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This analysis of the literature on public relations history indicates that the field has been dominated by a business history approach. Most scholars have studied public relations in its corporate context, and most have utilized business history's dominant paradigm, which calls for a general theory of PR history based on the review of a large number of case histories. But the business history frame is both flawed and inadequate for a complete understanding of public relations history. Political and social histories show that public relations was emerging and apparently would have emerged even if big business had not. In reality, these histories are intertwined. No single strand of PR history can be understood except in relation to the others, and none should be given a privileged position in public relations historiography.

Public relations is an interdisciplinary field with ties to business, political science, psychology, and media studies, among other areas. The study of the history of public relations could, then, be explored from any number of angles – cultural, intellectual, political, social, or political history, to name a few. However, most of the best research on public relations has adopted a business history frame, focusing on corporate PR to the detriment of other areas of practice, and business history's dominant paradigm has restricted understanding of corporate public relations. These choices have seriously undermined current understanding of public relations history.

I begin this chapter by describing the dominant business history paradigm and its relationship to public relations historiography. I then examine criticisms of the dominant paradigm and demonstrate how these criticisms suggest different ways to analyze corporate public relations. Finally, I outline some alternative

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approaches to public relations history, discuss public relations as political and social history, and conclude with an agenda for further research.

BUSINESS HISTORY AND PUBLIC RELATIONS HISTORIOGRAPHY

The study of business history has been dominated by a paradigm based on the work of Alfred D. Chandler, Jr., who revolutionized the field with his books *The Visible Hand* (1977) and *Scale and Scope* (1990). Before these books were published, business historians typically wrote biographies and case histories of individual firms; occasionally they examined trade associations or conducted general studies on topics such as labor relations (Hidy, 1970). But, as McCraw (1988) notes, "Chandler insisted on asking a very different set of questions, and in so doing he transformed the nature of the field" (p. 10).

The thesis of *The Visible Hand* may not seem so revolutionary. Chandler argued that the modern business enterprise took the place of market mechanisms in coordinating the activities of the economy and allocating its resources. Technological innovations in communication (the telegraph) and transportation (the railroad), Chandler asserted, enabled innovation in production and distribution, which led to increased volume of output and greater numbers of transactions, which in turn required greater efficiency for high-volume production and distribution. Organizations were therefore subdivided into operating units, with several units integrated into a single enterprise under a managerial hierarchy. Managers monitored and coordinated the production and distribution flow

more efficiently than the market could, at least in those industries where administrative coordination permitted greater productivity, lower costs, and higher profit. Large enterprises altered the basic structures of the sectors of the economy that they dominated as well as the economy as a whole. In short, Chandler concluded, the visible hand of management replaced the invisible hand of the market on the supply side of the economic equation.

What was revolutionary about this book was its approach. Chandler organized and synthesized the histories of an enormous number of individual firms in order to generalize business history, essentially developing a model that explained the rise of big business. As McCraw (1988) says, Chandler described the forest by examining all the trees, moving “toward a historical theory of big business, a working model of its evolution” (p. 1). Other scholars had previously developed synthesized histories of business. Most notable of these is Galambos (1970), whose “organizational synthesis” of American business history suggested that “some of the most...important changes which have taken place in modern America have centered about a shift from small-scale, informal, locally or regionally oriented groups to large-scale, national, formal organizations” (p. 280). But Chandler went farther, developing a model to explain changes in industry and creating a powerful

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new paradigm that others have used to structure their own research (Lamoreaux, 1991).

Chandler and Corporate Public Relations Histories

Chandler’s approach to business history has also affected many public relations histories. Of the significant scholarly works, most authors who have chosen the business history frame have looked at public relations through a Chandlerian lens, tending to generalize and to consider public relations almost exclusively in the context of big business. The following paragraphs examine how four leading public relations historians – N. S. B. Gras, Alan Raucher, Richard Tedlow, and Stuart Ewen – have explained the rise and growth of the field based on the business history frame. All place the advent of public relations in the broader context of the rise of big business.

Writing decades before Chandler published *The Visible Hand*, Gras (1945) began the effort to generalize the history of PR. Although he did not create a theory of PR, he did develop a chronological model that describes the development of public relations history in terms of changes in the role of business in society. From the 12th to the 18th centuries, Gras argues, “the chief public relations of business ... was dependence on the public for a recognition of its ways and means of operation” (p. 108). The second period, the 18th and 19th centuries, was characterized by a belief that the public should keep its hands off business so that businesses could freely compete. Business asked for little more than police protection. From 1901 to 1945, Gras asserts, beliefs about the relationship between business and government shifted again, with business leaders developing a new policy of pleasing yet fooling the public and moving toward a policy of informing the public. Gras documents the growth of public relations counseling and internal corporate PR departments, which he sees as the culmination of the changing relationship between business and the public.

In *Public Relations and Business, 1900-1929*, Raucher (1968) also attempted to develop a generalized history of corporate PR. Basing his discussions heavily on the ideas and activities of the “father of public relations,” Ivy Lee, Raucher concludes that corporate public relations was initiated primarily as a political device, especially for the railroads. Companies hired publicity men who claimed to be completely aboveboard in their operations; this was intended to demonstrate that business cared what the public thought. Raucher discredits the idea of public relations as a “two-way street” of communication between management and the people, as practitioners since Ivy Lee’s time have claimed, because practitioners did not utilize reliable methods of registering public opinion. They said, for example, that they could interpret the true sentiments of workers better than could the unions. Rather than a two-way street, corporate public relations was simply a business strategy rooted in industry’s effort to cope with the size and social complexity of bigness and the new methods of communication. Growth and complexity “certainly created the need for policies, but alone they did not determine which

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kinds of policies would be adopted.” The “vocation specializing in public relations grew out of the need for communicating through the mass media” (Raucher, 1968, p. 150). PR is thus located firmly within the rise of business bigness.

Tedlow’s (1979) *Keeping the Corporate Image* is based explicitly on Chandler’s attempt to show how modern business enterprises adapted to bigness. Moving on a case-by-case basis through some of the major events in public relations history, Tedlow first disproves the popular thesis that PR emerged in response to muckraking (see, e.g., Ross, 1959, discussed below). Business had been attacked before the Progressive Era began, PR continued after muckraking ended, and nonbusiness organizations, including churches and universities, experimented with press bureaus at the turn of the century even though they were not necessarily the subjects of muckraking. Tedlow therefore attributes the timing of the rise of corporate PR to other changes taking place at the same time as muckraking. His basic argument is that “business bigness, a search for order within corporations themselves encouraging an impersonal approach to management and at the same time suggesting the organization of the publicity which great corporations naturally attracted, high literacy rates, nationally available periodicals, and vigorous reform politicians all played a part” in the rise of corporate public relations (p. 18). Like Raucher (1968), Tedlow (1979) argues that mass communication was an important part of the development of public relations, but he puts additional emphasis on American faith in public opinion. Politicians and business leaders, he says, “never doubted that the locus of power lay with public opinion. What is more, they accepted this situation as right and proper” (p. xvi). If the public turned against business, its leaders had to set them right. PR was only one of the efforts made in response to rationalize bigness – Taylorism, welfare capitalism, and advertising were others. Again, like Raucher (1968), Tedlow places PR within the larger context of the growth of big business and the opposition it faced from government, public, and labor.

Tedlow’s (1979) book serves as a model of the ways the Chandlerian approach can inform the study of public relations history, because it draws general conclusions about the history of public relations based on selected cases. First, Tedlow explains when

and why corporations started to use public relations techniques, arguing that PR was a managerial strategy that began in the 1880s with the rise of large corporations, especially railroads and utilities. Second, the book sheds light on the policies and practices of individual people and businesses, such as Theodore Vail and Arthur Page at AT&T, without reducing their stories to “great man” studies. Additionally, Tedlow’s use of the business history frame allows for examination of what business leaders generally thought about certain issues, as in the discussion of the ways PR techniques were used to defeat the major strikes that followed World War I. Finally, Tedlow assesses the effects of particular campaigns, such as the 1930s free enterprise campaign of the National Association of Manufacturers, which he concludes may have changed some minds, but “its extremism provided a convenient foil against which defenders of the New Deal could crystallize sentiment” (p. 69). All of these issues are important and worthy of study by PR

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historians, making it clear that the Chandlerian approach has much to offer public relations historians.

Ewen (1997) shows the extent to which the business history frame has dominated PR historiography. His book *PR! A Social History of Spin* is primarily a history of the ideas that have shaped public relations. Ewen explores the changing meanings of *public*, *public opinion*, and *persuasion* and the ways these meanings have been applied to visual and verbal propaganda. But, perhaps because of the dominance of the business history frame in PR historiography, the scope of Ewen’s book is very narrowly defined. Ewen describes four basic eras in 20th-century public relations, beginning with the Progressive Era. By 1914, Ewen asserts, the public, meaning middle-class Americans, had been convinced by muckraking journalism that private enterprise should be responsive to public concerns, but they also feared revolt from below. This tension shaped the thinking of the first generation of public relations men, such as Ivy Lee, who dispensed facts and created a demeanor of openness to counterbalance traditional corporate secrecy. The second era is marked by the post-World War I trend toward social psychology and the belief that public opinion could be managed with appeals directed at emotions. “Old distinctions between the *public* and the *crowd* were giving way,” Ewen writes, “to ideas of an all-inclusive mass audience, driven, for the most part, by its sentiments” (p. 143). Reason employed by experts, such as Edward Bernays, could save society from its unreasonable nature. These insights, newspaper chain ownership, commercial radio, and new public opinion measurement techniques combined to cause a dramatic spread in organized propaganda after World War I. “In the simultaneous unfolding of a national media system and of a modern machinery for measuring public opinion,” Ewen argues, “a social infrastructure” for the “two-way street” model of public relations was being built (p. 186).

