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Models of Public Relations in an International Setting

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Scholars of public relations have identified four typical models of public relations practice in countries with Anglo cultures—press agentry, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical. Press agentry and public information form a continuum of craft public relations. The two-way models make up a continuum of professional public relations. Research shows that public relations departments contribute most to organizational effectiveness when they practice on the professional continuum and emphasize the symmetrical model more than the asymmetrical. However, most of the conditions that foster professional public relations in Anglo countries may not exist in and around most organizations in other cultures. In addition, in other countries practitioners may practice public relations according to a completely different model. In this article, we report a meta-analysis of studies of public relations practice in India, Greece, and Taiwan. Those studies show that craft

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public relations predominates in these countries: Although practitioners ascribe to the values and goals of professional public relations, most do not have the knowledge to practice it. In addition, through the research we identified two additional patterns of public relations practice—"personal influence" and "cultural translation." These patterns may represent new models, but more likely they are variations within the four known models. The research also suggests, however, that public relations practice containing at least elements of the two-way symmetrical model may be generic to effective practice in all cultures.

Public relations is a major force in organizational communication in the United States and other Western countries. When public relations is practiced as a management function, corporations, government agencies, associations, and nonprofit organizations identify the stakeholders they affect and that affect them. Once stakeholders are identified, public relations managers develop ongoing programs of communication with these publics. Public relations then is a vital part of strategic management. Its role is to use communication to build relations with the strategic publics that shape and constrain the mission of the organization. (For a complete conceptualization of this "excellent" approach to public relations, see J. E. Grunig, 1992.)

Public relations often does not fill this strategic role, however, because it is practiced according to an anachronistic model of the function. J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1989, 1992) identified four typical models of public relations practice in North America. These models are press agentry, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical. Press agentry and public information form a continuum of *craft public relations,* which ranges from propaganda (press agentry) on one end to journalism (public information) on the other. The two-way models make up a continuum of *professional public relations,* which ranges from persuasion on one end (two-way asymmetrical) to conflict management (two-way symmetrical) on the other.

The research summarized in J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1989, 1992) shows that public relations departments that contribute most to organizational effectiveness practice on the professional continuum and emphasize the symmetrical model more than the asymmetrical model. Organizations practicing public relations professionally generally have participative rather than authoritarian cultures, have organic rather than mechanical structures, have symmetrical systems of internal communication, value external communication and participation in public relations, and are in an environment in which activist groups regularly bring pressure on the organization.

Most of the conditions that foster professional public relations in the United States may not exist in and around organizations in other countries. Public relations professionals may practice different models of public relations elsewhere in the world—models that may or may not be effective in the countries where they are used. Public relations practitioners and scholars have begun to debate whether public relations can be practiced in a similar way in different countries or whether different, localized approaches will be necessary. The question is especially important for multinational organizations—those that do business in more than one country or have publics in more than one country. The question also is important for public relations education and for the development of a global public relations profession: Can the same principles be taught in different countries and included in a body of knowledge that can be used throughout the world?[1]

THE SEARCH FOR GENERIC PRINCIPLES OF PUBLIC RELATIONS

Anderson (1989) used the terms *global* and *international* to distinguish between public relations practiced in the same way throughout the world and public relations customized for each culture:

> *International* public relations practitioners very often implement distinctive programs in multiple markets, with each program tailored to meet the often acute distinctions of the individual geographic market.
>
> *Global* public relations superimposes an overall perspective on a program executed in two or more national markets, recognizing the similarities among audiences while necessarily adapting to regional differences. (p. 413)

Sharpe (1992) endorsed a strong version of the global approach. After travels to Brazil, Turkey, Canada, the Netherlands, and Nigeria, he concluded that the "principles as to what public relations is and can do remain the same worldwide—and surprisingly—appear to be clearly understood by professionals irregardless [*sic*] of the working conditions in which they may find themselves or the social conditioning they themselves have experienced" (p. 104). Anderson (1989), however, chose a softer version of the global model, saying, "Global, as opposed to multinational, businesses demand that programs in distinctive markets be interrelated. While there will always be local differences and need for customization, the programs will probably share more than they differ" (p. 413).

Botan (1992) came to the opposite conclusion. He called the global approach the ethnocentric model and concluded that practitioners from Western countries often impose the assumptions of their culture on public relations practice in other countries. Under a polycentric model, in contrast, practitioners in each country in which a multinational organization works

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[1]Public relations people have not been alone in asking this question. Marketing experts also are debating whether the same products can be marketed and advertised in the same way in different countries or whether different products must be developed and marketed differently (Ovaitt, 1988). Likewise, management scholars are debating whether management practices can be culture-free or culture-specific (Adler & Doktor, 1986).

have considerable freedom to practice public relations in a way they believe is appropriate for that country. Likewise, VanLeuven (1994), after observing public relations practice in Singapore and Malaysia, theorized that public relations will develop through different stages as a country develops economically. In particular, he concluded, public relations will begin as marketing communication in early stages of economic development.

Emerging out of this debate about the merits of two extreme positions seems to be a consensus that the ideal model for international public relations lies somewhere in the middle—that public relations programs, in Ovaitt's (1988) words, "can share strategic elements even if these strategies are implemented in different ways in different cultures" (p. 6). Booth (1986) described the middle ground similarly: "There seems to be a general consensus that a public relations campaign has to be adapted to meet local conditions and that even the strategy requires some local input" (p. 22).

