Government Public Relations in West Africa: Propaganda or Development Tool – The Case of Ghana’s Ministry of Information

by Kojo Yankah

INTRODUCTION

In this presentation, I propose to examine public relations as conducted by Governments in West Africa, define propaganda as used in pre-independence and post colonial contexts and relate them to current practices which profess that public relations is being used as a developmental tool. A closer look will be taken at the public relations role Ghana’s Ministry of Information plays in the developmental process.

Government Information Officers in West Africa, even under colonial rule, were very effective in the days of single radio and television channels. Communities watched Government newsreels via battery-charged projectors, with scripts translated into local languages. They were intolerant of opposing views. Over time, and with the introduction of multiparty systems of government and media plurality in Africa, the Ministries of Information are groping for more effective ways of reshaping their functions as well as performing their ‘propaganda’ roles.

In my conclusion, I propose that it is time for Government Public Relations to facilitate information across party lines and forge unity among the people around developmental issues. Concentrating on defending Government at all cost, and acting as a ‘propaganda’ tool, tends to sharpen tension between Government and the Opposition Parties and therefore promotes division among the people. It makes it extremely difficult for Government to succeed with any serious campaign, on such issues as National Unity, National Discipline, Clean Environment etc. Developmental issues – mostly social and economic – are most times interpreted under political lenses by political parties which invariably take hard and entrenched positions. I recommend that Government Public Relations could be refashioned to make more tangible contributions to national development at the same time as it maintains its professional character.
PROPAGANDA

Propaganda has not enjoyed a standard definition. Garth Jowett and Victoria O’Donnell, in their book “PROPAGANDA AND PERSUASION, 4th ed. Sage Publications, p.7, define “Propaganda” as the “deliberate, systematic attempt to shape perceptions, manipulate cognitions, and direct behaviour to achieve a response that furthers the desired intent of the propagandist”. This definition has achieved some recognition as ‘workable’ because it gives ‘propaganda’ a neutral colour which can be seen as positive or negative depending on the perspective of the person using it. This definition focuses primarily on the communication process itself and does not lend itself to any ideological connotation.

However, there are other views that portray Propaganda generally as appealing to ‘emotion, not intellect’. This perspective claims affinity to advertising and public relations which promotes a commercial product or shapes the perception of an organization, a government or a brand.

Propaganda, in the early 20th century, was used by the founders of the public relations industry, but Harold Lasswell in an article "The Function of the Propagandist", in International Journal of Ethics, 36 (no. 3. pp. 258-268) was quick to explain in 1928 that ‘public relations’ was used as a term to ‘shield the profession from the ill repute increasingly associated with the word ‘propaganda’. He wrote : "Propaganda has become an epithet of contempt and hate, and the propagandists have sought protective coloration in such names ‘public relations council,’ ‘specialist in public education,’ ‘public relations adviser.’ By the time of the Second World war, the public relations industry began to avoid the word ‘propaganda’ because it had gained a negative pejorative connotation.

Long after the War, and as late as 1996, Richard Alan Nelson, in A Chronology and Glossary of Propaganda in the United States, 1996, describes ‘Propaganda’ as “a systematic form of purposeful persuasion that attempts to influence the emotions, attitudes, opinions, and actions of specified target audiences for ideological, political or commercial purposes through the controlled transmission of one-sided messages (which may or may not be factual) via mass media and direct media channels”. Propaganda therefore is noted to have much in common with ‘public information’ campaigns by governments, which are intended to encourage or discourage certain forms of behavior (such as keeping the City Clean, not smoking in public places, and so forth). In most cases, this form of propaganda takes the form of leaflets, posters, TV and radio broadcasts and can also extend to any other medium. Which means, therefore, that propaganda in its original sense is neutral, and may also refer to uses which are generally held to be relatively benign or innocuous, such as public health recommendations, signs encouraging citizens to participate in a census or election, or messages encouraging persons to report crimes to the police, among others.

Although, there appears to be some incoherence in its definition, Propaganda is generally accepted as a form of communication that is aimed at influencing the attitude of a community toward some cause or position. Perhaps, as opposed to impartially providing information, propaganda in its most basic sense, presents information primarily to influence an audience. It often presents facts selectively (thus possibly lying by omission) to encourage a particular synthesis, or uses loaded messages to produce an emotional rather than rational response to the information presented. The desired result is a change of the attitude toward the subject in the target audience to further a political agenda.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Is Public Relations any different? Basically it aims to improve public image of organizations, governments and individuals. It paints a positive side of the organization so it can influence attitudes and emotions of target audiences. Admittedly, the worldwide definition is acknowledged: "the art and social science of analyzing trends, predicting their consequences, counseling organizational leaders, and implementing planned programs of action, which will serve both the organization and the public interest." (The first World Assembly of Public Relations Associations, held in Mexico City in August 1978).

Traditional tools used in Public Relations include press releases, radio and television jingles, media kit, brochures, newsletters and annual reports. Increasingly, companies are utilizing interactive social media, such as blogs, Twitter and Facebook, as tools in their PR campaigns. Unlike the traditional tools which allowed for only one-way communication, social media allows the organization to engage in two-way communication, and receive immediate feedback from their various stakeholders and publics. With the way that the industry has changed, many organizations now maintain a website with a link, "Press Room" which would have online versions of their messages.

PROPAGANDA IN PRE-INDEPENDENCE SETTING

The Ministries of Information in most West African states derive their origin from the British Ministry of Information. The use of cinema by the Information Services Department of the Ministry of Information is therefore a direct heir to the British experience. “The story of the British cinema in the Second World War is inextricably linked with that of the Ministry of Information.”, says the UK National Archives. Formed on 4 September, 1939, the day after Britain’s declaration of war, the Ministry of Information (MOI) was the central government department responsible for publicity and propaganda in the Second World War. It was the Ministry’s function to “represent the national case to the public at home and abroad”.

The Ministry of Information (MOI) of the United Kingdom, headed by the Minister of Information, was a government department created at the end of World War I and again during World War II. It was the central government department responsible for “publicity and propaganda”.

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In the 1930s communications activities had become a recognized function of government. Many departments had, however, established public relations divisions, and were reluctant to give this up to central control.

By early 1939 there was concern that the next war would be a ‘war of nerves’ involving the civilian population, and that the government would need to go further than ever before with every means of publicity ‘utilized and coordinated’, as it fought against a well-funded and established Nazi machine.

The Ministry was responsible for information policy and the output of propaganda material in Allied and neutral countries, with overseas publicity organised geographically. American and Empire Divisions continued throughout the war, other areas being covered by a succession of different divisions.

For home publicity, the Ministry dealt with the planning of general government or interdepartmental information, and provided common services for public relations activities of other government departments. The Home Publicity Division (HPD) undertook three types of campaigns, those requested by other government departments, specific regional campaigns, and those it initiated itself. Before undertaking a campaign, the MOI would ensure that propaganda was not being used as a substitute for other activities, including legislation.

The MOI was dissolved in March 1946, with its residual functions passing to the Central Office of Information (COI), a central organization providing common and specialist information services.

The British Colonies, Nigeria, Ghana, Sierra Leone, the Gambia, included, were not only targets of the British Ministry of Information public relations and propaganda; they also inherited a system and structure that has characterized their activities till today.