The Great Depression changed views of big business, and Ewen (1997) reasons, public relations had to respond. President Roosevelt’s fireside chats, for instance, reflected a change in PR thinking in their repudiation of disdain for the public, given Roosevelt’s clear intention to educate and reason with listeners. New Deal photography likewise changed visual communication, as pictures told stories about real conditions instead of being “color-coded daydreams of advertising” (p. 276). Big business found

itself fighting labor, the consumer movement, and government intervention, and it responded with campaigns that linked business to the public interest, typified by the one sponsored by the National Association of Manufacturers. World War II forged a reconciliation between the Roosevelt administration and big business, and manufacturers' reputations improved. But business leaders still made widespread plans for after the war; even during the war, PR advertising highlighted corporate war participation and included exuberant visions of postwar America. Welfare capitalism would replace the welfare state. This fourth period of public relations history marked a return to the idea of a public driven by its emotions. Ewen points to Earl Newsom's work for Standard Oil of New Jersey as an example, indicating that, "to be effective, information must be calculated to stir an audience, to provoke an enduring psychological bond between

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the *public* and the *corporate*" (p. 380). This renewed belief in psychological methods of persuasion was influenced in part by the introduction of television—highly centralized in production and overwhelmingly privatized in reception—projecting an image to a public that never assembled.

Although Ewen (1997) expands upon the business history frame by putting public relations in the context of the larger society rather than describing it as only a business strategy, almost all of his examples of PR practice relate to corporations. He discusses, for instance, Ivy Lee's work for the Rockefellers, AT&T, Bernays's Light's Golden Jubilee, Byoir's campaign to stop antichain legislation for A&P grocery stores, and the free enterprise campaigns of the National Association of Manufacturers. Even the examples of political PR—the Roosevelt administration and Whitaker and Baxter's American Medical Association campaign in particular—are presented as part of the relationship between political and economic forces. Ewen addresses public relations largely in its corporate context.

All of the authors discussed above have made significant contributions to our understanding of the history of corporate public relations, but their attempts to generalize that history have been premature. Scholars agree that one of Chandler's strengths is his copious reading of the histories of business enterprises, which he synthesized into a model that attempts to explain why big business is the way it is. Chandler drew upon almost innumerable life stories and monographs on individual businesses, whereas the public relations literature is extremely limited and therefore inadequate for generalization. Tedlow (1979) does not explain, for example, why he examines Ivy Lee's contributions to PR, but not Hamilton Wright's or Pendleton Dudley's. Raucher (1968) selects such corporations as AT&T for study but ignores a multitude of others, and Ewen (1997) characterizes the post-World War II period as a return to a view of the public as irrational without examining the approaches of some of the period's leading practitioners—Benjamin Sonnenberg and T.J. Ross, to name two. It is difficult to argue that these authors have chosen the most important people or cases for examination when so little of the history has been documented.

Building a Foundation:
Biography and Autobiography

There are, of course, some sources for historians to build upon. First, a few book-length autobiographies have been published by public relations luminaries. These life stories describe the philosophies and strategies of some leading American practitioners, although they are sometimes self-serving or promotional in nature. McCann (1976) recounts his career in the publicity and advertising department of United Fruit, a career that led him to conclude that “public relations was helping to screw up the world” (p. 152). Although United Fruit conducted some activities that McCann believed were useful, such as establishing a sports foundation that brought famous coaches and athletes to Latin America, for the most part his experience was negative. By contrast, Sattler (1993) reviews his long associa-

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tion with Earl Newsom and the Ford automobile account with much more pride. PR staff should have access to management, in Sattler’s opinion, but PR’s function cannot be primarily one of counseling if it is to contribute to a company’s overall success. Harlow (1980) places public relations in the context of his own career, which began in 1912, viewing its history as a steady rise to professional status; in a follow-up article, Harlow (1981) suggests that PR began because an “aid or substitute for loss of the owner-employee intimacy once enjoyed by small concerns had to be devised” (p. 34). Macnamara (1993) and Rogers (1980) regale readers with tales of Hollywood press agency, such as the lies Rogers told to get starlet Rita Hayworth on the cover of *Look* magazine. He suggests it was his job to try to influence the public on behalf of his clients, but his publicity tactics either garnered media coverage or they did not, and he provides little explanation of how or why the coverage in turn influenced the public. Wood also emphasizes the tactics he used in his long career working with such clients as NBC, Woolworth, and Kodak (see Wood & Gunther, 1988).

Of particular importance is the autobiography of John W. Hill (1963), founder of Hill and Knowlton, which was for decades the largest agency in the world. Like Tedlow (1979), Hill argues that public relations is rooted in “the basic fact that public opinion, confused, obscure, and unpredictable as it may often seem, is the ultimate ruling force in the free world” (p. 2). He describes his early career as a journalist covering business in Cleveland, Ohio, where he learned that both journalists and corporations needed assistance to get information about industry to the public. He opened a corporate publicity office in 1927 and took on Don Knowlton as a partner in 1933. Eventually Hill opened a separate agency, Hill and Knowlton of New York, which obtained some of the largest accounts in the world, including the steel, tobacco, and aviation industry trade associations. Hill describes the strategies and tactics behind the programs his agency planned for several of its largest accounts, but given that the book was written primarily to promote H&K to potential clients, he sometimes glosses over problems and controversies the agency faced. Still, the book provides an unparalleled look at a major PR agency.

The most influential autobiographies are those of pioneer Edward L. Bernays (1965, 1971). Bernays began his career as a publicist for theater, music, and ballet, and then became a government propagandist during World War I. In 1919 he formed an independent consulting agency, where he and his wife, Doris Fleischman, created some of the most famous PR campaigns in American history. During the 1920s they promoted

soap carving to sell Ivory for Procter & Gamble, popularized gelatin as a dessert and hair nets as sanitary necessities for restaurant employees, and organized Light's Golden Jubilee to honor Thomas Edison while enhancing the image of General Electric and Westinghouse. The most famous PR counsel and certainly the best self-promoter, Bernays (1971) argues that public relations "helps validate an underlying principle of our society—competition in the market place of ideas and things" and makes "it possible for minority ideas to be more readily accepted by the majority" (p. 297). Bernays's autobiographical works revealed to many for the first time the tricks of the trade, and because of the

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author's prominence and longevity (he lived to be 103), they have had considerable influence on PR historiography: Bernays is never ignored in PR histories. Ewen (1997), for example, bases much of his book on Bernays's career and writings, even though Bernays was not a typical practitioner. Many of his PR brethren scorned him, and he did not join the Public Relations Society of America until 1971.

Published and unpublished biographies also describe important careers, but they too are limited in number. Ivy Lee, considered the "father of public relations," has been most closely examined. Hiebert (1966) provides an excessively admiring biography of Lee, arguing that he "believed implicitly in the power of public opinion and sought to serve the people, whom he considered the kings of democracy" (p. xi). Hainsworth (1987) reviews Lee's relationship with I.G. Farben, the German dye trust, prior to World War II, and states that Lee's advice to his clients, "including the Germans, was to tell the truth" (p. 41). Ballinger (1994) found that Lee was able to influence press coverage of the Ludlow massacre on behalf of his client, the Rockefeller family, but that Upton Sinclair did the same on behalf of the workers and those who died in battle against armed guards hired by Lee's client.

Recent biographies of women in public relations agencies demonstrate that studying more individuals can illuminate different aspects of public relations history as a whole. Henry (1997, 1998) shows that Bernays did not work alone in developing his philosophy and strategies. Doris Fleischman was an integral part of the counseling firm Bernays founded, and she possessed abilities that made her more effective for some parts of the job than even her highly celebrated husband. For instance, when the NAACP retained the Bernays agency to promote its 1920 annual convention, the first to be held in the South, Fleischman went to Atlanta to work with newspaper editors and the governor because "she knew how to avoid antagonizing people" (Henry, 1997, p. 53). Fleischman also developed a newsletter that the agency used to attract new clients and to promote the field of public relations generally. Despite such contributions, she has not been given attention or credit in general histories of public relations.

Biographies of two Hill and Knowlton executives also provide perspectives that are different from those found in previous research on public relations history. It has been shown that Jane Stewart, one of the agency's first female executives during the 1960s, approached her job differently than many other men because she was female (Miller, 1997). For example, she developed a collaborative management style that united people and focused them on shared goals, and she recognized the importance and value of women in the opinion-formation process, making them a formal part of public relations

research. Smith's (1997) biography of one of Stewart's colleagues, Mary L. T. Brown, shows both how women were targeted by public relations campaigns and how PR women were hired to target female audiences. Brown, who became Hill and Knowlton's director of women's activities in 1960, produced special campaigns for the agency's industrial clients by focusing on women as consumers. For example, for the American Iron and Steel Institute,

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Brown promoted steel doors as safety measures for women, sending news releases on pink paper to newspaper and magazine editors who came to know her by name.

Feminist research on women in public relations, then, offers evidence that not enough histories of individuals have been written to allow for generalization about this field. Women, at least the three women mentioned above, did not have the same philosophy or management style as their male colleagues, nor did they necessarily use the same strategies and tactics. Fleischman and Stewart are both remembered for their cooperative styles; Stewart and Brown both thought of women as audience more than did male practitioners, at least so far as can be determined from the current literature. Not all PR practitioners have been alike, and closer examination of a larger number of practitioners will undoubtedly allow us to refine our understanding of corporate public relations.

Institutional History

Institutional histories of public relations are also lacking. Golden (1968) presents brief historical examinations of several corporate PR departments, including General Motors, Standard Oil of New Jersey, and Du Pont, but focuses most closely on contemporary descriptions of the departments. Jarvik (1992) provides an analysis of Mobil Oil's sponsorship during the 1970s of the PBS television program *Masterpiece Theatre*; he argues that Mobil's sponsorship of the show was fundamentally a political strategy: "Mobil's crusade promoted big business, a hands-off Government energy policy, and made it seem that Mobil was the underdog, all in the name of high culture" (p. 271).