Two scholars of international management, Brinkerhoff and Ingle (1989), called this middle approach the use of *generic principles* and *specific applications.* They identified five management functions they said are generic to good performance. However, Brinkerhoff and Ingle added that how each of these functions is actually applied "can vary from setting to setting" (p. 493):

> For example, a rural development agency in country X may establish a formal goal specification and review procedure, whereas an agency in country Y may accomplish the same function with a more informal arrangement. What matters is that participants develop ways of fulfilling the functions that fit with their organizational and cultural environments. (p. 493)

In this article, therefore, we begin the search for principles of public relations that may be generic to more than one culture by examining the results of three studies that have measured the extent to which the four models of public relations identified in research in Anglo countries are practiced in India, Greece, and Taiwan. We ask whether any of these models, especially the two-way symmetrical model or a combination of that model with the two-way asymmetrical model, are practiced and are effective in the three countries. In addition, we report research that identified two additional models in these countries—the personal influence model and the cultural interpreter model—and then discuss the likelihood that these models also are practiced in the United States.

THE NATURE OF METARESEARCH

Together the three studies served as the data for the metaresearch presented in this article. Metaresearch synthesizes research results from a number of studies on a particular topic into more general and theoretical conclusions. We aggregated the qualitative data of the original research integrated here using a variation on the method of the propositional inventory. The propositional inventory is a methodology of synthesis that generalizes from qualitative data by reviewing and combining the conclusions of a number of primary research studies. It relies on systematic, subjective decision criteria.[2] Because data reduction is essential to developing more general conclusions at the theoretical level, our major decisions concerned discarding large chunks of the data that were available from the studies in India, Greece, and Taiwan.

Results are expressed as a narrative integration of the findings of the primary research.[3] This effort to discern patterns from specific, ad hoc instances represents one of the first major steps toward developing theoretical propositions about the international practice of public relations. Such linking of studies in an effort to develop a theory to account for some closely related set of phenomena is a traditional approach for social scientists (Mandell & Bozeman, n.d.) The method of linking adopted in this metaresearch is informal pattern recognition (Yin, 1981, 1982).

Traditionally, metaresearch has been the province of senior scholars in the field. As a result, it has reflected an establishment bias. Rogers (1985) argued, instead, for a more critical tone. He also suggested that metaresearch be considered more tentative in nature than has been the case. Why? It tends to be done so late that it suffers from lack of timeliness. Thus Rogers recommended that rather than waiting for any set number of studies to become available, the scholar should be alert to the time when the metaresearch would be most valuable.

We believe that that time has come. Meta-analysis simply involves the convergence of findings from more than a single study. We have chosen to generalize from three studies—not to the population of countries in which public relations is practiced, but to the theoretical propositions that guided each of these studies. Because each was based on a comparable theoretical framework (primarily that of models of public relations) and because these three studies represent the total available to us at this pivotal point, we consider the meta-analysis of their findings legitimate. In essence, we are less concerned about the risk of Type 1 error, the finding of false positives, than of waiting long enough to amass a larger number of comparable cases and missing the time at which the analytic generalization of findings from three exceptionally well-drawn cases would serve to develop the field of public relations theoretically.

In our attempt to generalize from empirical data to higher levels of abstraction, which is an essential activity for any scientific field, we further

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[2]By contrast, meta-analysis, which is an alternative type of metaresearch, is governed by statistical decision rules. Meta-analysis deals with quantitative, rather than qualitative, data (Rogers, 1985).

[3]In meta-analysis, findings are converted to a common statistic, typically a point-biserial correlation coefficient (see Glass, McGaw, & Smith, 1981; Hunter, Schmidt, & Jackson, 1982).

argue that even imperfect studies can converge on a true conclusion (Rogers, 1985). We believe that the conclusions to be set forth in this metaresearch are greater than the sum of the primary studies synthesized here. As a result, we can respond to the European critics who charge American scholars with much empirical research that contributes only marginally to theoretical progress (e.g., Nordenstreng, 1968).

Because the number of studies synthesized in the metaresearch matters less than the asking of important questions, we consider the addition of India, Greece, and Taiwan into the equation most valuable, especially at this stage. Analyzing the models of public relations in these three countries contributes to the description and classification of public relations behavior worldwide. Later, with more countries included, we may develop more complex explanations of the relations among key variables in the study.

Most important, we believe the time has come to address the ethnocentric bias that has characterized much research in public relations. The three international studies to be integrated here were designed to answer questions suggested by the initial program of research on the models of public relations in the United States.

MODELS OF PUBLIC RELATIONS: A CONCEPTUALIZATION

J. E. Grunig (1976) began a research program to explain the public relations behavior of organizations. His idea was to isolate variables that describe different types of public relations in order to reduce the universe of public relations practice to a few simplified types of behavior that could be measured and explained. He then looked for other variables to explain why organizations practice public relations as they do.

In the first study, J. E. Grunig asked 216 public relations practitioners in the Washington–Baltimore area to estimate the extent to which their organizations used 16 common public relations procedures, such as writing press releases, conducting formal and informal research, holding open houses, and preparing publications. He then used Thayer's (1968) concepts of synchronic and diachronic communication to group these 16 procedures into two theoretical patterns of public relations behavior. The purpose of synchronic communication is to synchronize the behavior of publics to benefit the organization. The purpose of diachronic communication is to negotiate a state-of-affairs that benefits both organization and publics. Factor analysis of the 16 public relations procedures produced two factors that approximated these two theoretical patterns of public relations behavior.