**Environment: West Africa**

Today, democracy is a growing trend in most of West Africa. There are still instances of instability in countries such as Guinea, Cote d’Ivoire, Togo and Guinea Bissau, but Liberia and Sierra Leone which went to war for 14 years now have democratically elected governments. Nigeria, Liberia, Gambia and Ghana are cited here for reference.

**GOVERNMENT PUBLIC RELATIONS IN WEST AFRICA**

**NIGERIA**

The stated mission of the Ministry of Information of Nigeria is ‘to provide the citizenry with credible and timely information on government activities, programmes and initiatives, while creating an enabling technological environment for socio-economic development of the nation

Its vision is ‘to create a proactive technology driven public information hub, with effective feedback mechanism as well as telecommunications transformation in line with global best practices’.

*The Ministry of Information* has the mandate to proactively inform, enlighten, and educate the citizenry on the activities, actions, policies and programmes of government and to initiate and supervise telecommunications policies in Nigeria.

Among other things, the functions of the Ministry include:

- To serve as the Federal Public Information outfit responsible for professional policy-making, planning, gathering, processing, packaging and dissemination of essential and vital information which will enhance and facilitate democratic governance of Nigeria as a Federal Republic.
- To provide professional information services which will project the image and reputation of the Federal Government and her people as a responsible society.
- To develop, design, institutionalize appropriate and generally acceptable public information and communication policies which will promote information management and control in a democratic society.
- To initiate action programmes, policies, rules and regulations which will ensure the existence and maintenance of civilized and orderly information and communication systems in Nigeria consistent with acceptable cultural and conventional norms and ethics of the Nigerian people and world community.
- To provide broad and specific guidelines for development management and operation of print and electronic media for education, public enlightenment, entertainment and socio-economic and political development and orientation. In this respect, the Ministry maintain appropriate relationship with the Press and the Government.
- To conduct research, surveys and studies which will enhance better understanding of the relevance, impact and approach to public information and their implications for public policies and programmes.
- To provide general printing and publishing services to all ministries for effective public administration and to educational, business and international organizations for their use.
- To represent Nigeria at International level for conferences on information.
Liberia
The Ministry of Information was established by an Act of Legislature in 1965, and endorsed by “executive law of 1972,” as the source of information on government activities. Its Public Affairs Division, according to Minister of Information Laurence Bropleh, serves as the “nerve center of government information and dissemination”. It registers and accredits foreign journalists working in the country.

The New Liberia newspaper established in 1978, is an arm of the Ministry, with a policy “to promote, interpret, analyze and explain government policies, programmes and activities for public understanding and acceptance, and to publish the views, comments and suggestions of the public for government’s attention and action, and countering misinformation, distortions and negative propaganda about the government and its functionaries.”

Gambia
The Ministry of Information in the Gambia is coupled with the portfolio of the Communication Services Department, which the colonial government had used to project its programmes, activities and messages to the people, was maintained with an even more active mission. From a one-party rule (1960-66), through a string of military governments, (1966-79) an attempted multi-party system (1979-81), to a revolutionary government (1981-92), the Ministry of Information played a more propagandist role actively influencing the minds of the people to accept the new dispensation. Whatever rubric the Ministry existed under, its stated mission was always to 'play a key role of communicating government policies and programmes to the people'.

Significantly, despite the changing systems of government throughout the pre-1993 period, the Ministry had to contend with a growing private media which offered opposing views against what the government had to say. There were trying moments where the press resisted attempts at ‘manipulation’ of information by the Ministry of Information.

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Ghana’s Ministry of Information in Multi-Party Democracy

On attaining independence from British Colonial Rule in March 1957, Ghana established the Ministry of Information as the mouthpiece for government information. The Information Services Department, which the colonial government had used to project its programmes, activities and messages to the people, was maintained with an even more active mission. From a one-party rule (1960-66), through a string of military governments, (1966-79) an attempted multi-party system (1979-81), to a revolutionary government (1981-92), the Ministry of Information played a more propagandist role actively influencing the minds of the people to accept the new dispensation. Whatever rubric the Ministry existed under, its stated mission was always to 'play a key role of communicating government policies and programmes to the people'.

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Ghana currently boasts of some 150 private radio stations, 10 private television stations, and about 40 private newspapers. This is in addition to one state-owned radio and television station (Ghana Broadcasting Corporation) with countrywide transmission reach and two publicly-owned newspapers, the Daily Graphic and the Ghanaian Times. The editorial positions of majority of the newspapers are anti-government but a significant proportion supports the current Government. The private television stations tend to portray a neutral role, but a couple of them are clearly identified with opposing political traditions.

On the political landscape are two major political parties, the left-leaning National Democratic Congress and the right-leaning New Patriotic Party, both of whom have had a chance to rule Ghana since 1993. In between, there are three other parties which have representation in parliament and are therefore significant.

In an environment where Freedom of the Press is fully guaranteed by the Constitution, with a National Media Commission legally instituted to insulate the public media from Governmental control, the only avenue for Government to disseminate information on its policies and programmes without hindrance is the Ministry of Information. It is the Ministry which conducts Government’s Public Relations. Unlike in the Gambia where the Ministry of Information is charged with responsibilities for Information Technology, Ghana has a separate Ministry for Communications. (At some point in the history of the ministry, it has been renamed from Ministry of Information and Culture, Ministry of Public Relations, Ministry of Communications, Ministry of Information and Presidential Affairs, Ministry of Information and National Orientation to the present Ministry of Information).

Although past Ministries of Information have professed to play public relations role for government, their vision and mission statements have not been the same. Currently, the public relations role of the Ministry is clearly defined and weighed toward the use of ‘development communication’.

Vision
The stated mission of the Ministry is ‘the attainment of a free, united, informed and prosperous society with good governance through development communication’ (emphasis mine).

Mission
Its mission is ‘to facilitate a two-way free flow of timely and reliable information and feedback between Government and its various publics and to assist in the development and coordination of policy; to monitor and evaluate the implementation of programmes and activities by Sector Agencies of Government’.

Objectives
The Ministry has set itself the following objectives:
1. To strengthen institutional capacity for effective policy formulation and execution.
2. To ensure free flow of public information in pursuance of the open Government policy.
3. To effectively and efficiently monitor and evaluate public responses to Government policies, programmes and activities and provide timely feedback to Government.
4. To project the image of the country in collaboration with other agencies to attract foreign investment in consonance with Government policy.

5. To co-ordinate activities of the Presidency towards ensuring uniformity and focus in executing policies, programmes and activities.

The major shift in the functions of the Ministry as opposed to the past and others in the region is the reference to ‘open Government policy’ and the projection of the image of the country ‘in collaboration with other agencies to attract foreign investment in consonance with Government policy’. The open Government policy has been dictated by forces of globalization, democratization and information technology growth.

However, what is of further interest here is how the Ministry is structured to play its public relations and/or propaganda role.

**ADMINISTRATION**

The Ministry of Information has a general administration headed by a Minister of State and two Deputies. They are assisted by a line of civil servants referred to as directors and assistant directors and other secretarial and administrative staff.

It is the Ministry that issues government press releases, responds to media and public criticisms and comments about government programmes and policies and organizes Press Briefings. Most prominently these days, under the term MEET THE PRESS, the Ministry offers the platform for other agencies of government to ‘inform’ the public about their operations. Although sections of the public refer to these sessions as ‘government propaganda’ the press uses the opportunity to ask pertinent questions about the work of particular agencies of government.