Ross (1959) and Cutlip (1994) both review the histories of numerous agencies and make the point that the public is largely unaware of the behind-the-scenes machinations of PR practitioners. Ross (1959) writes that surges of social reform were led by opponents of big business and that PR was business's answer to detractors. The attitude behind William Vanderbilt's famous "public be damned" remark was no longer possible, according to Ross, after Ida Tarbell, Lincoln Steffens, Upton Sinclair, and others turned their energies to exposing the problems of American business. "What PR is trying to sell, in an ultimate sense, are the merits of a particular corporation and the merits of the capitalist system," Ross writes (p. 26), arguing that PR does serve useful functions. PR agents urge reticent clients to talk, coach them to put their best foot forward, and occasionally change corporate policy to reflect public desires. A strength of Ross's book, which was written for a popular audience, is that unlike most PR histories, it continues beyond World War II; thus Ross devotes several chapters to agencies that have been

ignored by other historians, including Ben Sonnenberg, Earl Newsom, and Ruder and Finn. (Ross also includes one chapter on nonprofit PR, discussed below.)

Cutlip (1994) provides the most comprehensive history of American public relations agencies to date. He does not attempt to develop a theory to explain the rise and growth of public relations; instead, his primary contribution is that he retrieves the previously forgotten stories of numerous public relations pioneers

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He begins, for instance, by describing the first known agency, the Publicity Bureau, which opened in Boston in mid-1900, and the first Washington agencies, Smith & Walmer and Thomas R. Shipp, all of which predate the firm founded by the “father of public relations,” Ivy Lee. Although he spends considerable time on the best-known practitioners—Lee, Bernays, Hill, Byoir, and Newsom—Cutlip also includes chapters on Hamilton Wright, apparently the first American practitioner to run an international agency; John Price Jones, a pioneer in fund-raising; Steve Hannagan, one of the best publicists of his time, as evidenced by the popularity of the Indianapolis 500 automobile race, Miami Beach, and the ski resort at Sun Valley; and Harry Bruno, who was associated with the fledgling aviation industry. While arguing that “it is a basic democratic right that every idea, individual, and institution shall have a full and fair hearing in the public forum” (p. xii), Cutlip also suggests that practitioners wield an unseen power that has a profound impact on the business, political, social, and cultural life of the United States.

One author has examined the historical role of public relations in a trade association. Pratt (1983) includes public relations as one of the three most important functions of the American Petroleum Institute from its inception in 1919. The API created a formal public relations division as early as 1924. By collecting and disseminating statistics about the industry, the API established itself with government officials, allowing industry representatives to lobby effectively because of their direct access to federal policy makers.

Summary: Corporate Public Relations Historiography

Biographies and institutional histories are important because they document the strategies and tactics employed by leading practitioners, provide opportunities for assessment of the effectiveness of PR activities, and highlight the primary legal and ethical issues practitioners have faced. The literature on corporate public relations thus suggests several important themes. The first of these is freedom of speech and the right of practitioners to disseminate their employers’ views in the marketplace of ideas. A second theme has been effectiveness, but no consensus has been reached on this issue. The relationship of public relations to the rise of big business has been another important topic, as has the perceived importance of public opinion in society.

Too much remains unknown, however, about individuals, agencies, and corporations. For example, little is known about minority PR practitioners such as African Americans Ofield Dukes, who promoted everything from Motown singers to Lever Brothers, and D. Parke Gibson, who owned an advertising/public relations firm in New York City during the 1960s. Little is known of the histories of agencies founded

outside New York, even ones that became large and influential, such as Carlton Ketchum's agency, which opened in Pittsburgh in 1919. Post-World War II agencies such as Selvage & Lee and Burson-Marsteller have also not been the subjects of published research.

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Corporate PR departments have been ignored even more than agencies. Of the thousands of potential subjects, scholars have usually selected on their businesses for close examination: the railroads during the 19th century, the Rockefeller-owned Colorado Fuel and Iron at the time it retained Ivy Lee, and AT&T. Westinghouse, which apparently had the first corporate PR department, has not been examined in terms of its public relations function. The dozens of large companies in varied industries that opened internal PR departments after World War II—Ford, Allis-Chalmers, the Pennsylvania Railroad, Gulf Oil, Chrysler, and Northwestern Mutual Life—have not been studied.

In sum, the dominant paradigm in business history suggests that historians should gather as many data as possible on individuals and organizations, then develop generalized histories that explain the subject as a whole. In public relations historiography, general histories based on a limited number of cases, autobiographies, biographies, and institutional histories have identified basic themes and documented important careers and significant events. But much work remains. A definitive history of corporate public relations cannot be written without studies of more people, more agencies, and more companies.

CRITICISMS OF CHANDLER AND THEIR RELEVANCE TO PR HISTORIOGRAPHY

The tendency to generalize in PR historiography is troubling not only because of insufficient evidence, but because of criticism leveled at Chandler's work, criticism that should be considered by public relations scholars as well. Although many issues have been raised regarding Chandler's model, three are especially relevant to public relations history: power as a managerial motive, the relationship of business to the political state, and entrepreneurship. These issues and their significance to PR historiography are examined in this section.

Power as a Managerial Motive

First, Du Boff and Herman (1980) question Chandler's assertion that the incentive for growth was efficiency rather than the drive for power, noting, "In the framework employed by Chandler, power seems to be an incidental consequence of the growth of large firms: it is thrust upon managers by technological advance, widening markets, and the drive for efficiency" (p. 92). U.S. Steel, which cornered 60% of the steel market when it was created, is one example in which power, specifically market control, was clearly a factor in managerial decision making.

Power is relevant to public relations historiography in that the motives for introducing the public relations function into a corporation are just as important as the outcomes. Although companies and practitioners often describe the motive for PR as

putting forth industry's voice in the marketplace of ideas, the real motive may be market *control* of ideas, particularly relating to labor. Fones-Wolf (1994) reviews

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post-World War II business campaigns that aimed to sell free enterprise to the American people. Industry leaders feared their workers' loyalty to unions and to government intervention in business, she argues, leading them to seek victories over organized labor at the bargaining table, in Congress, and perhaps most important, in workers' opinions. They sought to educate Americans about the benefits of the free enterprise system through an aggressive public relations campaign that targeted everyone from union members to schoolchildren. "The labor movement could never match the resources available to the leaders of American business," Fones-Wolf concludes. "As a result, the political and cultural landscape of the postwar era was increasingly dominated by the images and ideas produced by a mobilized business leadership" (p. 287).

Research on the creation of corporate culture also shows ways that companies attempted to control or at least influence the way people thought about business. Marchand's (1991) analysis of the General Motors "family" campaign of the 1920s, in which advocacy advertisements used the metaphors of family, community, neighborhood, and ministry to promote what was essentially a giant holding company, indicates that the primary target and biggest beneficiaries of the campaign were dealers and managers of various divisions, rather than the general public. A review of General Electric's campaigns during the 1920s likewise shows that public relations activities were essentially attempts to create a corporate culture (Marchand, 1989).

Nye (1985) has examined the idea of corporate culture by analyzing photographs to uncover the ideologies presented by General Electric to various audiences. For example, to engineers GE presented itself as science. The *General Electric Review*, which went to engineering students, technicians, and officials who would buy GE products, included close-up, uncluttered photos of machines and only rarely included people. By contrast, to workers, GE was corporation as community, with photos in *Works News* (for line employees) that emphasized team ideals: formal group pictures, corporation-sponsored sports teams, and the like. Although there was no single coherent ideology, Nye argues, the photographs were taken and utilized for specific audiences, thus revealing what the corporation wanted people to think.

In my own examination of national and local public relations campaigns conducted by the American Iron and Steel Institute and the United Steelworkers of America during the 1946 steel strike, I found a slightly different picture (Miller, 1995). Although both management and labor tried to saturate the marketplace of ideas with their own views about the strike at the national level, local newspapers in one strike town presented both sides and advocated a peaceful settlement to the negotiations rather than arguing the merits of either side's case. In other words, the public relations campaigns had little impact on the resolution of the strike and certainly did not harm labor's position. Although power may be management's motive for introducing public relations activities, it is not at all clear that business control of the marketplace of ideas is necessarily the result. Still, motivation and the desire for control appear to be fruitful areas of research for historians of corporate public relations.

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Ideology and the Relationship of Business to the Political State

Du Boff and Herman (1980) also criticize Chandler for downplaying the role of the political state in the growth of big business. Numerous historians have demonstrated the importance of the state and federal governments in the development of U.S. big business. For example, Dunlavy (1991) found that about 40% of all railroad capital in the 1830s came from the states, and a leading business history textbook documents the extent to which government regulations shaped the growth of the railroads (Blackford & Kerr, 1990). Such evidence indicates that political economic issues cannot be ignored in generalized histories.

This criticism of Chandler is relevant for several reasons. Dunlavy's (1991) comparative approach would be equally useful for public relations scholars. Studies of countries with different government and media systems would shed light on the rise, growth, and philosophy of public relations in the United States. Culbertson's (1996) analysis of research on public relations in other countries suggests that "a nation's political system and culture shape its practice of public relations" (p. 6); presumably, the same has been true historically.

Second, the emphasis on political economy is important because corporate public relations has always been related to the political economy. In fact, two public relations historians—Carey (1997) and Olasky (1987)—locate public relations in the sphere of political action, although from different perspectives. Olasky (1987) asserts that "for over a century, many major corporate public relations leaders have worked diligently to kill free enterprise by promoting government-big business collaboration" (p. 2). He argues that PR practitioners supported the regulation of big business in order to eliminate competition and to ensure their own profits. He then recounts many of the same episodes from public relations history as Gras (1945), Raucher (1968), Tedlow (1979), and Ewen (1997), including those concerning the railroads, Ivy Lee, the Depression, and Bernays's career, reinterpreting them with a libertarian bent.

Carey (1997) also suggests that corporate PR is primarily a political measure, but in his view, it has been used to inhibit true democracy by restricting public discussion about business. U.S. corporate propaganda emerged because of the two opposing forces of increased popular franchise and the union movement, and the growth of corporate power, which clashed to create a climate in which business leaders perceived a need to protect corporate power against democracy. They developed internal and external programs that identified free enterprise with cherished values and government and unions with tyranny and oppression. By taking corporate power out of the sphere of public discussion, Carey argues, propaganda has closed minds and society. Both Olasky (1987) and Carey (1997) reject a progressive interpretation that views public relations as becoming more ethical or corporations as increasingly motivated by the public interest, and both do so because of PR's role in the political economy.