J. E. Grunig (1976) then correlated these two factors with several organizational structural variables that characterize two types of organizations: organic and mechanical. Schneider (1985) later correlated the 16 public relations activities with four types of organizations developed by Hull and

Hage (1982): traditional, mechanical, organic, and mixed mechanical/organic. In both cases, correlations of the public relations behaviors with types of organizations produced some explanation of the reasons why organizations practice public relations differently. However, the synchronic–diachronic conceptualization did not capture enough of the variation in public relations behavior to produce a deep theory.

Thus, J. E. Grunig (1984) introduced four models of public relations behavior based on J. E. Grunig and Hunt's (1984) discussion of the historical development of public relations. These four models are representations of the values, goals, and behaviors held or used by organizations when they practice public relations—simplified in the same way that a perfect vacuum or perfect competition are simplified representations in physics and economics. J. E. Grunig called these models *press agentry/publicity, public information, two-way asymmetrical,* and *two-way symmetrical.*

Press agentry/publicity describes propagandistic public relations that seeks media attention in almost any way possible. The public information model characterizes public relations as practiced by "journalists-in-residence" who disseminate what generally is accurate information about the organization but do not volunteer negative information. Both of these models are one-way models in that practitioners who follow them give information about the organization to publics but do not seek information from publics through research or informal methods.

The next two models are more sophisticated in that their practice includes the use of research and other methods of two-way communication. Two-way communication can be manipulative, however; thus, two-way asymmetrical public relations programs use research to identify the messages most likely to produce the support of publics without having to change the behavior of the organization. Effects are asymmetrical because the hoped-for behavioral change benefits the organization and not publics, although many practitioners believe that manipulated publics benefit also from the manipulation. As a result, the two-way asymmetrical model is the epitome of much of modern, sophisticated public relations practice. However, it also describes a model that fits within the predominant mindset developed by Bernays and others decades ago (see, e.g., Olasky, 1984).

The fourth model, in contrast, has effects that are symmetrical—effects that a neutral observer would describe as benefiting both organization and publics. Organizations practicing two-way symmetrical public relations use bargaining, negotiating, and strategies of conflict resolution to bring about symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitudes, and behaviors of both the organization and its publics.

J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1989) first conceptualized two of the models as asymmetrical in purpose (i.e., press agentry and two-way asymmetrical) and two as symmetrical (i.e., public information and two-way symmetrical). Later, J. E. Grunig (1989) changed this conceptualization and theorized that only the two-way symmetrical model is truly symmetrical.

According to J. E. Grunig, practitioners who practice the press agentry and two-way asymmetrical models intend to persuade or manipulate publics. Those following the public information model have the effect of manipulating publics, even though that may not be their intent. J. E. Grunig based this idea in large part on Gandy's (1982) concept of information subsidies. J. E. Grunig then argued that the press agentry, two-way asymmetrical, and public information models are variations on what he believed to be the dominant (i.e., manipulative) worldview of public relations and that the two-way symmetrical model represents a break from that worldview.

Originally, J. E. Grunig and Hunt (1984) speculated that the public information model would be the dominant one practiced. Research has not born out that contention (see J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 1992). Organizations seem to practice several of the models together, and the press agentry model is most popular. The two-way asymmetrical model, if practiced, is most popular in corporations. The public information model seems to be most popular in governmental agencies, especially in scientific agencies. The public information model, however, consistently has been the most difficult model to measure reliably because organizations rarely practice it as a pure model.

Many organizations do practice the two-way symmetrical model at times, and for some organizations it is the dominant model practiced. In addition, organizations often practice the two-way symmetrical model together with the two-way asymmetrical model. They also tend to combine the press agentry and public information models. The correlations among the models led J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1992) to reconceptualize them as points on two continua.

They placed press agentry on one end of a craft public relations continuum—an end labeled *propaganda.* They placed public information at the other end of the same continuum—labeled *journalism.* The two-way models can be placed on a professional continuum, which ranges from asymmetrical purposes (i.e., *persuasion*) on one end to symmetrical purposes (i.e., *collaboration*) on the other. J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1992) called this professional continuum mixed motive public relations, following Murphy (1991). Murphy used game theory to theorize that most public relations practitioners have mixed motives: They serve both as advocates for their organizations and as mediators between the organization and its strategic publics.

Extensive research on the models also has identified the conditions that make it more likely that an organization will practice the two-way symmetrical or mixed-motive (i.e., professional) model of public relations (J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 1989, 1992; J. E. Grunig et al., 1991). Each variable alone does not explain a large amount of the variance in public relations behavior, but together several variables give a composite picture of the reasons for that behavior. Organizations practice professional public relations because the most powerful people in the organization—members of the dominant coalition—understand the need for professional public relations as a central management function and choose to have a public relations department with the potential to practice those models.

To have a department with that potential, however, the organization must have public relations practitioners with the knowledge to practice professional, strategic public relations. In addition, dominant coalitions most often value public relations in organizations with participative cultures, organic structures, symmetrical systems of internal communication, and turbulent environments.

Research to date, therefore, has constructed a reasonably complete picture of the extent to which the four models are practiced, where they are practiced, and why they are practiced. However, nearly all of the research has been conducted in Anglo cultures. Our next step in this program of research was to extend the concept of public relations behavior to a more international setting. For this early research in an international setting, we chose simply to ask whether the models describe the practice of public relations in other countries. Our first research question, therefore, is:

> Research Question 1: Do the press agentry, public information, two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical models describe public relations in countries other than the United States?

In addition, we asked:

> Research Question 2: Are there additional patterns of practicing public relations in other countries that cannot be described by these four models? If so, can these patterns of practice be described as additional models or variations on the four models?