**INFORMATION SERVICES DEPARTMENT (ISD)**

This is the Department that still carries the ‘character’ of the old colonial propaganda machinery. It is established to operate as the main public information and outreach arm of the Ministry. Under its mandate to create awareness about government policies, programmes and activities, the ISD operates a fleet of cinema vans, manned by trained commentators, to travel round the districts and communities and explain government policies in local languages. The cinema vans carry ‘newsreels’ and film coverage of government activities and show them to particularly the rural population. With time, this Department is lacking in resources, unable to meet its operational costs, and is heavily being crowded out by private and public radio stations which are now heard countrywide. The challenges become greater particularly as government’s own budget for Information keeps dwindling. The question arising from this development is: Is the propaganda role of the Ministry declining?

The ISD also has the function to promote Ghana’s ‘international marketing agenda’. In the past, the Ministry paid for advertising and editorial space in leading international newspapers, magazines and television bulletins, but again the dwindling budget of government coupled with the rapidly increasing popularity of social media make it difficult for this role to be effectively performed. Add to this the growth of other agencies like the Ghana Tourist Board and the Ghana Investment Centre which periodically send delegations outside Ghana to ‘market Ghana’s potentials’. If in the past, such advertising space was used to further the propagandist role of the Ministry, current developments in the international media landscape have undermined it.

Providing Public Relations support to Ministries, Departments, Agencies and Ghana’s Missions abroad meant that the Information Services Department seconded its own staff to those various ministries to man their public relations departments. Instead of the Ministries themselves employing appropriately qualified public relations officers, the Information Services Department posted their own officers. The challenges being faced today relate to the quality, capability and resourcefulness of the staff sent out of the department. This has resulted in most of them being side-stepped by the Ministers when it comes to Speech Writing, Newsletter production, Organising Press Conferences and generally providing Public Relations advice. Increasingly, these seconded staff of the Ministry of Information are becoming irrelevant and ineffective and with time will fade out to allow the Ministries to recruit their own staff. Part of the frustration of the PR staff sent out of the Ministry also relates to the fact that these ‘professionals’ are treated and remunerated as ‘civil servants’ and therefore are de-motivated. Is it a sign that these professionals do not fit into the Civil Service mode?

The other function of the Information Service Department (ISD) is to ‘get feedback from the public to government for policy reinforcement or redirection’. The Department retains a unit which collates feedback from the public using the information officers and commentators in the districts and communities. This role is waning because of the lack of resources to gather information ‘at the speed of light’ to inform the Ministry. The idea may be plausible, but the reality is that there have grown new and more sophisticated channels of communication that can offer feedback reaction much faster than the information officers are equipped to do. Again, until the Department is well resourced to gather information on the field must faster that the current realities offer, the continued role of this unit of the Ministry of Information is questionable.

**GHANA NEWS AGENCY**

At a time when access to information was limited, Government of Ghana, and other governments in West Africa, established News Agencies that would gather news and information and distribute them among news organizations. The West Africa coordinating body was called the West African News Agency (WANA) while the continental body came to be called PAN AFRICAN NEWS AGENCY (PANA). The Ghana News Agency is technically a wing of the Ministry of Information, but the Agency, like its counterparts in the rest of Africa, is limping. It could not match pace with the rapid growth in information technology; its staff resigned to take up positions in newly emerging private media houses, and there is barely a skeleton staff at Ghana’s News Agency finding creating ways of staying above water. Once again, one wing of the Ministry of Information is giving way.
GHANA BROADCASTING CORPORATION (GBC)
This was referred to years ago as the Voice of Ghana. Without doubt, the GBC was until the liberalization of the airwaves the only source of information in Ghana broadcasting outside the borders of the country. Now facing a competition among 150 odd private radio stations and 10 television companies, GBC is not the same. Apart from competing for qualified personnel in a competitive environment, GBC has the added challenge of carrying both the public programming content and its commercial obligations to advertisers. Salaries of staff are still subsidized by Government and all attempts at restructuring the corporation have faced opposition from the staff. Currently there is debate about maintaining a Public Service Channel funded by the public separately from a Commercial Service Channel competing with the private commercial stations. Whatever the outcome of this debate, a strong National Media Commission is in place to ensure that Government does not interfere with the operations of the Corporation. Again, the Ministry of Information is losing one of its propaganda wings.

Ghana institute of journalism (gij) and National film and television institute (nafti)
The Ghana Institute of Journalism(GIJ) and the National Film and Television (NAFTI) are two professional training institutions, one for journalists and the other for film and television producers which have been listed under the Ministry of Information. They used to be funded by the Ministry and the directors were appointed by the Minister. Currently the GIJ has been brought under the Ministry of Education and NAFTI is the next to go. If this happens, the Ministry will not have any direct control of any media training institution.

PR and development communication
There is no doubt that the liberalization of the airwaves, the new environment for Freedom of Speech and Expression, the constitutional guarantees for Freedom of the Press, and the rapidly increasing growth of the new media and social media are impacting the original public relations roles of Government. What is discernible from the Ghana situation is that despite the incredible expansion of the media scene, a larger proportion of concentration of the mass media is urban-centered. About a dozen community radio stations for a population of 22 million, covering 138 districts, supported by private radio stations which are based in the regional capitals and going more commercial. Apart from ensuring that the urban centres are provided with accurate, timely and reliable information, Government will be concerned about the large rural population holding more than 65% of the populace which have access to less than 30 per cent of newspaper circulation and have disproportionate number of television sets to watch what is going on.

The private radio stations, which disseminate information to the districts do a lot more political reporting and news than development journalism. Issues on the environment, climate change, health, education and sanitation are scarcely discussed, unlike how the political reporting and news than development journalism. Whether it is in providing its platform to other sector agencies to canvass support for their programmes, or in explaining Government position on issues, there will be a high level of partiality, and therefore propaganda. Also, with the commitment to an Open Government policy, Government needs to find more creative and professional ways of reaching the large mass of people who have no access to all the available private alternate media.

CONCLUSION
Propaganda, in its original context of providing impartial information, cannot be divorced from the practice of public relations. Coloring information and defending at all cost facts to the contrary cannot be countenanced in an environment where no one person or agency has monopoly over the truth. Government has a right and the obligation to inform its people and contribute to educating them but such roles should be performed by professionals who know the boundaries and the ethics associated with the practice. With most of its wings falling off, the case for maintaining a fully-fledged Ministry of Information, in Ghana as in any part of West Africa, rather than an Office of Public Information, will soon become a matter for public debate.
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Future-Proofing a Strategic Communication Team for a Major Australian Government Entity

by Donald Alexander, David Cameron and Peter Simmons

ABSTRACT

This paper reflects on the development and implementation of a program for a new strategic communication and marketing team (SCG) at the Australian Taxation Office (ATO), one of the Australian Federal Government’s largest departments. The program also had to meet a Federal Government requirement for a vision of a connected and responsive government. The paper details a six month curriculum delivered to a new group of communicators whose function was to assist with the development of an organisation-wide sustainable and strategic communication strategy. The creation of the new group was because the ATO had identified a number of issues that required attention, such as a lack of an overarching communication direction, not having agreed evaluation measures and resources not being well planned to meet a rapidly changing external environment. The group also needed to be concerned with knowledge and reputation management, stakeholder engagement, and project management in a contemporary corporate environment. Three key areas identified were:

• Cohesion of the SCG as a group of professionals
• Effective strategic planning and programming
• Integrated communication and social media

The strategic planning and programming component combined in-house planning models with communication theory and applied conceptual frameworks. The integrated communication and social media component reviewed conceptual models and case analysis. The program supported research into, and the formation of, communities of practice and learning occurred through residential schools, workshops, guest lectures, individual assessments and real group projects.
INTRODUCTION

How does one of the largest government departments in Australia plan and implement a new top level communication strategy designed to develop an integrated approach for five business units that dealt with every taxpayer in the country and also provide all communication staff with a understanding of the rapidly changing external political, business and social media environments?

