist. As a result in 1938 Congress passed the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) requiring anyone doing work for a foreign government in the U.S. to register with the Justice Department (Stauber & Rampton, 1995).

World War II and the Office of War Information

During World War II, the U.S. government again called upon public relations and media professionals to gain public support for the war effort. President Franklin Roosevelt asked Elmer Davis, a veteran newsman to head up the Office of War Information (OWI), to serve similar functions as the Creel Committee. Davis had more tools with which to work, including feature length movies, newsreels, and radio broadcasts (Fearn-Banks, 2004).

Propaganda became works of art during World War II. Hollywood was “enthusiastic” when the United States finally entered World War II. Political and social issues were put in the background, while filmmakers focused on “optimistic stories of heroism, patriotism and antifascism” (Christensen & Haas, 2005, p. 92). Among the most renowned World War II movies were a series of seven films by director Frank Capra, called *Why We Fight*. Originally intended as morale boosters for the soldiers, the movies soon became popular among the civilian public. The *Why We Fight* films defined American war objectives to military and civilian audiences around the world (Culbert, 1983).

Congress opposed the domestic operation of OWI, curtailing its funds. By 1944 OWI operated mainly overseas. In 1945 the international operations were turned over to the Department of State and after the war the Department of Defense managed its own public relations. The post-WWII years saw a proliferation of public affairs officers in government. During the Cold War the United States increased its radio broadcasts to populations in Communist countries. As the emergence of new technologies made it easier for propagandists to reach their target audiences, world public opinion became a greater factor in influencing public policy in times of war and peace (Jowett & O’Donnell, 2006).

By the 1960s, the military had over 1000 public information or public affairs officers. In Vietnam, the American media, which at first sold the war to the public, later turned against the government propagandists, using daily reports of body counts as the means to sway the public. This image of dead American youth, as much as anything, turned public opinion against the war. Vietnam was both a military and a public relations failure. Learning from Vietnam, the military controlled the public relations in Grenada and the Persian Gulf War by keeping the media away from the battle front. Although the media objected to the censorship, they readily repeated what they learned in military briefings and from military-produced videos (Smith, 2004).

A news blackout occurred during the 1983 U.S. invasion of Grenada. The media found out about the invasion only after it had happened. After the press protested the blackout, the Department of Defense agreed that “a pool of regular Pentagon reporters” would accompany U.S. forces on any future invasions. Stauber and Rampton (1995) claim that the pool approach is a classic public relations tactic to manage crises. While the government claims the pool provides greater access to information and protects reporters, in fact it controls their access to the battleground.

The first test of the pool system came about in 1989 when U.S. troops invaded Panama to oust General Manuel Noriega. Reporters were confined on a U.S. base for the first five hours of the invasion while military public affairs officers controlled the information they received. Little real

information reached the American public. By the time the press was allowed outside the base, the major fighting was over.

Selling War in the Persian Gulf

When Iraq invaded Kuwait in 1990, most Americans were against a war to free the oil rich country. To gain support for the Gulf War in 1991, Citizens for a Free Kuwait, a third-party front for the Kuwaiti government, hired the world's largest PR firm, Hill and Knowlton, for \$10.7 million to oversee and plan a public relations campaign to mobilize U.S. opinion to force Saddam Hussein out of the country. In addition, the government of Kuwait funded as many as 20 other public relations, law and lobby firms. The Rendon Group received a retainer of \$100,000 per month for media work, and Neill & Co. received \$50,000 per month for lobbying Congress. Another \$7.7 million in advertising and lobbying dollars went to two front groups, the "Coalition for Americans at Risk" and the "Freedom Task Force." In addition to placing television and newspaper ads, the Coalition had fifty speakers ready for pro-war rallies and publicity events.