METHODOLOGY

The combined quantitative and qualitative database for this metaresearch includes interviews, surveys, ethnographic inquiry, case studies, and analyses of organizational publications in three countries. Although the research schedules were not standardized among the three studies, they were conducted within a year of each other and framed by the same theoretical conceptualization. Thus, resulting analyses should be comparable.

In southern India, a purposive sample of 18 organizations was selected for an ethnographic study of public relations practitioners (for the complete study, see Sriramesh, 1991). Organizations fell into four categories: seven public sector enterprises, nine private organizations, one governmental agency, and one nonprofit agency. Organizational publications (including house magazines, brochures, and annual reports) also were analyzed. Practitioners also responded to a self-administered questionnaire that asked questions designed to measure the models of public relations, public relations roles, and related variables.

In Greece, data were collected from 32 personal interviews with Greek practitioners. In addition, 81 practitioners responded to a questionnaire that measured their knowledge and practice of the models of public relations, public relations roles, their perception of management's schema for public relations, and demographic variables (for the complete study, see Lyra, 1991).

The case study of a nuclear power plant in Taiwan encompassed 34 interviews from the Tai Power Company (TPC), two antinuclear activist groups, and local community leaders (for the complete study, see Huang, 1990). As in India, additional sources of evidence included self-administered questionnaires and an analysis of relevant documents.

Despite the richness of this combined methodology and the multiple sources of data in all three studies, the metaresearch presented here has limitations. One major limitation of any metaresearch is the possibility of too much diversity of operational measures involved in the cases. Three different scholars, using different languages, conducted the studies in the three countries. A second important consideration is the culture-specific context of causes of social phenomena (Cronbach, 1975). A third concern is the relatively small number of countries included in this synthesis. The possibility of selection bias due to convenience sampling (both of the countries themselves and of the samples within each country) limits the generalizability of any conclusions. Appropriately selected small samples do add value, however, especially when the obtained results are significant (as they are here).

Despite these reservations, metaresearch as an approach to theory development is valuable because developing the theory is not an end in itself. Instead, it is one way to achieve a pragmatic goal: helping public relations professionals practice excellent public relations, based in part on the experience of a number of others in a variety of cultural, political, and economic situations. This accelerated learning is an important midpoint between the study of isolated cases and the emergence of an elegant theory. Thus it helps preclude the problem of conducting research for its own sake, rather than for the light it can shed on public relations practice.

RESULTS

Research Question 1

In the first research question, we asked whether the four models of public relations identified in the United States also are practiced in other countries. In each of the three countries, the researchers used both quantitative and qualitative methods. In India, the qualitative observations led to different conclusions than the quantitative—suggesting that quantitative measures uncovered normative (ideal) models and the qualitative measures positive (descriptive) models. In Greece, the combinations of quantitative and qualitative observations also suggested that some models are positive and others normative. In Taiwan, the two sets of observations seemed to be consistent.

In India, Sriramesh (1991) found that quantitative measures indicated that the two-way symmetrical, two-way asymmetrical, press agentry, and public information models were practiced in that order (Table 1). In contrast, Sriramesh reported that his ethnographic analysis showed that "the press agentry and public information models proved excellent indicators of how the sample organizations practiced public relations" (p. 170).

Indian respondents seemed to interpret the quantitative indicators of the models normatively. These practitioners responded favorably to the idea of practicing the two-way asymmetrical and symmetrical models, saying that public relations should be two-way and that it should be based on research. Most also claimed that they conducted research before engaging in two-way communication. However, the ethnographic evidence and responses to open-ended questions on a questionnaire showed that practitioners' notions about two-way communication were only ideals. Intensive observation of their activities and conversations with them revealed that public relations people in India did not have the time, the support from senior management, or the infrastructure to engage in research or to practice strategic two-way communication (Sriramesh, 1991, pp. 168–170).

When asked to list the activities they performed most often, the Indian practitioners listed the following typical activities—most of which characterize the press agentry or public information model. No one listed formal or informal research.

> "Explain to people what the organization is, stands for, and needs."
> "Communicate our needs to donors and match donors with the needs of the organisation."
> "I maintain a constant two-way relationship with media persons even outside my office hours."
> "In charge of gifts for VIPs (only) and usually take the wives of the VIPs around the town."
> "Responsible for all publicity and arrangements—programme, lunch, dinner, transport, protocol, etc. ... when the visitor is a VIP."
> "Liaise with researchers working on our company—PR, house journal, campaigns, etc."
> "Dissemination of company information/maintaining an information bank."
> "Printing and production of publications, brochures, technical leaflets."
> "Newspaper scanning."
> "Formulating and releasing goodwill advertisements." (pp. 187–188)

Sriramesh (1991) also asked his respondents to define public relations and to describe its purpose. Most defined public relations as publicity. Most

TABLE 1
Means for the Variable Practice of Public Relations Models for South India