One of Australia’s leading communication teaching universities, Charles Sturt, worked with the ATO to develop the initial framework of an educational and training strategy that was created to ‘future-proof’ a newly formed communication team by providing them with tools and approaches that would support them to develop as a team and leaders in communication in a large and otherwise conservative organisation which was facing major technological and societal pressures. Another outcome for the University was that the curriculum would also lead to a graduate qualification.

The learning / knowledge /practice continuum was integrated through a multistrategy delivery and action-research model (Proctor and Kitchen, 2002; Peng and Litteljohn, 2001; and Pryor, Anderson, Toombs and Humphreys, 2007) developed by Charles Sturt University academics who had backgrounds and specialised expertise in corporate communication, employee communication, social media, and communities of practice.

The strategic planning and programming component combined in-house ATO planning models with contemporary communication theory and applied conceptual frameworks developed by the University academic staff.

BACKGROUND

Annually, the ATO processes tax returns for 11 million personal taxpayers, and two million businesses and non-profit organisations. In the 2006-07 tax year the ATO handled over 10 million telephone enquiries, over 25,000 email enquiries and over 700,000 visits to Tax Office shopfronts, and 87 million visits to the ATO website. With over 23,300 employees, the ATO is the second largest employer in the Federal Government public service.

NEED FOR CHANGE

In 2006 in response to a wide ranging review of its operations (The Buchan Review), the ATO identified that the function of marketing communication with the ATO was unsustainable into the future. The Review identified the following issues:

- There was no overarching organisational communication strategy for the ATO;
- The scope and quality of strategies varied from very good to marginal;
- Some communication strategies were never implemented;
- Branding needs to move from a function and rules focused regime to the next stage (ie promotion of brand ownership and flexibility);
- There was a need for a stronger research foundation;
- A need was identified for agreed evaluation measures to be applied across all communication activities;
- There was no quality assurance of strategy; and
- Resources were not well planned and difficult to marshal.
- Strategies were separated functionally and geographically and operated in silos which impacted on the effectiveness of the department.

To address these issues, the Review recommended the creation of a Strategic Communications Group (SCG) and for this group to be the “centre of expertise that leads and manages the integrated design and delivery of priority marketing communication strategies for the ATO”. (Australian Taxation Office, 2007. Strategic Communication Group (SCG) Proposal Unclassified Draft 31 January 2007 p4.)

Designed to function as an internal consultancy, the SCG was to provide direction and support to all ATO communication staff within ATO business units and to work within the existing federated model and move communication from “tactical” to “strategic”. SCG staff were recruited internally from senior communicators within the ATO and also externally from other government departments (for example, Education, Science and Training; Treasury); governmental institutions (Australian Sports Commission, Australian Mint) and private enterprise. Nearly all had undergraduate university qualifications in public relations, public administration, journalism, marketing, science, business administration, and seven had Masters qualifications or were completing Masters Degrees. The SCG was also geographically dispersed with staff in Brisbane, Sydney, Melbourne and Canberra.

Their charter was to “provide a quality assurance role to ensure corporate integration, consistency and integrity of strategy design and implementation” (SCG business case, 31/01/2007). They also needed to work with a very large, process-driven corporate entity with myriad complex cultures and entrenched existing processes and relationships.

The process to be adopted by the SCG was based on an integrated administrative design (IAD- ATO,2007) that assessed high risk compliance strategies, corporate and campaign strategies and a “business as usual” approach. A disciplined “strategy dial” process was the foundation for this work, and this incorporated a scoping phase (eg issues, constraints, reporting and governance); research (internal intelligence, market research); strategy development (collaborative development for key stakeholder and peer review); implementation planning ( developing project plans); execution phase (as projects were the responsibility of line businesses, the SCG had the task of providing assurance through monitoring); evaluation phase (testing the effectiveness of the strategy against the agreed objectives and finding key outcomes), and closing (record keeping).
SOLVING THE PROBLEM

• The first steps were a series of brainstorming sessions held among the CSU academic staff and the following concepts were initially developed:
• A contract was required for the project between the University and the ATO that would resolve issues of Intellectual Property; and
• The curriculum content was to run over six months (this became eight months due to ATO work pressures).
• The ATO had developed a series of communication background documents that centred on the organisation’s overall communication strategy for 2007 to 2010 and a Communication Strategy Dial that set out a framework for scoping a project. It was the primary objective of the University team to provide the basis for understanding the context of the framework and to introduce the SCG team members to new ideas and concepts relevant to the contemporary operational environment.

A MODEL

The academic team decided to use an action research based approach to developing the programme (Kemmis 2007). The key elements of this approach were based on a Spiral of Action: Plan, Action, Observe, and Reflect. The key factors identified that needed to be addressed were:
• How to deal with change, adapt and overcome problems. Develop and implement a training program for a new strategy.
• Create a relevant curriculum and suitable presenters
• What were the internal drivers: a new team that needed to integrate, adapt, innovate, obtain organisational knowledge, and work to a shared vision
• The SCG were “dropped in” on top of existing communication structures which would create cultural issues in a huge department.

Three main objectives were identified for the training program conducted in the second half of 2007.

Objective 1. Enhance the cohesion and effectiveness of the SCG as a unit of professionals

Objective 2. Support campaigning and change communication, within ATO and the SCG policy framework

Objective 3. Improve the capacity to integrate and innovate in communication leadership

OBJECTIVE 1.
Enhance the cohesion and effectiveness of the SCG as a unit of professionals

The first objective was approached from a communities of practice (COP) (see Note 1) standpoint (Wenger, 1999) where reflective practitioner research, developed from Bourdieu’s (1999) discourse that identified that practice shaped by discourses of the profession, could be applied to setting up a COP network within the SCG. The aim was to create a foundation for a COP focussed on an epistemology of practice based on Polanyi’s (1967) “tacit knowledge” which develops from Knowing-in-action through Reflection-in-action into Action research based on the future proofing of communication strategies that already existed within the organisation. The aim was to build a COP that responded to the new technologies of social media and digital communication through a reflexive–dialectical process of research that would provide an insight into evolving new forms of communication.

The focus was for narrative research that dealt with the analysis of the COP as a group of reflective practitioners examining how professionals think in action, Schon (1983) and reflect on critical communication incidents as they related to the introduction of new communication technology and narrative cultural analysis of the internal corporate culture operating within the ATO.

Process and delivery

The COP process encouraged them to use corporate cultural narrative as research. These are the stories that corporations tell themselves to maintain their identity in the face of rapid changes in communication technology. This was done so the COP could use the narratives as a medium for understanding the strategies that contributed to the construction of organisational reality within the organisation.