Two articles on military public relations also indicate the importance of political-economic considerations in public relations historiography. Thelander's (1966) analysis of the U.S. Navy's campaign for naval and industrial preparedness

before World War I shows that Navy Secretary Josephus Daniels used the Naval Consulting Board, an advisory group chaired by Thomas Edison and consisting of several leading businessmen, to conduct a publicity campaign to gain public support for a bigger, better-equipped navy. Miller (1996) documents the U.S. Air Force's cooperation with the aircraft manufacturers' "Air Power Is Peace Power" campaign after World War II, arguing that air advocates fashioned a climate of opinion that favored air power and helped to establish a policy of peacetime armament. These articles suggest that greater attention is needed to the role of public relations in the development of the military-industrial complex specifically, an area that has gone virtually uninvestigated, in addition to the political economy in general.

Another stream of business history research also touches on the government-business relationship, focusing on ideology. In *Scale and Scope*, Chandler (1990) argues that the characteristics of certain industries, particularly capital-intensity and ability to take advantage of economies of scale, meant that those industries were destined to become monopolies or oligopolies. Scranton explicitly challenges this point in *Proprietary Capitalism* (1983), a study of the Philadelphia textile manufacturers during the 19th century. Scranton not only argues that alternative forms were possible, he shows that they existed. The textile manufacturers of Philadelphia "had erected a manufacturing system that stood as a fully realized alternative to the corporate industrial model" (p. 3). These businesses remained family or partnership owned, in contrast to the more famous corporations in Lowell, Massachusetts. The oligopolies Chandler describes were not inevitable—nor, Scranton argues, did they necessarily represent the best competitive route for business firms to take.

The existence of alternative forms to big business is important to public relations historiography for two reasons. First, scholars should consider alternatives to public relations rather than assume that it had to emerge exactly as it did. Tedlow (1979) and Raucher (1968) briefly mention several alternatives to public relations available to corporate managers: Communication accountability could be placed in the hands of lawyers or advertising agencies; corporate leaders could speak directly to the public themselves; they could manipulate advertising contracts to sway editorial opinion; they might provide information to sympathetic third parties, such as legislators, so that those parties could serve as conduits to the press and public. Instead, corporate leaders chose to institutionalize public relations by hiring managers and creating departments in charge of releasing information and, sometimes, seeking input from publics. Raucher (1990) also notes that the PR agency was not a preordained form. In addition to establishing independent consultancies, PR pioneers found work by expanding the services of existing advertising agencies to include PR and creating public relations departments within corporations and other institutions. Problematizing public relations—that is, starting with the assumption that it need not have emerged the way it did—makes explicit the thinking of its originators. Historians could study public relations agencies that failed to determine what makes agencies appealing or unappealing to clients.

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Second, because alternative forms of business did exist, some scholars argue that the missing link in Chandler's model is ideology. Like Scranton, Sklar (1988) rejects Chandler's economic determinism, asserting the big business was not the natural outcome

of some suprahuman law of economics; instead, it was constructed. Several preconditions helped to guarantee the relative peacefulness of the transformation. These included the expanding market and nationalist sentiment after the Spanish-American War, a president who favored corporate capitalism, the disenfranchisement of black Americans, the weakening of trade unionism (especially following the Homestead and Pullman strikes during the 1890s), and the fact that no politically effective segment of the population saw itself as threatened by the new system. Lawyers, intellectuals, journalists, educators, members of the clergy, engineers, politicians, and so on all supported corporate capitalism, especially “corporate liberalism,” which Sklar defines as a mutual adaptation of corporate capitalism and American liberal tradition that resulted in neither totalistic statism nor a corporate state, but administered markets and a regulatory government.

This interest in corporate liberalism is reflected in research that examines the role of PR in government-industry accommodation. Galambos (1975) reviewed trade journal coverage of big business and found that public acceptance of the corporate state was nearly complete by 1940. Considering the devastation of the Great Depression, attacks against big business were feeble in comparison to earlier periods. The image of business was thus directly related to its public acceptance, and the public relations role of creating corporate cultures is doubly important.

Although Chandler neglects the role of ideology, most PR historians have not made the same mistake. In addition to discussions of the political role of corporate public relations by Raucher (1968), Olasky (1987), Tedlow (1979), and Carey (1997), one history explicitly addresses the ideological role of PR. Galambos and Pratt (1988) consider the rise of public relations as a part of the gradual process of government-business accommodation. In the 19th century, they argue, both business and politics were local, grassroots affairs, with entrepreneurs enjoying a measure of political authority and respect in their cities or towns. Big business never enjoyed that goodwill at the local level, but a new political system emerged along with the new economy. Individual influence and a local power base became less important than effective state and national lobbying, making both effective legal representation and media campaigns necessary to build public understanding and confidence. Business in 1900 was not equipped to carry out these activities, but public relations and public affairs soon became permanent staff functions in the large combines. “Public relations grew directly out of the perception on the part of managers, especially corporate officers, that liberal or progressive political campaigns were generating an intensely negative concept of business and threatening to create an ever more restrictive political economy” (p. 96). Thus PR departments labored hard to alter negative images of the corporation, gave input on corporate decisions, and reported on public perceptions and how the business might avoid antagonizing publics. By the 1920s, Galambos and Pratt argue, the

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“two-way street” of information between the public and the business firm was in place, with the public relations department serving as the conduit, and business was more in touch with its social environment than it had been since the rise of business bigness. The corporate commonwealth is the uniquely American relationship between business and government, whereby corporations remain privatized yet are regulated in the public interest.

Scholarship on institutional advertising also shows the role of public relations in government-business accommodation. The case of AT&T is instructive. Its ads at the turn of the century “combined a subdued element of advocacy with such other purposes as employee instruction, morale building, and the enhancement of corporate prestige” (Marchand, 1987, p. 130). An ongoing motif of these ads was the identification of the company with democracy, both democracy of service to all and democracy of ownership by many shareholders, all the while promoting the virtues of private monopoly in the hopes of avoid government imposition of utility status on the telephone company. Griffith (1983) analyzes the Advertising Council’s campaigns to “sell America to Americans” after World War II, showing that the council’s political philosophy reflected an emerging corporatist ideology, opposing New Deal policies that threatened private enterprise, yet viewing the state as a powerful instrument for sustaining economic growth. “Mistrustful of the untutored responses of ordinary citizens, the Council feared that Americans did not truly understand the economic system,” and that they could be misled by propaganda, Griffith notes (p. 395). The Advertising Council and many individual companies thus began to promote the American way of life (and business).

This research suggests that the role of public relations in creating an ideology and a political climate that supports big business is another fruitful area for research. Several important campaigns have been examined, but additional information can only enhance our understanding of PR, business, and society.

A Bigger Picture: The Entrepreneurial Paradigm

In addition to these specific criticisms of Chandler’s model, historian Harold Livesay (1989) has raised a larger question. Perhaps more important than any particular flaw in the model is what Chandler omits: small businesses and entrepreneurs. Small business did not die with the rise of big business, but it has taken a decidedly secondary position in the business history literature in the Chandler era. Livesay has led the charge, arguing that the entrepreneurial paradigm should not be abandoned. “The study of large-scale organizations,” he asserts, “leaves too many recent phenomena unexplained and inexplicable” (p. 2). Chandler cannot account for the role of individuals, although Livesay argues that “given the right manager, any form of organization can work or be reorganized until it does work, whereas the wrong people can cripple the most vigorous firm despite the presence of a structure thought to be self-correcting” (p. 3). Furthermore, small business is a

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source for future large businesses, and together small businesses have had a dynamic impact on the economy.

The entrepreneurial paradigm has much to offer public relations historiography. Sullivan’s (1968) unpublished master’s thesis is illuminating. Sullivan traces the development of the public relations function at Parker Pen, a manufacturing company in Janesville, Wisconsin. Formed in 1891, the firm was a partnership that began growing to a substantial size during World War I and had its first million-dollar sales year in 1918. Parker’s top management remained “primarily a family affair,” “paternalistic,” with a

distinctive character and “way of doing things” (pp. 42, 45). Sullivan asserts that this character was an important part of the public relations programs and policies that the firm developed over the years. The public relations function, like the top management, tended to stay under the control of only a few individuals. Eventually, PR became part of the policy-making process, although perhaps only in small ways. In 1947, for instance, the company made all of its financial information public for the first time.

What does this study of a medium-sized firm tell us about the history of PR that other studies have ignored or failed to uncover? It reveals how one company’s management looked at public relations: with reluctance. Not until 1946 did Parker Pen introduce a PR person or consider public relations part of the overall approach to doing business. Sullivan’s study also documents some specific campaigns undertaken by the company to promote products, a function often overlooked in favor of the political aspects of PR, which figured as the main activities during the early years of the department. It shows how an individual, PR director Alan Center, could affect the course of a company. It shows that public relations was not the two-way street that its practitioners often claimed, because Parker Pen’s PR department made no attempts to ascertain public needs or desires, only to send information out from the firm. More such studies would make invaluable contributions to our knowledge about public relations generally.

Summary: Public Relations History and Criticisms of Chandler

The above discussion of criticisms of the dominant business history paradigm points out many flaws in public relations historiography. Not one published book has examined the history of a corporate PR department or trade association over time. No monograph has traced the development of a single counseling agency’s philosophy or strategies and tactics. Small agencies, agencies that failed, PR departments in small or medium-sized firms, and virtually all organizations outside New York City have been ignored. No one has examined organizations that have tried approaches other than PR. The deficiencies in the literature are such that Pearson (1990), in a review of approaches taken by four PR historians, can conclude only that “for the left, public relations is seen as serving the private interests of individuals, from the right public relations is seen as threatening those interests” (p. 37).

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ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES: POLITICAL HISTORY

Livesay’s (1989) criticism of business history’s dominant paradigm can be extended and applied to public relations historiography. The biggest problem with the current public relations literature is not so much that it is flawed; rather, the problem is simply that too much is left out as a result of researchers’ adhering so closely and so frequently to the business history frame. Public relations could be viewed from many other perspectives, and a slowly emerging literature has begun to present a very different picture, one that looks at public relations as more than just corporate. In this section I

consider PR as political history and describe how research in this area has been delegitimated by the extensive use of the business history frame.