Model	*M*
Public information	
I have little time to engage in research about the efficacy of our public relations activities.	2.51
Maintaining newspaper clips is the only measure of the success of our public relations activities.	1.83
The public relations unit of this organization is more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between the management and the community.	2.30
Press agentry/publicity	
The public relations unit of my organization does not go beyond acting as a liaison between the organization and the media.	2.20
The main purpose of the public relations unit in our organization is to get favorable publicity for this organization and keep unfavorable publicity out.	2.75
The purpose of public relations is, quite simply, to get publicity for this organization.	2.63
Two-way asymmetrical	
The public relations unit of my organization does research regularly to determine how effective the PR unit has been in changing people's attitudes.	3.32
The broad goal of our public relations unit is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave.	3.31
The public relations unit of my organization looks at attitude surveys to make sure that the unit is describing the organization and its policies in ways its publics would be most likely to accept.	3.47
Before beginning a public relations campaign, one should conduct research to determine public attitudes toward the organization and how these might be changed.	4.30
Two-way symmetrical	
The purpose of public relations is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organization and publics the organization affects.	4.57
Before starting a public relations campaign, we conduct surveys or informal research to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.	3.46
The purpose of public relations is to change the to change the attitudes and behavior of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behaviors of publics.	4.37
Two-way symmetrical	
It is the view of this organization that public relations should provide mediation for the organization—to help management and publics negotiate conflict.	3.63

Note. $N = 18$. Scale = 1–5.

described its purpose as building a positive image of the organization. As a result, media relations was the predominant activity of most public relations professionals. Most saw public relations and advertising as complementary activities. As a result, they used the media and advertising to achieve their objective of gaining positive publicity. Given this definition and purpose of public relations, the press agentry and, to a lesser extent, the public information models occur naturally. Public relations practice has not evolved to include either of the sophisticated two-way models in India, although practitioners see them as ideals.

In Greece, Lyra's (1991) quantitative data showed press agentry to be the most popular model, followed by public information and the two-way symmetrical model (Table 2). The two-way asymmetrical model lagged far behind—in large part because Greek practitioners do not conduct public relations research and three of the four items asked about the use of research. Lyra also used quantitative indicators of knowledge needed to practice each of the four models. These results showed that Greek practitioners had far more of the knowledge needed to practice the press agentry and public information models than of the knowledge needed to practice the two-way, professional models (Table 3).

Lyra found that most of the practitioners she studied were communication technicians or technical managers rather than strategic managers. For 15 respondents she classified as strategic managers, the model with the highest mean was the two-way symmetrical model (62.75 on a 100-point scale), compared with means of 53.15 on the press agentry model, 45.08 on the two-way asymmetrical model, and 41.58 on the public information model. For these 15 managers, the knowledge scores were similar for all four models, ranging from 66.17 on the two-way symmetrical model to 85.63 on the public information model. Although these managers still reported the greatest knowledge for the craft models, they indicated that they had nearly as much knowledge of the two professional models. Practitioners who were primarily technicians reported the two-way symmetrical model as second to the press agentry model. Those results suggested that the press agentry model was a positive model of what Greek practitioners actually do, whereas the two-way symmetrical model was a normative model of what they would like to do.

Even the managers had a tendency to combine the press agentry and two-way symmetrical models. This combination was puzzling because the qualitative research suggested that most of their activities were promotional and, as in India, revolved around what these practitioners called image building. Lyra (1991) explained this contradiction as follows:

> One reason could be the overwhelming preference of the press agentry model by management, at least in the practitioner's perception (mean = 71.72 compared to 49.35 for the public information, 42.24 for the two-way symmetrical and 30.32 for the two-way asymmetrical). Shaped by this framework and with little power in the public relations department, naturally, many of the

TABLE 2
Means for the Variable Practice of the Public Relations Models for Greece and Taiwan

Model	*Greece*[a]	*Taiwan*[b]
Public information		
In public relations, nearly everyone is so busy writing news stories or producing publications that there is no time to do research.	12.96	2.35
In public relations, we disseminate accurate information but do not volunteer unfavorable information.	87.65	4.30
Keeping a clipping file is about the only way we have to determine the success of a program.	57.65	3.50
In this organization, public relations is more of a neutral disseminator of information than an advocate for the organization or a mediator between management and publics.	34.51	3.45
Total	48.19	3.40
Press agentry		
The purpose of public relations is, quite simply, to get publicity for an organization.	60.72	4.15
In public relations we mostly attempt to get favorable publicity into the media and to keep unfavorable publicity out.	90.68	4.30
We determine how successful a program is from the number of people who attend an event or use our products and services.	65.67	4.65
For this organization, public relations and publicity mean essentially the same thing.	56.58	4.00
Total	68.41	4.28
Two-way asymmetrical		
After completing a public relations program we do research to determine how effective the program has been in changing people's attitudes.	19.75	5.00
In public relations, our broad goal is to persuade publics to behave as the organization wants them to behave.	57.04	6.00
Before starting a public relations program we look at attitude surveys to make sure we describe the organization in ways our publics would be most likely to accept.	18.49	3.75
Before beginning a program, we do research to determine public attitudes toward the organization and how they might change.	10.62	4.50
Total	27.90	4.83
Two-way symmetrical		
The purpose of public relations is to develop mutual understanding between the management of the organization and publics the organization affects.	71.19	4.45
Before starting a program, we do surveys or informal research to find out how much management and our publics understand each other.	9.44	4.10
The purpose of public relations is to change the attitudes and behavior of management as much as it is to change the attitudes and behavior of publics.	37.90	5.55
This organization believes public relations should provide mediation for the organization, to help management and publics negotiate conflicts.	56.73	4.70
Total	44.14	4.70

[a]$N = 81$. Scale = 0–100. [b]$N = 20$. Scale = 1–7.