Such narratives supply a framework of meaning for employees. Cultural narratives play a role in defining expectations and supplying ways of thinking about the organisation. As Goffman stated, in large organisations such as the ATO, the codification and restricted communication practices meant that “Reality is being performed” (Goffman 1990) within the organisation despite the changing external reality of evolving digital technology and the “architecture of participation” existing within social media applications such as blogs and wikis.

The aim of this new COP was to “prepare messages, identify participants and their online haunts; must create dialogue, distribute information and erect online forums that help present the company as a transparent, frank participant in the crisis.” (Moore and Seymour 2005, 155)

The issues canvassed as part of the future proofing strategy were:
• Campaign issues (i.e. compliance, new tax laws) that needed to be addressed much faster than in the past;
• More rapid external problem recognition was required due to new social dialogues;
• Individuals and lobby groups have more power in a more transparent electronic community and information is demanded by clients, Governments, the media and tax payers.
• The effectiveness of responses to marketing campaigns “depends on ensuring that Business uses technology as deftly and loosely as other crisis participants” (Moore and Seymour 2005, 96);
• The ‘splintering of audiences’ creating micro communication environments which...
needed to be acknowledged and factored into all communication strategies;
- Shift to ‘all-way communication’ “the ability of millions of individuals to reach in all directions for data, views and courses of action” (Moore and Seymour 2005, 98);
- Reframing the message for mobile communication and social media with the interactivity of social media (text messaging, SMS, email) playing a role in new message development;

The COP was to be constituted as on a distributed model as it aimed to “future-proof” itself by utilising the “architecture of participation” that exists within social media and produce user-generated content that would allow leadership to emerge from the group expertise.

**OBJECTIVE 2.**
Campaigning and change communication, within ATO and the SCG

The second objective was to support the new communication team’s effectiveness in campaigning and change communication. All SCG individuals had extensive and diverse experience in a range of organisations, mostly from the public sector. As strategic communicators there was an expectation that they would consider and address all stakeholder interests, including other government departments, internal audiences and taxation and finance professionals. The CSU communication program sought to support the SCG in two ways:

a. Familiarise the SCG recruits with the strategic communication group policy framework and tools; and
b. Explore frameworks for conceptualising change and change management.

**Process and delivery**
Prior to the program starting, participants were issued with background readings on the SCG strategy model and templates, the principles underpinning voluntary compliance model for administering a taxation system, and communication and relationship management.

**a. ATO communication policy environment**
The program was designed to raise understanding of the ATO brand as a platform for effective communication, and to support the use of the ATO’s ‘Strategy Dial’ guide.

Although regulatory authorities have power to enforce laws and punish disobedience, the high costs of surveillance, enforcement and prosecution make coercion an inefficient way to obtain compliance (Wenzel and Jobling, 2006). The ATO has increasingly shifted towards a more efficient ‘voluntary compliance’ approach to the payment of taxes, and has invested considerably in developing a brand platform that supports voluntary compliance. People behave more cooperatively when they feel they have been treated fairly and respectfully. The ATO brand encourages staff behaviours and a level of professionalism that presents the ATO as ‘trusted advisor’, ‘fair administrator’, and ‘professional adviser and educator’. (Australian Taxation Office, 2005. Brand Navigator and Platform Statement. Copy held by authors). These qualities are intended to underpin the ATO interactions with Australian taxpayers. Because the community are aware of the far reaching powers of the ATO should they need to use them, the fourth dimension to the ATO brand platform, the ‘firm enforcer of the law’, is deliberately made less apparent in ordinary transactions and communication. The sequence of the workshop program and learning topics was designed to approximate the stages of the strategy dial described earlier.

The strategic communication and change component of the workshop training focused on the ‘strategise’ and ‘plan’ stages. The workshops aimed to normalise among the SCG an understanding of change as a strategic process that is not necessarily linear, and which requires planning and intervention at individual, system and cultural levels. It emphasised alternative conceptualisations of change and change strategy, and the political dimensions of change.

**b. Change frameworks**
Most change management models include rational analysis, a sequence of planning and management stages, and promote an upbeat and prescriptive tone (Dawson 2004). Others emphasise stages in individual change (Prochaska and DiClemente 1982), or interventions for cultural change (Kotter 1996) or capabilities for change (Turner and Crawford 1998). But they tend to overlook competing narratives and agendas, conflict negotiation, coercive power, obstructive behaviours and retelling of histories to justify (Dawson 2004). Alternative conceptualisations explored the concept of ‘opposing pressures’, where communicators aim to diminish status quo pressure or increase change pressure to break equilibrium and facilitate change (Dawson 2004), and two models for conceptualising effective change influence as a simultaneously multilayered, multi-strategy endeavour were introduced to the analysis.

The workshops focused on exploring two change management case studies through change frameworks analogous to the requirements of the SCG. The first involved the introduction at CSU of a new university wide Web 2.0 technology system for online subject delivery (Sakai, known at CSU as ‘Interact’). The second was a public health campaign in the Australian Capital Territory that sought to improve the quality of the community’s diets in line with nutrition guidelines.

The analysis reflected on, and dissected, the cases using a cultural change framework that emphasises simultaneous consideration of interventions at structural, systematic and symbolic levels to effect change (Stace and Dunphy 2005). The Ottawa Charter for Health Promotion (OCHP) (1986) was also used as a model for change adopted by health promoters internationally. It emphasises the importance of simultaneously addressing five dimensions of change such as public policy, sustaining a supportive environment, strong community action, developing personal skills and ensuring the organisation can support the new changed direction.

The SCG recruits were required to reflect on the OCHP (1986) commitment to advocacy, enabling mediation through the involvement of all entities and sectors in a position to influence the desired change.
OBJECTIVE 3.
Improve the capacity to integrate and innovate in communication leadership

The third key objective of the training was to assist the SCG develop strategies to provide greater leadership and innovation for projects and campaigns than had previously taken within the ATO. During the iterative design phase of developing the curriculum, the area of new and emerging media technology – particularly highly participatory forms now commonly referred to as social media - was identified as a focus for exploring the impact of media technology on government communication, and opportunities for innovative approaches to the activities of the SCG.

Process and delivery
Two sessions examining online media were provided to the SCG. The first was focused on introducing participants to some of the new media forms and their features, especially the shift from passive audiences to active participants in the construction and distribution of content. The second session took a more practical approach to providing members of the SCG with some useful tools that might be used in their day-to-day activities, as well as for strategic communications within the ATO or with external audiences.

Session 1: Social media and user-generated content
At the time of the first training session, stories appeared in the Australian media claiming staff working for the then Prime Minister, John Howard, were editing Wikipedia entries to remove unfavourable comments about the government. Journalists had used a new software tool called WikiScanner (http://wikiscanner.virgil.gr/) to trace individual edits back to computer addresses in government departments. This provided an interesting initial talking point.

Although the Wikipedia story was prominent in the news that day, most of the SCG staff were unaware that there was a Wikipedia page for the Australian Tax Office, and noted that there were no policies or procedures in place to guide staff in this new online form. The aim of this first session was to create awareness of some of the key differences between traditional communication channels and the new and emerging online forms. The session focused on the participatory nature of online media, particularly the concepts of user-generated content and self-publishing. Features relevant for government communicators were summarised as:

Participation
The blurring of content creator and consumer. People contribute out of curiosity rather than a deep commitment. Are the few still creating content viewed by the many?