Running Hill and Knowlton's Washington office was Craig Fuller, one of President George H. W. Bush's closest friends and inside political advisors. Frank Mankiewicz, who served as press secretary and advisor to Robert F. Kennedy and George McGovern, managed the news media. Under his direction, Hill and Knowlton arranged hundreds of meetings, briefings, calls and mailings directed toward the editors of daily newspapers and other media outlets. Documents filed with the U.S. Department of Justice showed that 119 company executives in 12 offices across the U.S. were overseeing the Kuwait account. The PR firm organized a press conference with "a so-called Kuwaiti freedom fighter," a "National Prayer Day" service for Kuwaiti and American servicemen, and "Free Kuwait" rallies at 21 college campuses. It promoted an Islamic art tour, produced advertisements and video news releases (VNRs), arranged luncheons with journalists and spent more than \$1 million polling the American people. The dozens of video news releases cost over half a million dollars. The VNRs were shown by TV news directors around the world who rarely (if ever) identified the source of the stories. TV stations and networks "simply fed the carefully-crafted propaganda to unwitting viewers, who assumed they were watching 'real' journalism" (Stauber & Rampton, 1995, p. 171).

Perhaps, the Hill and Knowlton's greatest coup was in providing witnesses to a Congressional hearing. On October 10, 1990, the Congressional Human Rights Caucus held a hearing on Capitol Hill which provided the first opportunity for formal presentations of Iraqi human rights violations. Hill and Knowlton wrote the scripts for the witnesses, coached them, and produced videos detailing Iraqi atrocities. A 15-year Kuwaiti girl, Nayirah, told the hearing that she had witnessed Iraqi soldiers take babies from hospital incubators in Kuwait and leave them on the floor to die.

Three months passed between Nayirah's testimony and the start of the war. During those months, the story of babies torn from their incubators was repeated over and over again. Even President Bush told the story. It was recited as fact in Congressional testimony, on TV and radio talk shows, and at the UN Security Council. On January 12, the U.S. Senate voted by a narrow, five-vote margin to support the Bush administration's invasion of Iraq. The babies-thrown-from-incubators story may have been a factor in the close vote. Only after the start of the war did the

media discover that the testimony was completely false. The girl was the Kuwaiti ambassador's daughter, who had been coached by Hill and Knowlton staff (Grunig, 1993; Stauber & Rampton, 1995).

Even as the military build-up in the Persian Gulf began, in a secret strategy memo, the Pentagon outlined a plan "to constrain and control journalists." A massive public affairs operation would ensure that no unfavorable or uncensored reporting got to the U.S. public. Public information officers would escort the media representatives at all times.

Within days the overwhelming technological superiority of U.S. forces won a decisive victory. "The American public's single most lasting memory of the war will probably be the ridiculously successful video stunts supplied by the Pentagon showing robot 'smart bombs' striking only their intended military targets, without much 'collateral' (civilian) damage" (Stauber & Rampton, 1995, p. 174). Only after the bombing had ended did the media realize how devastating the battle had been. Afterwards, some in the media suggested that they'd been manipulated to produce "sanitized coverage" which ignored the war's human cost.

9/11 and the War in Iraq

Following 9/11, the U.S. media became complicit in a plot to take America once again into war. Journalists asked few questions, instead passively accepting and promoting the George W. Bush administration point of view. Anyone who didn't was branded a traitor for supporting terrorism. "What is clear ... is that the American press corps enabled the Bush administration to cocoon the public to such an extent that it had only a vague notion about alternative viewpoints and policy options, or the consequences of American policy decisions worldwide" (Finnegan, 2007, p. 2). "The line was drawn in the sand early, and members of the media chose to fall in step" (Finnegan, 2007, p. xix). For example, CBS's Dan Rather wept as he pledged: "George Bush is the president.... Wherever he wants me to line up, just tell me where" (Finnegan, 2007, p. xix). This atmosphere following 9/11 made the media vulnerable to government PR efforts, including disinformation and lying.

Again, as in previous conflicts, the expertise of public relations consultants was used to assure the government agenda was successful. The Pentagon secretly awarded PR practitioner John Rendon a \$16 million contract to use propaganda to target Iraq and other adversaries. He used a strategy of "perception management" to manipulate information and the news media to achieve the desired result. Rendon was not new to government work. He played roles in the toppling of Panama's President Manuel Noriega, the first Gulf War, the Balkans, and Haiti. His firm, The Rendon Group (TRG), had made millions from government contracts since 1991, when it was hired by the CIA to help "create the conditions for the removal of Hussein from power" (Bamford, 2005, p. 1). In 1991, Rendon assembled a group of anti-Saddam militants that he called the Iraqi National Congress (INC). In 1992, Rendon protégé Ahmed Chalabi was put in charge of the group. Rendon served as their media consultant and "senior adviser" in order to engineer an uprising against Saddam.