TABLE 3
Means for the Variable Knowledge of the Models of Public Relations for Greece

Model	*M*
Public information	
Provide objective information about your organization.	92.81
Understand the news values of journalists.	84.57
Prepare news stories that reporters will use.	44.64
Perform as a journalist in your organization.	55.33
Total	69.63
Press agentry	
Convince a reporter to publicize your organization.	60.90
Get your organization's name into the media.	71.11
Keep bad publicity out of the media.	76.90
Get maximum publicity of a staged event.	63.58
Total	68.12
Two-way asymmetrical	
Get publics to behave as the organization wants.	55.63
Use attitude theory in a campaign.	28.58
Manipulate publics scientifically.	15.37
Persuade a public that your organization is right on an issue.	42.57
Total	35.54
Two-way symmetrical	
Determine how public reacts to the organization.	28.64
Negotiate with activist group.	23.84
Use theories of conflict resolution in dealing with publics.	24.75
Help management understand a particular public.	57.06
Total	33.57

> practitioner's activities converged toward press agentry. By the same token, an agency has to be competitive; and to achieve that, it has to offer services for which there is a demand. Therefore, at least to some degree, and for as long as the management remains illiterate in public relations, an uninformed force will affect the choice of model practiced. (p. 120)

The Greek practitioners, like those in southern India, described public relations primarily as a marketing activity—image building—and the managers who employed them were even more likely to define public relations in that way. That worldview again seemed to explain the dominance of press agentry in Greek public relations.

These studies in southern India and Greece were of public relations practitioners in a number of varied organizations. Huang's (1990) study of public relations in Taiwan, however, was of the behavior of the public relations department of a single government-owned corporation, the TPC, during a campaign to gain approval for the construction of a nuclear power plant. The company had secured permission from several governmental regulatory agencies to build three previous plants in 1971, 1973, and 1976 while Taiwan was ruled through martial law. Under an authoritarian system of government, the company, using techniques of press agentry and personal contacts in the regulatory agencies, had been able to secure permission to build those plants.

The company continued those approaches when it proposed the building of a fourth nuclear plant in 1980. Preliminary construction began on the project, but activists began to protest the project in 1985. In 1987, the government of Taiwan lifted martial law, and the system of government became more participative—increasing the power of activists to stop the project. Huang used qualitative methods to analyze the TPC's public relations during three stages of the controversy—before activists appeared, after the appearance of activists, and after the lifting of martial law. In the third stage, she also used quantitative methods.

Evidence from publications of the TPC and media coverage showed that the company used the press agentry model during the first stage of the conflict. It provided highly technical, but one-sided, information supporting the construction of the plant. Although the technical information resembled the output of the public information model, it was one-sided and biased—thus fitting the press agentry model best. After the activists appeared, analysis of the TPC's publications and media activities showed that the company "reacted to its challenges passively, slowly, and impotently" (Huang, 1990, p. 122). At first, the company stayed with the press agentry model, but later it turned to the public information model "to educate the public about nuclear information, starting to try to cooperate with the environment" (p. 122).

For the stage of the controversy after martial law was lifted, Huang administered a quantitative questionnaire to 20 public relations practitioners in the TPC (see Table 2). These results suggested that the respondents perceived the TPC to be practicing the two-way asymmetrical model, with the two-way symmetrical model a close second. The press agentry model followed these two models closely, but the public information model had a significantly lower score than the other three.

Huang (1990) also interviewed 21 respondents personally. After describing the essence of each of the models, she asked the respondents which best described the public relations activities of the TPC. Eleven chose the two-way asymmetrical model, 4 the two-way symmetrical model, 3 both two-way models, and 2 the public information model. Huang also examined the TPC's major communication programs about nuclear power and analyzed its publications during the last stage. She concluded that the TPC's goal was to persuade publics by providing them with scientific information supporting nuclear power. It did not intend to bargain or negotiate with activists.

Huang (1990) also looked in detail at the research that practitioners at the TPC claimed to have conducted. The quantitative items in Table 2 showed that the public relations department did more evaluative than formative research—to determine if it had been successful in changing attitudes about nuclear power. Personal interviews confirmed that scientific polling had been done "to have the evidence showing the increasing percentages of public approval to present to the government" (p. 137). In total, then, these quantitative and qualitative observations support the conclusion that the TPC did practice the two-way asymmetrical model predominantly after the dropping of martial law in Taiwan led to a more participative political system. As we will see in addressing the second research question, Huang also found that the company practiced a personal influence approach in the early stages of the conflict—a pattern of practice not described well by the four models of public relations.

Later in her analysis, Huang evaluated the effectiveness of the four models as well as the personal influence approach to public relations. At the time of her research, the government still had not approved the fourth nuclear plant. Interviews with leaders of community and environmental activist groups revealed a complete distrust of the TPC. She concluded that the asymmetrical models had been ineffective, but that it was too late to turn to the two-way symmetrical model. Leaders of the activist groups so distrusted the company that they said they would not communicate with or bargain with the company even if it wished to do so.

The effectiveness of the models was not a major research question in the Indian and Greek studies, so we cannot draw metatheoretical questions about effectiveness from these studies—although the Taiwanese results do confirm previous studies that the asymmetrical models are generally ineffective (J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 1989). Our metaresearch of these three studies, however, does suggest that at least some organizations practice all four models in these three countries. Press agentry predominates, especially when public relations is considered to be a marketing, image-building function. A few of the more knowledgeable public relations managers practice the two-way symmetrical model—at least in combination with other models. For most practitioners, however, the two-way symmetrical model serves as a normative ideal even though conditions that foster its practice—especially the understanding of the model and support of public relations by the dominant coalition—do not exist.

The most sophisticated practice of a professional model seemed to occur in Taiwan, but there the two-way asymmetrical model was little more than an extension of press agentry. The model was ineffective, and Huang (1990) recommended use of the two-way symmetrical model—although her study showed that, because of the previous use of asymmetrical models, even that model would have to be used many years before it would be effective.