Openness
Content is there for anyone to share, respond to, re-use, and develop. This is most apparent in the “mash-up” approach that blends data sources to create a new application. Some recent advertising slogans: “rip, mix, burn” (Apple) and “create, connect, consume” (Nokia) are evidence of this. Can communicators let go of control of their content?

Conversation
This is not a lecture or broadcast model. But can governments learn to really listen to their publics? What are the risks in people forums for conversation e.g. “flaming” and moderation of content.

Community
These applications allow “like to find like”. Organisations need to work on a trust economy in order for their messages to be heard and shared. Can this be seeded or must it emerge naturally?

Connectedness
Organisations can’t limit people’s ability to go elsewhere for information – they need to use online media links to “thrive & survive” as online content producers; a willingness to let people link to their resources is vital in order to gain “critical mass” as an authoritative source of information.

Part of the session was also devoted to considering the risks to government in using these emerging media forms as communication channels. This was summed up as the dangers of “anti-social media and loser-generated content”.

The lack of clear social media policies and guidelines for all staff within the ATO became apparent during this discussion and the potential risk that informal or personal opinions may be confused with those of the organisation were canvassed. At the time of this session there were few examples of such policies, though they are now more common in both government (for example those provided by the Australian Government Information Management Office: http://webpublishing.agimo.gov.au/Online_Consultation_Guidelines) and private organisational settings (for examples see http://laurelpapworth.com/enterprise-list-of-40-social-media-staff-guidelines/). The potential impact and use of other media forms such as 3D virtual worlds and mobile media were other communication channels that the ATO could consider.

However it was apparent that the ATO had until that time taken a fairly typical bureaucratic approach in banning access to these sites from department computers. The SCG staff questioned how they could monitor references to the ATO in these sites, let alone develop effective communication through them, when they could not be accessed. It was clear that issues regarding security and access would need to be resolved with the department’s IT managers if the SCG was to be able to develop effective strategies for using new and emerging media.

Session 2: A social media toolkit
The second session focused on using technology to enable members of the SCG to conduct “desktop research” - theoretical/conceptual research- based mostly on gathering secondary information from online sources, though the increasing availability of raw data or
primary source material via the Internet does allow for some original research. It was identified that desktop research could:

- be cheaper and faster than gathering original data (do you mean traditional means?)
- use existing research, and prevent re-inventing the wheel
- be customised to suit individual projects within the ATO
- help to familiarise team members with the resources available within the ATO
- be supported by ‘basic’ computer/online access.

The ‘Social Media Toolkit’ developed for the ATO communication staff was based on Calishain’s 2007 book on information trapping. The session was based around five areas:

1. Really Simple Syndication (RSS)
   RSS technology allows you to see when Websites or services have uploaded new content. It can be used to subscribe to content such as blogs, news services, and pod casts. You can even use it to monitor edits to selected Wikipedia articles. The ATO staff were encouraged to choose a news reader or aggregator program. This is the software that will track and show the content of the feeds you subscribe to. Some examples are:
   - FeedZilla, http://www.feedzilla.com/

2. Web-based page monitors
   As not all sites or services provide RSS feeds as a means of monitoring new content, SCG staff were next encouraged to consider using page monitors. This software will compare versions of a nominated Web page, and then notify the user when some content has been updated. Two examples are:
   - Watch that page, http://www.watchthatpage.com
   - Dapper, http://www.dapper.net/

3. Conversation traps
   Calishain (2007) describes the value of being able to tap into the “conversations” that take place in online publication spaces such as forums, bulletin boards and blogs. SCG members were asked to consider the benefits of a ‘dialogue’ approach to marketing and communication in the world of social media, requiring a need to find, monitor and participate in conversations with internal and external ATO stakeholders. Some examples of tools to assist in conversation tracking are:
   - Technorati, www.technorati.com/
   - Del.icio.us, del.icio.us

4. Multimedia monitors
   Calishain (2007 164), notes that it is difficult enough keeping track of text-based online conversations, let alone the multimedia world of images, sound and video. SCG members considered some of the tools they might use to monitor non-text online media content relevant to ATO activities. Some examples of multimedia monitoring resources are:
   - Get a pod cast, getapodcast.com/
   - Yahoo pod casts, podcasts.yahoo.com

OUTCOMES

At the conclusion of each session a detailed evaluation form was completed. This was to test if the material being delivered was meeting the expectations of the group, and also to assess if any changes were required for future sessions. Negatives were that some of the material was too theoretical, that case studies should have been more reflective of the ATO environment, and that some external presenters did not understand the culture of the ATO. Overall, the feedback was very positive with most sessions ranked highly for extending knowledge, providing a framework for issues related to the new work and the skill levels required. A survey of all participants was undertaken before the sessions commences and they were seeking team building, strategy development, communication case studies from external organisations and new and rigorous approaches to communication and problem solving.

In the final discussion all participants rated the communities of practice, social media, and understanding the principles of strategic planning as the most valuable.

a) Communities of Practice
   Although the community of practice approach had support from the SCG leadership and recruits, and it was formally embedded in the SCG strategy manual, it proved not to be effective. This was not the organisation model for a large governmental bureaucracy and the ATO had misgivings about the ability of the organisation to cope with a radically new form of communication approach even within the forward thinking elite group they had established to deal with technological change.

b) Social Media
   A key outcome was the development of a very thorough report on the potential applications of these media to the ATO’s channel strategy entitled New and emerging media: Research review into use in the ATO operating environment. A draft was prepared in early 2008 by Communication Strategists in the SCG and provided a detailed guide on appropriate applications and use.

   Overall, the review found that like any large organisation, the Australian Office faced an enormous challenge making use of new media to improve its internal and external communications. It found that there had been some exploratory use of new media, but that growth in its use would become particularly important “in light of greater government accountability for service, responsiveness and the requirement to balance the needs of different groups” (2008, p.51).

It concluded by stating that the two-way communication approach possible in these new media forms required the ATO to prepare a “participative model for new media where users...
can choose appropriate and useful tools to interact with the Tax Office. This means new media tools cannot be prescribed but rather ‘offered’ for consideration” (2008, p.51).

By early 2010, the ATO had adopted some social media tools ostensibly as part its goal of promoting “tax compliance as a characteristic of citizenship in Australia”, particularly among young people and recent immigrants who are seen as presenting a “fresh opportunity” for such messages (ATO, 2010). A social media presence has been established using Facebook (http://www.facebook.com/ATOetax) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/ato_gov_au), though these currently seem limited to a channel for announcements rather than promoting a dialogue with citizens about taxation issues.

c. Whole of government alignment
The Australian Government’s commitment to a national broadband network will see greater public demand for a stronger and more functional government presence in the online media space. The opportunities for data and service sharing between departments and agencies are also increasing.

The role of communication strategies in promoting a “whole of government” message, and the contribution of new and emerging media is an area for further research.

d. Privacy and security
As more government communication moves into the networked digital space, issues of public demand for a stronger and more functional government presence in the online media space. The opportunities for data and service sharing between departments and agencies are also increasing.