Election Campaigns

Public relations in the political sphere can include several different kinds of work, including political campaigning, publicizing the actions of elected and appointed officials, lobbying, fund-raising, and seeking support for government policy. Public relations historiography provides only a sketchy picture of these processes, and no author has definitively explained the rise and growth of political PR. The most common approach, however, has been to criticize the role of public relations in the democratic process, generally because PR is said to subvert the marketplace of ideas. As Cutlip (1976) notes, public relations practitioners “have come to constitute an influential and integral component of the nation’s public information system—the system upon which our citizens must depend to make their political judgments and their daily decisions” (p. 7). There is at least one history relating to congressional public relations. Richard Nixon’s first press secretary, William Arnold (1975), relates funny or interesting stories, such as the time he was left behind on an airplane trip because the plane was too heavy and Nixon’s staff chose to take along the mimeograph machine rather than the press secretary. But this is quite unusual. Only two areas of political PR have been explored to any degree in the literature: election campaigns and public information campaigns conducted by the federal government.

Only two authors have considered the role of formal public relations in political campaigning, and both are critical of the function. Kelley (1956), however, does see PR as an improvement over bossism. By turning to propaganda, he argues, political parties moved campaigning into the hands of specialists who guide the actions of politicians toward the people and vice versa. He notes, “The problem now becomes one of finding what it means for our system of government to have a political discussion increasingly monopolized by members of a restricted skill group” (p. 38). He believes that just as big advertising expenditures can be used to keep competitors from entering the field, public relations activities can drown out ideas.

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Bloom (1973) traces changes in campaigns, starting with Samuel Adams, and the increasing importance of public relations in policy making, beginning with President Eisenhower. He argues the public relations is only one part of the campaign process, but that with the increasing importance of television and of “image,” it is becoming a more dominant part. PR is not, he notes, a part of classical democratic theory, which posits the press as an intelligence service for the people. But the complexity of both government and society means that reporters can no longer keep up, and they must depend on public relations practitioners to help them. Written in the aftermath of Watergate, Bloom’s unhappy conclusion is that “public opinion is not really a weapon that the people can confidently hold in reserve as part of their revolutionary arsenal. Instead, it has become a factor subject to professional management” (p. 248).

Because of the importance of elections to democratic society, it is almost shocking how little is known about the historical role of formal PR in political

campaigns. For example, Democrats started the first permanent publicity bureau in 1929, and the first political PR agency was Whitaker and Baxter, formed in California in 1933, but no major historical study has been published about either one. Kelley (1956) does review several of Whitaker and Baxter's campaigns, especially one against "socialized medicine" for the American Medical Association, but not such significant contributions as the agency's campaign during Richard Nixon's first run for office. Charles Michelson's (1944) autobiography provides some insights regarding the Democratic National Committee's public relations tactics during the 1930s and 1940s, indicating that the publicity director "was not of the policy-making group" during that time (p. xvi), but no other author has investigated party public relations policies. The first U.S. representative to hire a press secretary, Frank O'Hair of Illinois, did so in 1912; the first senator to do so, Hiram Johnson of California, waited until 1918. These press secretaries might have had impacts on the election process, but they have not been studied. The passage of the 17th Amendment, which was ratified in 1913 and established direct election of senators, might also have had an impact on the adoption of formal public relations in election campaigns, but that relationship is likewise yet to be examined. The emphasis on the business history frame in public relations historiography has apparently discouraged scholars from studying other areas that are just as important, if not more so, to understand.

Information Campaigns

Information campaigns conducted by U.S. presidents and other officials have fortunately not been so neglected. Two areas of research, presidents and the press and executive branch PR, including war propaganda, have been most popular. Below, I review the literature on federally sponsored campaigns to influence public opinion, noting that research on this topic has been particularly preoccupied with determining the effectiveness of such campaigns.

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There has been to date but one general history of political PR, written by a British historian. Pimlott (1951) explains several reasons for the growth of government PR, including increasing bigness of government and of the population, decreasing acceptance of alternatives to open communication (such as bribery of members of Congress), and changes in the media industry as a whole. He asserts that although executive branch agencies were forbidden in 1913 from employing publicity agents except with congressional consent, the federal government has justified the use of PR in two ways: one reportorial, suggesting that a democratic government must report to its citizens, and the other administrative, suggesting that measures will not succeed without public support and understanding. He concludes that the professionalization of government information specialists should help to protect citizens. Although now almost five decades old, Pimlott's book provides a good starting point for research on formal public relations in politics.

Although several of the colonies used public relations techniques to promote settlement (Cutlip, 1995), most histories place the beginning of government public relations with propaganda during the American Revolution. Davidson (1941) and Berger

(1976), for example, review government-sponsored initiatives ranging from pamphlets and broadsides to John Adams's letters to the editor and army rumor-mongering. "As propagandists, the Americans demonstrated great ability," Berger writes, but the new country's leaders "never lost sight of the fact that words were no substitute for 'an arm of flesh'" (p. 199). Propaganda, then, was only one part of the war effort, and not the most important part. Miller (1936), however, suggests that propaganda was effective because British officials were alarmed by the successes of American propaganda, believing that Sam Adams had turned citizens in New York and Philadelphia into fire-eating patriots. In short, even the genesis of American government propaganda is not fully understood. This is symptomatic of the state of the literature on political public relations.

Presidential Press Relations

Chandler's influence on corporate public relations historiography is most evident when that literature is compared to the state of the literature on presidential press relations. There exist dozens of autobiographies and biographies of political public relations practitioners, especially White House press secretaries, yet there has been very little generalization. By reading these life stories—which are nearly nonexistent in the corporate PR literature—scholars can see the gradual institutionalization of presidential media relations.

Press Relations from the 19th Century to the Progressive Era

Several authors have traced the history of presidential-press relations, beginning as early as the first president, George Washington (Pollard, 1947), and Amos Kendall, who joined Andrew Jackson's "Kitchen Cabinet" in 1829 (Endres, 1976). Kendall's duties included writing speeches, performing straw polling, serving as an advance man, and building a favorable image of the president. Cutlip (1994) contrasts the press relations of Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis during the

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Civil War, showing that Lincoln was much more adept at dealing with the press and public. Davis, he writes, had a tendency to keep secrets, which brought criticism from Confederate newspapers. Davis did hire James Spence, a British propagandist, to recruit support in England. Tebbel and Watts (1985) discuss George F. Parker, who worked for Grover Cleveland as what was essentially a press secretary, although he lacked an official title. Parker later became Ivy Lee's first partner when the two formed an agency, Parker and Lee, in 1905.

Hilderbrand (1981) indicates that the McKinley administration's efforts "marked the beginning of self-conscious presidential management of public attitudes in foreign affairs" (p. 4). Prior to the 1890s, presidents recognized the value of publicity, but they used it only rarely, in part because they needed public support for foreign policy so sporadically. However, the executive became an increasingly dominant force in leading public opinion, and presidents employed increasingly sophisticated techniques for directing public views of foreign affairs. Hilderbrand suggests four reasons for these changes: improvements in technology of the mass media; the development of the

business of public relations; Progressive ideology, which emphasized the power of the people; and the rapid expansion of the U.S. role in world affairs. McKinley laid the foundation for changes in executive management of public opinion on foreign policy through such activities as appointing a secretary to the president, John Addison Porter, who held nightly press briefings and whose assistant, George B. Cortelyou, drew up numerous press handouts. McKinley also opened a room inside the White House to reporters, drawing them away from the North Portico, where they had traditionally waited to interview the president's visitors.

Such activities quickly became institutionalized, Juergens (1981) has shown, during the Progressive Era. The starting point for most histories of presidential opinion management is Theodore Roosevelt (Cornwell, 1965; Juergens, 1981; Pollard, 1947; Smith, 1990). Juergens's (1981) examination of the administrations of Theodore Roosevelt, William Howard Taft, and Woodrow Wilson indicates that as power flowed to the executive branch with increased regulatory power and an increased role for the United States in foreign affairs, both the modern presidency and the "watchdog" Washington press corps came of age. Ponder (1994) goes even farther, asserting that presidential publicity—"the ability of the chief executive to appeal to the citizenry through the developing media of mass communications" (p. 257)—was central to the transformation of presidential power. Presidents and reporters were thrown into a relationship of mutual need and mutual antagonism, Juergens (1981) argues, that continues today. The liaison between these antagonists became the press secretary—in Wilson's case, Joseph Tumulty (Bloomfield, 1965), often considered the first modern press secretary.

Press Relations Since World War I

Following the institutionalization of presidential press relations during the Progressive Era, the literature tends to fall into three general categories: examinations of the relationships between individual presidents and the press, biographies and
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autobiographies of press secretaries, and the development and institutionalization of the techniques of opinion management. These areas are discussed in turn below.

Press relations of individual presidents. Many authors have examined relationships between particular presidents and the press. Pollard (1947, 1964) provides a chapter-by-chapter synopsis of each president's relationship with the press, from Washington to Johnson. He presents information on such topics as the president's attitude toward a free press, use of a press secretary, and format and style of meetings with reporters. Cornwell (1966) likewise examines how each president from Theodore Roosevelt to Truman attempted to lead public opinion, discussing, for example, whether or not they employed speechwriters and how adept they were at using the mass media.

Based on the work of Pollard (1947, 1964), Cornwell (1966), and many others, it is clear that the story of presidential press relations after World War I is one of expansion. Like the Wilson administration, Herbert Hoover advanced the degree and sophistication of governmental public relations. Hoover's humanitarian campaign to help feed the needy on behalf of the Food Administration during World War I catapulted him

to public prominence (Ponder 1995), but Liebovich (1994) notes that President Hoover's approach to the press was uneven. Hoover saw the press as a tool, but he could not understand why reporters disliked being treated as such; and although he had strong links to certain influential magazine and newspaper editors, he had a roller-coaster relationship with the White House press corps, depending on how compliant reporters were with his wishes.