Research Question 2

The second research question asked whether public relations is practiced in these three countries in ways not described by the four models identified in the United States. The three studies examined here did identify two additional patterns of practice—which tentatively we will call the personal influence and cultural translator models. Later, though, we will ask whether these two new patterns of practice represent comprehensive patterns of practice like the other four models or whether they are variations of those models.

In India, Greece, and Taiwan, qualitative research identified the personal influence model. With this model, practitioners try to establish personal relationships—friendships, if possible—with key individuals in the media, government, or political and activist groups. Practitioners in the three countries referred to relationships with these key people as "contacts" from whom favors can be sought.

In media relations, public relations practitioners use contacts to get journalists to write stories about the organization represented by a public relations practitioner. For example, an Indian practitioner reported that 60% of the reason a news release gets published can be traced to personal influence and only 40% to news value (Sriramesh, 1991, p. 191). Media relations practiced according to the personal influence model, therefore, resembles the press agentry model. However, the press agentry model usually uses a different set of techniques—such as staged events, puffery, or photo opportunities—to get attention, whereas the personal influence model concentrates on personal relationships with journalists.

In addition to the use of the personal influence model in media relations, Sriramesh (1991) identified a technique he called *hospitality relations* in that model. For practitioners engaged in hospitality relations,

> Their objective was to keep strategically placed persons "in good humor." Practitioners tried to maintain a good personal relationship with these individuals so that they could use this goodwill later to seek favors. One senior executive called this exchange between public relations practitioners and strategically placed individuals "quid pro quo." He said that by giving gifts and hosting lunches or dinners, a good public relations officer "fans the egos" of the recipients thus keeping a channel open for asking favors for the organization when needed. (p. 191)

The overall purpose of hospitality relations is to build a lasting relationship with journalists or other individuals in key decision-making spots. According to Sriramesh (1991), one Indian public relations officer told him that he visits the local press club at least once a week to socialize with journalist friends. Sriramesh added, "It is not uncommon for public relations practitioners to invite key individuals to family celebrations such as marriages. The emphasis is on building a lasting personal friendship, which can then be used for seeking official favors" (pp. 192–193).

In both India and Greece, organizations tried to hire public relations practitioners who were among the elite of society so that they had contact with powerful people and possessed necessary social graces. In Greece, according to Lyra (1991),

> Often what management expects from the public relations department is to develop contacts with important people of the Greek society and political arena and to be good at socializing with them "at their level." Personal contacts are so important that they often constitute a criterion for hiring a public relations person. (pp. 128–129)

The personal influence model often leads to practices that would be considered unethical in most countries. Lyra (1991) reported, for example, that many Greek practitioners pay their friends in the media for the placement of news articles.

In her study of the TPC, Huang (1990) used the term *carrot public relations* to describe the personal influence model. Representatives of the company used this model to secure necessary government approvals for the first three nuclear plants. As an example of the worst form of this model, she reported that practitioners had been accused of bribing government officials or giving them other political incentives. In milder versions of the model, they flattered officials or provided them with drinks, food, or gifts.

Thus, these studies suggest that the personal influence model generally is an asymmetrical model; its practice often includes unethical practice or borders on unethical practice. Such asymmetrical practice can be successful in meeting organizational goals—especially in societies with rigid cultures and authoritarian political systems. In Taiwan, for example, the power company succeeded in building three nuclear plants. Later, however, when martial law ended and the political system became more participatory, community and environmental activists opposed construction of a fourth plant. They mistrusted the company because they believed that officials had been bribed or bought with other favors to gain their approval for the first three plants. As a result, they told Huang, they would not trust the company even if it were to use the two-way symmetric model in its efforts to communicate about a fourth plant. They also would not communicate with the company for fear that others would think they were taking bribes.

Lyra (1991) discovered another pattern of public relations practice, the cultural interpreter model, in her study of Greek public relations practitioners. In particular, she found it in "multinational companies in which the CEO was a foreigner and depended on native Greeks for input about the country's culture and politics" (p. 124).

In one multinational corporation in Greece, Lyra (1991) reported that the foreign CEOs and senior managers consulted a native public relations practitioner in the company daily about many issues. The practitioner reported:

> Many times they depend on the opinion of a Greek for many things that they might find right but many times might have negative consequences. Therefore, yes, we are in very close collaboration and usually are the spokespeople of the company. (p. 125)

The cultural interpreter model, therefore, seems to exist in organizations that do business in another country, where it needs someone who understands the language, culture, customs, and political system of the host country.

CONCLUSIONS

Our purpose in this article was to conduct metaresearch of three studies of models of public relations in countries other than the United States. Although we were able to analyze only three countries, we believe we were able to move the concept of models of public relations to a higher theoretical level. In doing so, we provided at least preliminary evidence that the models must be generic to all cultures and that an approach to public relations that contains at least elements of the two-way symmetrical model may be most effective in all cultures.

First, we were able to establish that all four models of public relations previously identified in the United States are practiced outside the United States. In these three countries, however, the two-way symmetrical model seems to be more of an ideal, normative model than it is in the United States. That is the case because the conditions in and around organizations necessary for excellent public relations exist even less often in these countries than in the United States. The first of these conditions, in particular, is a dominant coalition with the worldview that public relations is an essential strategic management function of the organization and more than image-building marketing support. The second is the availability of professionals with the education and knowledge needed to practice public relations as a strategic management function.