The role of communication strategies in promoting a “whole of government” message, and the contribution of new and emerging media is an area for further research.

e. Measurement
A key question for any private or public organisation seeking to make greater use of these new and emerging technologies is how to measure their effectiveness in terms of the costs involved in implementing strategies through these applications. While a range of metric tools are being developed, there is still scope for research into the return on investment. An alternative view may be to consider the “return on engagement”, that is, the ability of these media forms to provide a more engaging and personal experience for individual users that enhances the success of marketing and communication messages.
Moore, Simon, and Seymour, Mike. Global technology and corporate crisis. Oxon, Routledge, 2005


Pryor, Mildred; Donna Anderson; Leslie Toombs and John Humphreys," Strategic Implementation as a Core Competency: The 5P's Model" Journal of Management Research, 7-1 (2007), 3-17


INTRODUCTION: CONFUSED STARTING SITUATION AND TRIPLE GOVERNMENT MANDATE

Much has been written about government communication and also about climate change and its consequences. With this paper, we aim to put these two perspectives together and ask how government communication can contribute or, at worst, even be an obstacle to a reasonable approach concerning the “treatment” of global warming. We also view this as an interesting example to better understand general decision making and system integration as function of public communication.

The fascinating thing about government communication is that many different perspectives exist on this subject. Within the German-speaking academic world, (upon which we will focus here for reasons of space) the two main lines come from administration science and law on the one hand, and from social sciences, especially communication and political studies on the other hand. In this paper, we will look at both of these and try to crystalise what is of current importance for issues relevant to climate change.

We are convinced that this kind of research makes sense because the issue mentioned is one of the major challenges for modern society. And PR has one of the key roles therein – as one of the causes of debate (especially as a “loudspeaker” for the different protagonists) as well as a contributor of possible solutions (e.g. as successful multiplier of problem-solving ideas). Therefore, various interdependencies, constellations of actors and uncertainties manifest themselves in the climate-debate (cf. Prins & Rayner 2007a, 2007b). In this paper, we will argue that nation-state governments have one of the key roles in tackling climate change, whether they like it or not. This role is differentiated in various aspects:

- First, the government has to take decisions regarding which strategies are to be used to tackle climate change. The government is dependent on scientific uncertainties. The research on climate change and its findings are often particularly preliminary and hypothetical (cf. Weingart et al. 2000, 2002).
- Secondly, the government has to integrate various (sub)systems like the economic and the scientific system into the decision-making process. This is only possible with successful communication including, but not restricted to media relations. Therefore, government officials have to put together different logics and attempts to tackle climate change to form a strategy. Much of these communication is not internal, but public. Each system realizes its own kind of PR on the issue – and the simpler the story appears, the easier it is to tell. The government is one of these actors struggling for attention.
• And thirdly, the government has to communicate the possible impacts of climate change to the broader public beside the subsystems directly concerned. We are also interested in understanding what kind of strategies are neglected in politics and the mass media, whilst other approaches are being prominently discussed (cf. Boykoff 2004, 2007; Carvalho 2007; Corbett & Durfee 2004; Palfremann 2006; Tolan & Berzo 2005; Zehr 2000).

The aim of this paper is to understand what kind of positions concerning climate change are dominant in the public debate, and why this is so. We also aim to show that the only successful opportunity to establish a real change is the consequent use and application of modern crisis communication. However, our aim is not to judge which solution to climate change is right or wrong, but which communication is appropriate or not – and how the theory of government communication as well as the practice and research of PR in general can contribute to this important subject.

Hence, our paper is organized as follows: we will first analyze the two afore-mentioned perspectives on government communication and how they apply to the issue of climate change. Following that, we will examine the climate debate itself in more depth, with particular focus on the way the issue has been communicated thus far. Building on this, we will suggest how the issue could be communicated differently and what contribution could be made by modern PR theory. In order to sort our theoretical framework, we rely on Beck’s concepts of the “Risk Society” and the “World Risk Society” (cf. Beck 1992). And within PR sciences, it is a good opportunity to test different new and established theories about “Public Affairs” and “Crisis Communication” (cf. Baizer et al. 2009; Bauer 2006; Harris 2009; Henry 1989; Hoppe 2010; Mahony et al. 2010, Morrison 2009; Nixon et al. 2010; Pedler 1995).

ANALYZING THE CONTEXTS OF GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION
AND THE CLIMATE DEBATE

Government Communication

Law and administrative science perspective

As mentioned above, there are many different perspectives on government communication, with the main ones in the German-speaking academic world being administration science and law on one hand and out of communication science on the other hand. A key figure in the first of these disciplines is Hermann Hill, who has written an extensive, five-volume work on this topic.1 According to Hill (2004: 1), the literature on “communication in the public sector” has become so extensive that it is difficult to understand. He comments that the term “state communication” can refer to all communicative relationships of government bodies, both internal and external. It can also be extended to areas of publicity work, political marketing and PR.

This paper purely is about the area of government communication. Parliamentary communication, party communication, administrative communication in the strictest sense and specific questions regarding election campaign communication will not be dealt with. Hill, whose roots lie in constitutional law, lays great importance on describing a clear change in the role of government communication. Whereas previously, a difference was drawn between the production and the representation of communication of politics, the view is now gaining increasing prominence that political communication is not only a side-effect produced before or after the politics itself, but political communication is itself politics. The classical function of political or government communication was to observe and influence public opinion, whether by using information, clarification, image cultivation, persuasion or justification. This aimed to enable each citizen to exercise his or her democratic rights. Through understanding and insight, credibility and trust, the legitimization of the state’s actions was to increase and the integration of each citizen in the state was to be achieved. Alongside the involvement-oriented or participative function of the communication, it also had a politically pedagogical function, which aimed to promote the education and development of each citizen.

New approaches are no longer based on approval or acceptance management, but on the aim of promoting responsibility or resonance with the attitudes or opinions of the electorate. They also emphasize the procedural nature of political communication as part of a communicative political development. Instead of “communication from above” or “politicians’ politics”, they use consultation and feedback mechanisms as well as reciprocal dialogues. Communicative measures aim to build relationships and manage interdependencies. The role of the state thereby primarily involves the organization or leadership of societal communication and the maintenance or management of networks.

This is certainly possible on a local and maybe also a regional level – that is to say, where the politics happens close to the citizens. Whether this organisatory role is genuinely dominant on a national and, particularly, international or global levels, especially regarding topics such as climate change, will be examined critically and, as far as is possible, answered below.2

Communication and political studies perspective

Alongside the legal and administrative science perspective, there is also the previously mentioned political and communication science perspective. The starting point for this perspective is that today’s daily life cannot be imagined without media and mass media in particular. They are omnipresent in politics, economy, education and arts as well as in the public and private spheres. We spend most of our time using the mass media. The

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1 The remark from Hill regarding the history of government communication is interesting in this context. Hill notes that the roots of state publicity work lie in the middle ages and the disputes between the Kaiser and the Pope. The Prussian government was also aware of the importance of state publicity work and image maintenance abroad. In the time before World War I, for example, it was important to mobilize public opinion to develop the German fleet. During World War I, the importance switched primarily to the campaign for the sale of war bonds. After World War II, it was particularly desirable for the new democratic states to distance themselves from the National Socialist propaganda, especially that represented by propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels, and develop a new political publicity policy.