Theodore Roosevelt may have originated many White House public relations techniques, but it was his cousin Franklin who perfected them. As Ewen (1997) points out, FDR's administration used many forms of verbal and visual communication to keep the public informed about government measures to combat the Great Depression. Winfield (1990) shows the development of FDR's media skills and explains in detail how Roosevelt and his press secretary, Steve Early, controlled press conferences, making sure that reporters always got a story—but only the story they wanted to tell. FDR, like his cousin, is credited with many innovations in press relations, particularly regarding his use of radio, photojournalism, and newsreels. Recognizing that although he could control the press conference, he could not control the press, he turned to these alternative forms of communication to reach the public (Schoenherr, 1976).

Williams (1984) and Liebovich (1989) disagree to a certain extent about the effectiveness of Truman's relationship with the press. Williams calls Truman the "newspaperman's president," whereas Liebovich asserts that Truman lacked the diplomatic skills and patience to work well with the White House reporters. Virtually everyone agrees that the sometimes testy Truman suffered in comparison to his predecessor, Franklin Roosevelt, whose charisma made him a media natural.

The major public relations innovation during the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations involved the increasing use of television. Allen (1993) points out that, although Kennedy is remembered as the television president, Eisenhower was actually the first to make extensive use of TV, experimenting with televised

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fireside chats, news conferences, and cabinet meetings and hiring a television consultant. Ike also allowed his press secretary, James Hagerty, to contribute to policy making. Kennedy's best-remembered innovation was to allow the live television broadcast of news conferences, but Pollard (1964) notes that Kennedy also enjoyed unusual intimacy with certain correspondents, inviting them to swim in the White House pool with him, or dining in their homes. The president was often criticized, however, for his administration's efforts to "manage" the news.

President Lyndon Johnson, like Truman, languished in comparison to his charismatic, fallen predecessor. Cornwell (1966) explains that Johnson tried to rely on small group meetings with reporters, something he was accustomed to because of his years in the Senate, rather than the colorful spectacle of the Kennedy-type press conference. He also began using planned and impromptu television announcements and had television facilities installed in the White House for such events.

Maltese (1992) shows that the ever-expanding White House public relations apparatus changed significantly in 1969, when President Richard M. Nixon created the White House Office of Communication. This office functioned in addition to the White House Press Office, and its four staff members, directed by Herbert Klein, coordinated

the flow of information from the entire executive branch. Nixon used the office as a political tool to influence, not just inform, the public. Not surprisingly, when the administration's lies to the public, Congress, and the media were exposed during the Watergate scandal, the entire White House public relations operation was discredited.

The Nixon experience did not slow the growth of White House PR, although Nixon's successors had to live down the precedent he had set. Rozell (1989, 1992) has investigated the relationships between Ford and Carter and the press by examining newspaper coverage and interviewing reporters and White House staff members. In his study of Carter, he analyzes changing eras in presidential press coverage and concludes that one of the biggest problems President Carter faced was simply timing, with a traumatized press being determined not to be manipulated by a president following Watergate.

The above-mentioned examinations of media relations of individual presidents show that there has been considerable interest in the White House as a source and as a manager of news. Presidential opinion management techniques have been studied extensively; there is also a sizable literature on White House press secretaries.

White House press secretaries. The history of the White House press secretaries is the single best-documented aspect of political public relations, but even in this area the research is flawed. Biographies and autobiographies of the press secretaries abound, but a major problem with the autobiographies in particular is that the press secretary authors have very often used their pens to promote their presidents or to continue their debates with the press. The ever-loyal Joseph Tumulty (1925) painted Woodrow Wilson as a heroic martyr to the cause of world peace, even though Wilson and his wife had all but broken with the press secretary by the time Wilson died (Blum, 1951; Smith, 1964). In his *With Kennedy* (1966), Pierre Salinger did much the same thing, with only occa-
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sional references to the actual work of the press office, such as preparing Kennedy for press conferences or planting questions with reporters by telling them they would get an interesting answer if they asked about a specific issue. Salinger's (1995) later book provides a little more detail, showing that he had a very basic approach to public relations, simply trying to "create a climate in which it was as easy as possible for the reporters to cover our campaign" (pp. 75-76). Jerald terHorst (1974) does not discuss himself or the press office until the epilogue of his book about Gerald Ford. Ron Nessen (1978) and Jody Powell (1984), secretaries for Ford and Carter, respectively, both wrote books that include diatribes against journalists they disliked.

Another problem with biographies and autobiographies is that they often focus more on the exciting events that press secretaries have witnessed or people they have met than on the day-to-day operations of the White House press office. Jim Brady's biographer describes his recovery from gunshot wounds suffered during an attempt on President Reagan's life; very little of the book discusses Brady's strategies or policies as press secretary (Dickenson, 1987). Larry Speakes (1988), who took Brady's place after the shooting, focuses in his book somewhat more on press operations, but he usually concentrates on how the press office handled specific events, such as the Reykjavik summit with the Soviet Union. Speakes also analyzes the pros and cons of his own performance, explaining that he had to fight Nancy Reagan's desire to hide the

president's cancer from the public, and evaluates certain reporters. Speakes's successor, Marlin Fitzwater (1995), likewise includes in his book "insider information" on summits between Reagan and Gorbachev, the U.S. invasion of Panama, and events during the Bush administration.

The most analytic press secretary autobiography, Jody Powell's (1984), suggests that the relationship between the press and the president is seriously flawed. Powell, who was Jimmy Carter's press secretary, somewhat bitterly argues that the press fails to provide the president with an adequate channel of communication while failing to provide the nation with information the people need for self-government. Both the White House and the press are flawed, he says, because both adhere to artificially imposed deadlines, base their stories on inadequate information, make decisions based on what the other is doing, become overly defensive, and fail to punish mistakes or incompetence from within.

Although there are abundant studies of the modern president's influence on public opinion, these very often ignore the role of public relations staff or press secretary in shaping executive policy. Studies of the Cuban missile crisis, for instance, attend to neither Pierre Salinger's counsel to President John F. Kennedy nor his contributions to influencing press coverage when the country was on the brink of nuclear disaster (Salinger, 1966, 1995). In their study of the Kennedy administration, Kern, Levering, and Levering (1983) examine three sets of factors that influenced Kennedy's relationship with the press. In the category of "internal conditions," they include such elements as "the quality of presidential activity directed toward the press; his overall press strategy; his news conferences, special

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messages, backgrounders, and leaks," but not the public relations expertise of his press secretary and staff (p. 11). Small (1988) similarly asserts that in both the Johnson and Nixon presidencies, "no systematic attempt was made to coordinate the flow of public opinion, nor were any specific aides responsible for its monitoring" regarding the Vietnam War and foreign policy (p. 14).

Even when they do include a president's press advisers in their analyses, scholars fail to place the role of the press secretary in the context of public relations historiography generally. Anderson (1968) examines the careers of important presidential advisers, including several press secretaries, but considers only what each contributed to his president's administration. Eisenhower's press secretary, James G. Hagerty, was included so often in high-level discussions that he became part of the decision-making process (Tebbel & Watts, 1985), but his career has not been analyzed in terms of his impact on public relations practice. (Hagerty did leave behind a diary; see Hagerty, 1983). Williams (1984) and Liebovich (1989) both analyze Harry Truman's press relations, but not in terms of how his press advisers contributed to the development of public relations or even whether they typified public relations after World War II. In his unpublished dissertation on Franklin Roosevelt's press secretary, Steven T. Early, Shoenherr (1976) describes Early's daily routine and shows that his philosophy of public relations was that "he was as much the representative of the press in the White House as he was a representative of the administration to the press" (p. 46). Shoenherr concludes that because Early accepted the right of the press to criticize the president, he never

became an intimate adviser to FDR. This is an idea that deserves further analysis, but because Schoenherr focuses on the individual rather than the vocation, it is an idea that goes unexplored.

Techniques of presidential press relations. Another group of authors who have written on political public relations history focus on the development and institutionalization of specific presidential PR tactics over time, but they never compare the use of these tactics to other areas of public relations practice. Smith (1990), for example, traces the development of the presidential press conference, discussing the format of the questions (written versus spoken), the ground rules (whether or not direct quotation was allowed, for instance), where the conferences were held, and which reporters attended. Similar analyses of presidential press relations have included discussion of techniques such as leaks, trial balloons, photo opportunities, and radio addresses. Cornwell (1965) analyzes each president's attempts to lead public opinion, from Theodore Roosevelt to Truman, noting which ones had press secretaries and how adept they were at working with reporters. Spragens (1979) evaluates the television-age presidents and their press secretaries. Pollard (1947, 1964) provides a progressive history in which presidents move from reliance on unsophisticated partisan newspapers for publicity to the ultimate form—the live, televised press conference. Unfortunately, none of these authors provides any context based on how these or similar tactics were used in corporate or nonprofit public relations during the same time periods.

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In fact, political PR is virtually always treated in isolation from other areas of public relations history. One example will suffice. Spragens (1980) interviewed former White House staff members and reporters to learn about tactics, such as the use of briefing books, as well as philosophies of public relations. He discusses a conflict of opinion about the role of the press secretary as policy adviser or as technician. For Spragens, Jerald terHorst, who resigned because he disagreed with Ford's decision to pardon Richard Nixon, represents a policy adviser; his successor, Ron Nessen, took the role of technician, believing it was his job to serve as the president's spokesperson regardless of the decisions the president might make. This reflects a long-standing debate among public relations counselors about client choice (Should practitioners represent only those clients with whom they agree, or do all clients deserve representation?), but neither corporate nor political PR historians have drawn from each other to analyze this debate.

Executive Branch Public Relations

As with presidential press relations, several authors pinpoint the Progressive and World War I eras as key periods for the development of executive branch public relations. Ponder (1994) argues that the World War I Committee on Public Information (CPI) was only the continuation of a trend toward centralization of executive branch news: "As early as 1889, Jeremiah Rusk, the first Secretary of Agriculture, found that newspaper editors were willing to print departmental reports as news if they were written in a summary form and sent to editors on a timely basis" (p. 259). By the time Wilson took office in 1913, many federal agencies had their own press bureaus; the first was the

U.S. Forest Service, headed by Gifford Pinchot, in 1905 (Ponder, 1990). Several members of Wilson's cabinet hired their own publicists or met with reporters independently, leaving Wilson frustrated by leaks and unhappy with press coverage. Ponder reports that Wilson considered forming a federal news agency as early as 1913.