Second, we identified two additional patterns of public relations practice, which we tentatively have called the personal influence and cultural interpreter models. Although these models were identified outside the United States, theoretical reflection suggests that they also are practiced there.

In his book, *Power and Influence,* Robert Dilenschneider (1990), the former CEO of the public relations firm Hill and Knowlton, described what seems to be the personal influence model as a "favor bank":

> Look for favors you can do. Continually pay attention to both sides of the Favor Bank ledger. Constantly look for favors that you can perform for others that don't cost you anything. Who are the powerful people who feel really antagonistic toward your business? I'm talking about special-interest leaders, columnists, politicians—anyone who can be a big-league aggravation. Without undermining your business objectives, do every possible favor you can for these people. (p. 14)

Similarly, several articles have been written about the work of John Scanlon, a veteran public relations practitioner who has represented clients such as the Columbia Broadcasting System during a libel suit and Ivana Trump during divorce proceedings (Buchanan, 1990; Policano, 1985). He also has defended cigarette companies when attacked by antismoking groups. Much of his work fits the press agentry or public information models, but the essence of his success as a practitioner can be explained by the personal influence model—especially personal friendships with journalists.

In 1980, the Daniel Edelman public relations firm acquired Scanlon's smaller firm. "It's been a good marriage," said Richard Edelman, president of the firm. "Scanlon has unparalleled contacts" (Policano, 1985, p. 30). *Connoisseur* magazine described a softball team of journalists in Sag Harbor, Long Island, of which Scanlon is a member in this way: "Some describe Sag Harbor softball as good clean fun; others see 'a blurb factory' where 'there's more backscratching than anyone will admit.' In any case, it is a handy place for a PR man to play first base" (Buchanan, 1990, p. 78).

According to these accounts, Scanlon has built an extensive set of relationships by providing journalists and other influential people with information and getting information from them in turn—which he then can broker for influence when needed. He seems, therefore, to have mastered the personal influence model of public relations.

The personal influence model also seems to be practiced widely in the Washington offices of public relations firms or major corporations. Many former government officials have gone to work for these firms or have started their own firms. Their knowledge of public relations as a professional discipline probably is limited, but their personal contacts in government are extensive. Thus, these former officials are valuable as practitioners of the personal influence model.

The cultural interpreter model may be unique to an organization that conducts business in another country, but it also may be found in an organization in a single country that must work in an environment with diverse groups. Such a situation now is common for most organizations in the United States that have large groups of African Americans, Hispanic Americans, and Asian Americans in their environments. Yamashita (1992), for example, found that Asian American practitioners often filled this role for their employers or clients. Ferreira (1993), however, studied the roles and models of Hispanic American practitioners and found that they did not often serve as cultural interpreters. Most of the Hispanic American practitioners she was able to locate in the United States worked in the Los Angeles area, however, where Hispanics are not a minority and less cultural interpretation is needed than in areas where they are a minority.

International public relations firms with offices in several countries typically hire citizens of those countries to staff the firms. Likewise, multinational corporations hire local citizens for their public relations departments. The United States Information Agency hires local citizens to work with Americans. In the United States, foreign firms hire Americans for public relations work. Foreign governments, embassies, and information agencies hire U.S. public relations firms. Much of this work would seem to fit into the cultural interpreter model, but little research has been done on this model—even though it should become critical as, in the future, most organizations become global in their orientation.

In short, we identified these additional models in countries other than the United States; but they do not seem to be unique to the conditions or cultures of those countries. In addition, the four American models seem to be present or aspired to in at least three other countries. The extent to which each of the six models is practiced seems to be a function of management's worldview or definition of the nature of public relations, the education and knowledge of practitioners, and the extent to which the culture and political system in which an organization exists is participative or authoritarian. Asymmetrical models of public relations—including asymmetrical personal influence—seem to work better in authoritarian political systems and cultures. Even there, their use may be shortsighted because those systems may change—as they did in Taiwan—and the damaged relationships may render an organization ineffective for many years.

A personal influence model does not have to be asymmetrical, however. A symmetrical model of personal influence may exist—or it could be created—that would be a valuable component of excellent public relations. Symmetrical personal relationships can be as important for individual public relations practitioners as are symmetrical organizational relationships with publics. For example, practitioners and their organizations benefit from trusting relationships with reporters or leaders of activist groups such as environmental or consumer organizations.

The theoretical possibility of symmetrical interpersonal relations as well as asymmetrical personal influence suggests, therefore, that this new model really identifies a component of the other models—the use of interpersonal communication (a possibility suggested by Toth, 1992). Research on this minimodel, therefore, should help to expand our knowledge of how the other models are practiced.

Similarly, the cultural interpreter model may be a component of the other models. A cultural interpreter, for example, could help client organizations determine how best to asymmetrically describe an organization or its behavior to make it more acceptable in a given culture. On the other hand, cultural interpreters would play an essential role in the two-way symmetrical model in a multicultural organization by helping to facilitate dialogue and understanding between organizations and publics from different cultures. Thus, the cultural interpreter could be a role practiced differently within the four models in the same way that the communication manager, communication technician, media relations specialist, or communication liaison roles function differently within the four models (for discussion of public relations roles, see Dozier, 1992).

Although we need much more evidence, this metatheoretical analysis suggests that a symmetrical model—consisting in part of the general two-way symmetrical model, symmetrical personal influence, and symmetrical cultural translation—may be the only model that is effective over the long term. Thus, we suggest the following metatheoretical proposition: Symmetrical public relations may be a generic concept that makes organizations more effective over the long term in all cultures—although its specific manifestations may differ from culture to culture.

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