Although later it was shown that there was no connection between Iraq and the perpetrators of 9/11, Rendon was nevertheless successful in demonizing Saddam Hussein. Through Chalabi,

Rendon fed the media false news stories of weapons of mass destruction (WMD) in Iraq. He chose Judith Miller of *The New York Times* to write the story that would be the catalyst for more stories about weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. Miller, who was close to I. Lewis Libby and other neoconservatives in the Bush administration, had been a trusted outlet for the INC's anti-Saddam propaganda for years. Miller flew to Bangkok to interview an Iraqi defector who claimed to have information about weapons of mass destruction. Her front-page story, published December 20th, 2001, was “exactly the kind of exposure Rendon had been hired to provide” (Bamford, 2005, p. 1). The problem was that her story was a lie (Bamford, 2004, 2005).

In explaining her behavior, Miller said, “My job isn’t to assess the government’s information and be an independent analyst myself. My job is to tell readers of *The New York Times* what the government thought about Iraq’s arsenal” (Loewenstein, 2004, p. 7). In accepting government propaganda, she completely ignored contrary viewpoints that disagreed with the Bush administration’s position on weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. This is a classic example of how the media become purveyors of the official government position.

“The entire story may have been little more than a U.S. sponsored psychological warfare effort—The Rendon Group’s speciality—to gin up the American public’s fear over Saddam Hussein. If so, it would have been illegal under U.S. law, which forbids the use of taxpayer money to propagandize the American public” (Bamford, 2004, p. 298).

Scott Ritter, a former UN weapons inspector in Iraq, said: “I think what you’re seeing is the need for the United States government to turn to commercial enterprises like The Rendon Group to do the kind of lying and distortion of truth in terms of peddling disinformation to the media that the government normally can’t do for itself” (Ritter cited in Bamford, 2004, p. 298).

New media technology has changed coverage of war and military public relations (Smith, 2004). In the Iraq War, satellites, mobile technology and the Internet made it practically impossible to censor coverage from the front. Rather than control the content of coverage, the military co-opted the American media, embedding them with the advancing soldiers. The American media saw favorable coverage as part of their patriotic duty. Coverage was greater than in previous wars, requiring military public affairs officers to monitor and respond to a greater variety of questions. Foreign media were not as easily controlled. They were often ignored and isolated, and even targeted as enemy combatants. Except through the Internet, their message was practically unheard in the United States.

CONCLUSIONS

In studying international public relations, Grunig (1993) found that asymmetrical models of public relations dominate the examples of public relations and international affairs. Similarly, as described in this paper, asymmetrical models are used in public relations and warfare. Table 1 shows that the predominant public relations models practiced in times of war are public information, personal influence, and two-way asymmetrical.

TABLE 1: EXAMPLES OF MODELS USED TO MANIPULATE PUBLIC AND MEDIA

Event	Public relations model	Characteristics	Examples
World War I	Public information Personal influence	One-way communications Asymmetrical Used media and interpersonal relations Unethical Propaganda	Manipulated public opinion Convinced public to support war Used personal influence with other nations Focused on ethnic groups Organized front groups Articles sent to media
World War II and after	Public information Personal influence Two-way asymmetrical	One-way communications Asymmetrical Used media and interpersonal relations Unethical Propaganda Research based	Researched audiences Gained public support for war Movies, newsreels, radio Propaganda film series “Why We Fight” Increase use of public affairs officers (PAOs) Used technology to bypass media Military control of media
The Gulf War	Public information Personal influence Two-way asymmetrical	One-way communications Asymmetrical Used media and interpersonal relations Unethical Propaganda Research based	Researched audiences Gained public support for war Foreign hiring of PR firms, lawyers and lobbyists TV and newspaper ads, speakers, meetings, briefings, calls, mailings Prayer days, rallies, VNRs Lied in testimony before Congress PIOs used to control, censor media Used video to show bombing
The Iraq War	Public information Personal influence Two-way asymmetrical	One-way communications Asymmetrical Used media and interpersonal relations Unethical Propaganda Research based	Manipulated public support Silenced dissident voices in media Secret use of PR firms Used perception management Used psychological warfare Manipulated and lied to media Establishment of front groups Used personal influence with reporters Made false claims about WMD Used lies and distortion of the facts Embedded media with soldiers Appealed to patriotism of reporters Controlled, isolated foreign media