The Committee on Public Information

The Committee on Public Information, the federal government's propaganda arm during World War I, is the government PR agency that has been studied most extensively in terms of its contribution to the development of public relations. Most of the biographies of Bernays include analysis of his years in the CPI, most histories of World War I at least mention the committee, and the general histories of corporate public relations lavish great amounts of attention on this first large-scale effort at federal propaganda. Drawing upon and espousing Progressive ideals, the CPI under former muckraking journalist George Creel used nearly every form of mass and interpersonal communication—posters, pamphlets, radio and films, press releases, school materials, speeches, and more—to rally Americans and allies and to neutralize the enemy (Creel, 1947; Vaughn, 1980). Hilderbrand (1981) suggests that the CPI was in some ways a temporary aberra-

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tion, but it was also the “era's highest expression of executive desire for control and centralization of information” (p. 164).

Most people believed that the Creel committee had been extraordinarily effective, and many historians agree. George Creel (1920) himself was so sure of the CPI's success that he subtitled his memoir *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*. Mock and Larson (1939) argue that the CPI uttered the “words that won the war.” “Through every known channel of communication the Committee carried straight to the people its message of Wilson's idealism, a war to end war, and America to the rescue of civilization,” they conclude (p. 5). Vaughn (1980) asserts that the CPI “succeeded all too well,” because it “organized patriotic enthusiasm where it existed and created it where it did not” (p. 4). Raucher (1968), although arguing that the war was not a watershed moment in public relations history, points out that “what is most noteworthy about the work of the Creel Committee was the scope of its operations” (p. 72), with a single clipping bureau amassing 15,000 newspaper stories in a span of 18 months.

The Office of War Information

The World War II Office of War Information (OWI) has been given some attention, but the definitive history of that office has yet to be written. Bishop and Mackay (1971) provide a summary of OWI activities and a history of the formation of the agency, which was composed of three prewar agencies. One of these was the National Emergency Council (NEC), created by Franklin Roosevelt in 1933, a little-remembered but important government agency that helped the administration gather information and feedback from the public. The NEC, Bishop (1966) recounts, made regular informal

surveys on as many as 50 different topics, produced special reports as needed, and maintained a clipping service, all to keep the administration informed about public opinion on issues and events. Roosevelt called the NEC “my legs and ears and eyes” (quoted in Bishop, 1966, p. 16). This is a rare example of two-way communication in political public relations.

Winkler (1978) argues that the excesses and the apparent success of the CPI’s propaganda left Americans with a bitter taste in their mouths, and this led the Roosevelt administration to take a more restrained approach. Under the direction of respected radio commentator Elmer Davis, the OWI “was to provide truthful information to the American public and meanwhile to develop campaigns—like those on behalf of bond-buying or salvage—to secure certain actions by that public” (p. 35). Even efforts in Europe, such as radio propaganda, were news based rather than emotional. But other scholarship on the OWI shows the efforts were far-reaching and not simply factual. Honey (1984) demonstrates that editors used government-suggested story lines and themes in fiction about women war workers, both to recruit women and to create a more supportive environment for them. Koppes and Black (1990) confirm that the OWI was more than just fac-

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tual with their examination of government influence over Hollywood films that were designed to end isolationism and instruct Americans on which side to take.

Many authors have documented American propaganda efforts overseas during World War II and during the Cold War that followed. For example, Laurie (1996) reviews propaganda campaigns aimed at Nazi Germany, showing that OWI campaigns were infused with liberal, New Deal ideologies despite their espoused goal of nonpartisanship. Shulman (1990) and Green (1988) analyze the Voice of America and the U.S. Information Service, respectively, to show how Americans attempted to influence foreign audiences. Such analyses are very often concerned with the effectiveness of American propaganda in the Cold War against communism.

Summary: Political Public Relations

At this point, scholars have assembled bits and pieces that explain small parts of the history of government PR, but there is no comprehensive history and, as is the case with corporate PR, many of the individual parts have yet to be explained. For example, Ritchie (1991) provides one of the best discussions available of the origins of public relations in Congress in a few pages in his analysis of the Washington press corps. Why did the government form the CPI during World War I but not create such a committee during the Spanish-American War, not so many years before? Why did government agencies continue to hire public relations specialists even after Congress had prohibited them from doing so—and why did Congress feel compelled to ban the practice? The literature thus far suggests that the Progressive Era was key not only to corporate PR but to political public relations. Hilderbrand (1981) makes a strong case that the Progressives realized the usefulness of opinion management, but not the possibility of its application to goals they did not share, at least in the case of foreign policy. Kelley (1956) argues, “This has been the chief motive back of the vast expansion of public relations programs by

businesses, industries, and interest groups: to control government policy by standardizing and enforcing public opinion” (p. 218). All of these ideas must be carefully investigated if we are to understand the historical effects of public relations on society.

Moreover, there is no theory to explain the rise and growth of political public relations as a specialized function, the reasons for the technician and policy adviser roles and why each one is adopted, or the relationship between the growth of political PR and the growth of corporate and other areas of public relations practice. A fairly sizable literature on White House public relations, including biographies, autobiographies, and general histories on presidential-press relations, is available to scholars. Compared with corporate public relations, there is much more research to draw upon in developing a generalized history of executive branch public relations—yet no such generalized history has been written. In short, Chandlerization has not yet taken place, and Chandler’s influence on

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corporate PR historiography is made doubly clear. His model of generalization has not been adopted in other areas of public relations historiography.

This emerging literature on political public relations indicates that understanding the rise of public relations as solely (or even mostly) due to the rise of big business is insufficient. Despite the fact that historians of corporate public relations have recognized as much and have included discussions of the Creel committee and other noncorporate aspects in their discussions of the rise and growth of PR, the widespread adoption of the business history frame has in essence delegitimated research on other forms of PR activity (although this was by no means the intention of historians, who have a rightful interest in public relations in its business context). The business frame defines corporate as the norm, and public relations activity that took place before the rise of corporate PR—which includes a great deal of the history of political public relations—is therefore defined as an “antecedent” rather than “real” public relations. Raucher (1968) separates the vocation of public relations from the business policy of public relations, arguing that the vocation was new in name and specialization, but many of the functions it would eventually carry out were old. Public relations did not spring up full-blown in corporations. It had been developing for many years, but the business history frame has encouraged scholars to consider PR only after 1900 and only as a full-time vocation.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES: SOCIAL HISTORY

If, as political PR historiography suggests, other approaches are both useful and necessary, then the redefinition of PR beyond the business history frame could begin with analyses of areas that are usually considered “antecedents.” These commonly include press agency, advertising, reform movements, civic volunteerism, fund-raising, and showmanship, in addition to political campaigning and war propaganda. Such PR activities often include public relations at the grass roots, conducted by the people rather than at the people. In this section, therefore, I examine research on the antecedents of public relations and on PR for nonprofit organizations, and I arrive at conclusions about public relations that are very different from those the corporate literature suggests.

The “Antecedents” of Public Relations

Circus promotion historiography shows how one antecedent has been ignored as part of the development of modern public relations. Publicity genius Phineas T. Barnum is the best known of these promoters. Wallace (1959) suggests that Barnum had an “instinctive understanding of what startled, amazed, astonished, titillated, thrilled” the public, and Saxon (1989) similarly attributes Barnum’s success to his “almost intuitive knowledge of human nature...; to his willingness to

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risk all that he had...; and to his then skillfully exploiting public opinion through the press so as to build interest in his acquisitions to a perfect furor” (p. 74). Harris (1973) finds a greater level of sophistication in Barnum’s appeals to the public. Barnum capitalized on the Jacksonian challenge to notions of social order, which placed authority in the hands of the “common man,” to glorify doubt and celebrate individual judgment, and asked audiences to judge for themselves the authenticity of the Fiji mermaid or the aesthetic quality of Jenny Lind’s voice. All of these authors agree that Barnum was a publicity genius and describe his use of techniques that are still current, but none places him in the context of the rise of public relations.

A notable exception to the tendency among historians to allow the business history frame to dominate has been the research of the “father of public relations education,” Scott M. Cutlip. His *Public Relations History* (1995) traces the antecedents of modern public relations, again starting long before corporations institutionalized public relations as a function of business. Based primarily on secondary sources, the book serves essentially as a reinterpretation of American history with a view toward understanding the people and events that contributed to the development of the field. In addition to circus promotion, war propaganda, and political campaigning, Cutlip includes a wide range of publicity and press agency activities, including those not sponsored by government or industry. Many campaigns, such as Clara Barton’s tireless efforts on behalf of the American Red Cross, were conducted by nonprofit organizations.

Olasky (1985) also considers grassroots public relations in his examination of General Lafayette’s visit to the United States in 1824-1825. “Each community invited Lafayette on its own and made preparations to receive him properly as he passed by on the grand tour,” Olasky writes (p. 4). The citizens of Murfreesborough, North Carolina, formed three committees, one to invite Lafayette to the city, a second to arrange his reception and housing, and the third to choose a speaker to welcome him. Olasky’s point is that citizens working as community boosters utilized many of the strategies and tactics later adopted by corporate practitioners, albeit for different reasons.

McBride’s (1989, 1993) dissertation and book on the work of 19th-century women reformers redefine PR by demonstrating that decades before corporations institutionalized public relations, Wisconsin women used nearly every modern technique of public relations in reform campaigns for the abolition of slavery, temperance, and woman suffrage. McBride (1989) argues that these public opinion campaigns contributed to “the rise and growth of mass communication in general and, specifically, to the modern profession of public relations which arose only after 1920” (pp. 391-392).

McBride (1989) criticizes the current literature on PR history because it focuses on what is predominant today—an emphasis on PR’s corporate and political origins—when in fact the social reform origins of public relations run much deeper (McBride, 1993).