Although this is by no means a complete history of public relations, the pattern as shown here is one of propaganda and deceit. The use of public relations is highly unethical. As set forth by Smith (2004), the ultimate purpose of public relations in the examples was to persuade the public to accept the need to go to war and to support the war while it was going on. This is illustrated most recently by the hiring of public relations firms to involve America in both the Gulf War in 1991 and the Iraq War in 2003. The hiring of PR firms supports the view that governments see the need for the use of public relations to persuade and manipulate the public to support war. Also, third-party organizations, as used by Byoir to achieve the goals of the Creel Committee in

World War I, are still used today. This is illustrated by the formation of Citizens for a Free Kuwait in the Gulf War and the Iraqi National Congress in the Iraq War.

Propaganda was used as a tactic in both World War I and II and continues to be used in recent examples. Propaganda is characterized by the use of “one-sided, half truths” to persuade public opinion as was the case in both the Congressional hearings of the Gulf War and the false news coverage of the Iraq War. Clearly, the nature of communications during warfare leads to deception as a means of justifying warfare and controlling information. The amount of information is greatly restricted and the accuracy decreases. This is worsened when the media are co-opted by governments and become their agents of propaganda. Communications and public relations are clearly both unethical and socially irresponsible as illustrated by the models used for public relations and the employment of propaganda.

Grunig (1993), claims that, if public relations is practiced according to the principles of strategic management, public responsibility and the two-way symmetrical model, it will help “to build relationships among organizations and publics and to develop policies that are responsible to those publics” (p. 157). In an international setting, he indicates that a failure to follow these principles may be because the majority of public relations practitioners who work for international clients enter the business because of experience in journalism, advertising or politics. “Because of this background, they devote most of their efforts to media relations and lobbying, typically practicing the press agency, public information or two-way asymmetrical models of public relations” (Grunig, 1993, p. 158). Similar patterns exist in public relations and warfare, but not because of the background of practitioners. In public relations and warfare, deception is both a tactic and purpose of communications.

According to Grunig (1993), ethical decision making is facilitated if public relations practitioners follow the two-way symmetrical model. In that model, they would assist government to negotiate decisions that would serve both the interests of the government as well as the public. Grunig recommends two symmetrical principles of openness. The first is full disclosure of source of informational materials. A second principle is that practitioners discontinue the use of front organizations and openly acknowledge the name of their real clients.

“Open, symmetrical communication as exemplified by these two changes in current public relations practice would enhance, rather than cloud, ‘decent and rational, unemotional debate’” (Grunig, 1993, pp. 161-162). While symmetrical public relations would eliminate most ethical problems of international public relations, it is unlikely a symmetrical model would be accepted for public relations of warfare. It is aimed at peacefully resolving conflicts and doesn’t fit into the war paradigm. The purpose of public relations in warfare is to persuade and restrict information and it is unlikely that this will change.

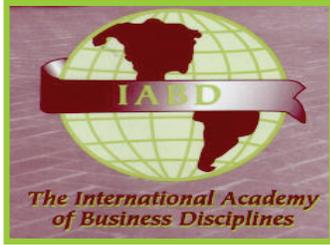
A normative theory describes what ought to be. A positive theory describes what is. Grunig’s models blend normative and positive theory. Grunig (1993) claims that the two-way symmetrical model of public relations applied in an international setting will resolve conflict and bring about change. This is a normative view. Applied to war the result would be peace. However, the reality (what is) is something different. The goals of governments in entering into warfare are not peace, but rather defeating their enemies. They use public relations to further these aims, both in

persuading the public to go to war and to continue supporting the war once the nation is involved.

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