McBride’s work on Wisconsin women is complemented by recent unpublished research on women’s reform movements. Byerly (1993) shows that suffragists had a coherent strategy for shaping public opinion about women and women’s rights,
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and they orchestrated a carefully planned campaign of interpersonal and mediated communication to reach their goal. Farmer (1997) notes that the suffragists “skillfully employed such public relations tactics as media relations, publicity, public education, propaganda, literature, public speeches and conventions, and political lobbying” (p. iii). Their tactics were ahead of their time. For example, to reach the ethnic communities in New York, “the suffragists held block parties with street dancing for each foreign group, which included native costumes, music, and suffrage speeches in the native tongue” (Farmer, 1997, p. 54). Such sophisticated targeting of audiences was not typical until years later in corporate public relations. Garner (1995) shows that beginning in 1912, Margaret Sanger used many techniques to promote birth control, including grassroots lobbying, long before many corporations or industries institutionalized them.

One of the most important examples of reform movement public relations is described by Hon (1997), who analyzes the PR elements of the civil rights movement by focusing on the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC), headed by Martin Luther King, Jr. Although the movement clearly did not utilize formal public relations, such as retaining external counsel, Hon identifies many public relations elements in the campaign, including alliance building, political advocacy, consumer boycotts, and grassroots communication. The SCLC conducted citizenship and political education campaigns designed to recruit volunteers, increase voter registration, and train citizens in nonviolent methods to resolve social problems. “Largely through its effective communication strategies and programs,” Hon concludes, “the SCLC eradicated state-supported segregation and disenfranchisement of African Americans, both predominant obstacles to advancement” (p. 201).

Civil rights PR is a dramatic example of the democratic possibilities of public relations from the bottom up, but another social history indicates that some of the same tactics used by the civil rights movement had previously been used to subjugate black citizens. Shotwell’s (1974, cited in Cutlip, 1994) unpublished master’s thesis on the Southern Publicity Association, an Atlanta agency headed by Elizabeth Tyler and Edward Young Clarke, shows that the agency was largely responsible for the revitalization of the Ku Klux Klan during the 1920s. The firm’s previous work for nonprofits, notably the Red Cross, the Salvation Army, and the YMCA, prepared it to recruit volunteers and raise funds, lessons it then applied to the nearly moribund Klan beginning in 1920. Within 3 months after the Klan’s Imperial Wizard retained Tyler and Clarke, 48,000 new members had joined. The publicists coached the Klan’s leader on public speaking, gave tours of the organizations, and worked with the news media to secure press coverage. They recognized, Shotwell explains, the suspicions and frustrations of white Protestant Americans and articulated them, in effect mobilizing public dissatisfaction.

PR for Nonprofits

Cutlip's (1990) book on fund-raising, first published in 1965, documents that origins of fund-raising for nonprofit organizations beginning with Harvard Col-

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lege in the 17th century and including large-scale philanthropic efforts of such "robber barons" as Andrew Carnegie and John D. Rockefeller. Like corporate and political PR historians, Cutlip asserts that World War I was "the catalyst that set off the nation's first great explosion of public giving" (p. 529).

Two of the institutional histories that focus mostly on corporate PR also contain information on nonprofit public relations. Ross (1959) includes a chapter titled "The Nonprofit Field" that briefly describes the PR activities of such groups as the Methodist Church, the American Cancer Society, and the Congress of Industrial Organizations. Cutlip (1994) discusses nonprofit and political campaigns conducted by several different agencies. For example, he describes the Birthday Balls organized by Carl Byoir and Associates, which were held on Franklin Roosevelt's birthday to raise money for polio research during the Depression. Such inclusion is not typical, however; public relations for nonprofit organizations is perhaps the single most neglected area in PR historiography.

An article on church public relations indicates that research on nonprofit PR can be informative. Ferré (1993) shows that public relations grew increasingly popular for churches at the same time it was being institutionalized in big business. Decreasing attendance and the demise of the Protestant press at the beginning of the 20th century led some religious leaders to experiment with publicity techniques, "creating a corps of amateur and professional publicists," acceding "to the rising authority of urban newspapers and business practices" (p. 515). Some ministers prepared sermons with an eye toward the headlines. Others wrote slogans or held competitions, such as father-son look-alike contests. There was enough demand for church PR that in 1913 Ivy Lee's partner, George F. Parker, left their firm to become a publicist for the Episcopal Church.

Another area of research on nonprofit organizations concerns higher education. After the Civil War, Bonfiglio (1990) argues, greater competition for enrollment and the rise of mass media led to a need for college recruitment as well as a need for larger universities. Much as a hierarchy grew in big business, university administrations began to expand. Unlike the corporate model, however, universities did not rely on outside counsel but quickly turned to "in-house" public relations departments. The first of these, the University of Michigan's publicity office, opened in 1897. By 1937 there were 205 such offices in American higher education. One example, the University of Wisconsin's press bureau, is described briefly by Bronstein and Vaughn (1998). In 1909, Wisconsin's publicity director, Willard Bleyer, launched a weekly press bulletin that brought stories about the school to newspapers nationwide. Bleyer's work dovetailed with the Wisconsin Idea, a partnership between the university and the state aimed at improving living conditions for all citizens, and Progressive ideals that had also fueled government and corporate public relations. Bonfiglio (1990) notes another difference from the corporate model, however, in that universities did not band together to promote themselves until

1981, when the Council for the Advancement and Support of Education instituted a campaign to promote higher education as a whole.

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Summary: Public Relations as Social History

The social histories reviewed above, which have often examined public relations from below, strongly contradict the findings of corporate PR historiography. Public relations was not used to suppress workers or subvert democratic processes but by ordinary and sometimes oppressed citizens to inform and persuade. Olasky (1985) notes that “the decentralist and vountaristic [sic: typo in published version; should read “voluntaristic”] emphases of early 19th century public relations have clearly been superseded in this century by paid, concentrated labors” (p. 10), but these antecedents deserver greater attention.

Together, the analyses of public relations as social history suggest the same thing as political histories: that the rise and growth of PR cannot be attributed solely to the rise of big business. The emphasis on the corporate frame has detracted from our understanding by infusing PR historiography with a decidedly institutional bias. But social histories have shown that individuals and public organizations such as reform groups, whether or not their aims were socially beneficial, were as important as corporations in the development of PR techniques and in the development of public relations as an occupation. As Byerly (1993) asserts, “Before the profession of public relations, there was the practice” (p. 16). To understand that practice and the profession that followed, historians must “examine much earlier periods” and “look for a more inclusive cast of PR characters” (p. 16), and thus adopt a broader definition of what constitutes the field.

In sum, public relations is not simply an occupation of paid counselors. Redefining PR so that it includes the philosophies, strategies, and tactics employed by individuals and communities, nonprofit and social organizations, and political advocates and institutions provides a broader base for understanding how and why people choose to utilize and institutionalize formal public relations practices in all kinds of organizations, including corporations. Byerly (1993) suggests that such a redefinition will democratize the way scholars study and conduct research on public relations. With so much of public relations historiography focusing on corporate PR, teaching materials such as textbooks also very often reflect a corporate or institutional bias. In reality, public relations history cannot be understood until all of its elements have been examined individually and then generalized in a Chandlerian model that blends many histories and not just business histories.

CONCLUSION: AN AGENDA FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

In this chapter, I have shown that the dominant paradigm in business history research, a Chandlerian model in which a general theory about the rise of big business is developed based on many individual case studies, has had a significant impact on the historiography of public relations. Although it has flaws, and despite the fact that it has been applied without prerequisite scholarship, the Chandlerian

lens has shed light on many important aspects of public relations history. Important themes identified in this chapter include the role of public relations in the marketplace of ideas, the historical effectiveness of PR, PR's relationship to the rise of big business, and the perceived importance of public opinion. But I have also shown here that the business history frame is simply too limiting for public relations. Because of the reliance on the corporate frame, most general histories of PR concentrate almost exclusively on its business aspects, neglecting other potentially profitable areas of inquiry, such as political, social, intellectual, and cultural histories.

This review has also shown that, although severely limited in quantity, research that has utilized other historical lenses has proven insightful. It is clear that public relations activities began long before they were institutionalized by corporate entities; it is clear that the Progressive Era was a watershed moment for public relations in every area of society; and it is clear that many different groups and individuals have used and been affected by the use of public relations strategies and tactics. Several scholars have made pleas for a more inclusive history of public relations (Byerly, 1993; Creedon, 1989; Garner, 1995), calling particularly for greater attention to women's history and social reform movements. But even that is not enough. Political and social histories show that public relations was emerging and apparently would have emerged even if big business had not. And the corporate histories have relied on evidence from political and nonprofit PR (e.g., Raucher, 1968, on John Price Jones's fund-raising activities; Tedlow, 1979, on the CPI) to explain how the field advanced. In reality these histories are intertwined, an idea best represented by the career of George F. Parker, who worked for a president, a corporate counseling firm, and a church, all before World War I. No single strand of PR history can be understood except in relationship to the others, and none should be given a more privileged position in public relations historiography.

Throughout this chapter I have advanced the elements of a research agenda for public relations history. Put together, the new agenda would include many elements. Scholars must examine not only the many big-city counseling firms and corporations, but civic, voluntary, and religious groups; labor unions, consumer groups, and trade associations; women's and minority groups; small businesses, nonprofit organizations, and political groups; and agencies outside of New York. An analysis of public relations as a whole during the Progressive Era would seem to be particularly important, given that scholars in so many areas have indicated the significance of that period. Research on individuals and on practitioners' groups should also be continued. For instance, a group called the Wise Men formed in 1938 in New York City and included such luminaries as Tommy Ross, Claude Robinson, Pendleton Dudley, Paul Garrett of General Motors, and Carlisle MacDonald of U.S. Steel, but it has not been studied. Comparative studies are also relevant. Because of the importance of the Progressive Era and World War I to

American public relations, a comparison between the Creel Committee and Britain's Wellington House (Kunczik, 1997), for example, would be productive. The adoption of American public relations practices around the world is another important topic. Intellectual histories, such as an exploration of the meaning of the world *publicity* to

Progressives, would further explain the ideas that have contributed to the development of PR, and cultural histories could illuminate the ways in which public relations has influenced society as a whole. Continued research on the political and social roots of public relations is also imperative. Until such wide-ranging studies are completed, scholars will not and cannot fully understand the history of public relations.

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