2 Hill goes on to focus in more detail on the strict legal conditions for government communication, as they are defined by, amongst other things, the judgments of the German Constitutional Court. This, however, is not the topic of the present article.

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concept of “media society” and its process of mediatization argue that the media are a societal phenomenon penetrating all areas of modern, globalized societies (Saxer 1998, 2007). Harvwood (2008: 105) suggests, that the “media may no longer be conceived of as being separate from cultural and other social institutions. (...) They have become an integral part of other institutions’ operations, while they also have achieved a degree of self-determination and authority that forces other institutions, to greater or lesser degrees, to submit to their logic”. Therefore, mediatized societies act more and more according to the logic of the mass media. However, the mass-mediated picture of the world isn’t a mirror, mediating real climate events and debates. Instead, it is in particular a construction by the media and their mechanisms of selection and presentation styles. This fact is especially obvious for topics that are not part of our direct and primary experience (McCombs & Shaw 1993). If we turn to the more narrowed field of government communication, Baumgarten offers a good overview (2010: 53-80). She too begins by breaking down the topic: “Many definitions of political communication are very broad and formulated very generally. Schulz, for example, defines communication as political ‘if it relates to the exchange of messages among political actors’ (Schulz 2008a: 3671). Based on the definition of politics as the process of producing and implementing generally binding decisions, Jarren and Donges define political communication as the central mechanism in the formulation, aggregation, production and implementation of collectively binding decisions (cf. Jarren/Donges 2006: 22). McNair defines political communication as communication practised by or aimed at political actors, or communication that contains political actors and their actions (cf. McNair 2007:4) Political communication is too broadly defined here for it to be of use for empirical research. We therefore need to specify things somewhat. This is done here by focusing on the government as an actor. Based on the definition of McNair, the focus is placed on the government as a potential actor within political communication. Government communication is then understood as a form of political communication, in which the government is defined primarily as recipient and initiator in public communications processes conveyed by the media. Political communication, and thereby government communication as a form of political communication, is furthermore not only understood as a means of political, but as politics itself (cf. Sarcinelli 2009: 171f.; Jarren/Donges 2006: 22; Jarren 1994: 663f.). With Korte and Fröhlich, political communication is not seen as an attribute of politics, but more as a central, constitutive condition for the effectiveness and success of government policy”. Some authors in the tradition of Deutsch even speak of politics as communication, i.e. the identity of politics and communication (cf. e.g. Deutsch 1969; Meadow 1980; Schulz 2003: 459)".

With specific regard to the position of the government, Baumgarten writes (2010: 53): “Government communication as a form of political communication follows its own, institutional-organisational logic and particular, normative rules, which differentiates it from the political communication of other actors, e.g. parties or NGOs. The difference between actors within and outside the political system implies that the political communication of the different actors is conducted fundamentally differently. Connected to this, Bentele notes the difference between functional PR and organised PR (cf. Bentele 1998: 136). Functional PR is conducted by individual actors. It is usually connected with the appearance of a politician who only conducts publicity work as part of his role. Organised PR, however, is conducted primarily by political institutions such as countries. This publicity work is institutionalised and is implemented by professional PR specialists or press and publicity departments (cf. Bentele 1998: 136). Jarren points out that political PR of the government, parliament and administrative departments tends to follow an institutional-organisational logic and, additionally, is greatly restricted and determined by the normative rules (cf. Jarren 1994: 659). Brüggemann continues this line of thought when he speaks about the PR of public institutions (cf. Brüggemann 2008: 72). The PR of institutions such as the government is an individual section of political PR, and is subject to its own particular communications conditions such as the state’s duty to serve the general good and the potential comprehensive jurisdiction (cf. Brüggemann 2008: 73)".

In this section, we have seen that government communication is subject to strong changes. The issue at hand seems, at least in theory, to offer an ideal field of application for a stronger role of the state as an organiser and leader of societal communication. Against this background, however, stands the development also described above, that government communication is today no longer primarily the conveying of previously approved content (if, indeed, it ever took this pure form), but is often rather presented as politics itself. In the following sections, we will analyse critically whether this intrinsically positive development really has happened. On the basis of our prior considerations, we could instead fear that government communication runs the risk of using the topic of climate change as yet another chance to show itself off. If this is the case, a particular way of dealing with a topic would almost automatically gain the upper hand. In the rest of the paper, we will investigate, based on secondary analyses, whether this is the case.

Climate Debate

Science and Risk Communication

The field of science and risk communications is actually full of subjects that we cannot experience personally. Instead, we depend on mass media coverage to get a picture of scientific debates and certain risks. For example, the concept of agenda-setting assumes that the issue-presentation in the mass media has impacts on the perceptions of these issues in the public and the political system (McCombs et al. 1997). Issues that are highlighted prominently in the news become important for the public. Modern risks are, in many respects, neither directly visible nor directly tangible for our knowledge. These risks and their potential to endanger modern societies are therefore constructed via the mass media (Beck, 1992, 2007). Modern society thus notices the climate basically through a socially defined filter, which is artificially constructed and not a mirror of the real climate (Boykoff & Boykoff 2007; Carvalho 2005; Smith 2005; Stehr & Von Storch, 2009). In addition to this, the social definition of risks is dependent on scientific uncertainties. The research on climate change and its findings are often particularly preliminary and hypothetical (Weingart et al. 2000, 2002). Modern societies produce ever more complex problems, which require scientific interpretations. Science therefore increasingly becomes the basis for both social action and political decision-making. Scientific findings, however, are often used without any extensive appraisal, for a particular reason, namely to justify positions. This implies that the political
system and the government are not dependent on scientific findings. It only uses them to justify decisions it had already taken. You can always find an expert opinion in one direction and an equally expert opinion in the other direction to suit your interests. In a network analysis on transnational policies on the ozone hole, Grundmann (1999) refers to the political instrumentalization of scientific findings. Government will not give up its power of decision-making, at least not in the public perception. One can actually observe the tendency of political communications to influence the scientific debate. Weingart (2001, 2003) suggests a politicization of scientific research: by discussing differing scientific expertise in the political system, these debates are extended into the scientific sphere and politicize the scientific debate too. Beck also describes a mediatization and politicization of the scientific system as part of the modernization process in its concept of risk society: until the first half of the 20th century, scientists were engaged in inventions about nature, human beings and the society. Since that time, however, they have been tied into a new frame: in a reflexive phase of research, science has to deal with its prior findings and its consequences. Since then it has been confronted with its own products and defects. This has also influenced the relationship between science and its environment. Whilst science was previously celebrated by the public as a successful field, it has lately been confronted by political actors, the media and the public with its faults from the past, which became obvious as follow-up problems. As a consequence, the science lost its monopoly as key definers of risks. This is ambivalent: on the one hand, a modern and complex society requires more research for its social progress, but on the other hand, because of the public perception of scientific uncertainty, science has lost its unique position to define social problems and risks in modern societies. Other social actors, formerly the receivers of scientific findings, became active definers. So, new definitions are no longer classified purely according to a scientific coding, but are the result of a social definition process. Therefore, the quality of a risk is based on two aspects, namely its scientific and its social construction. Especially risks that are withdrawn from our direct cognition, like radioactivity, harmful substances and obviously the consequences of climate change, are based on the causalities of their scientific and social construction (cf. Beck 1992).

The social construction is the result of a public debate that is principally structured by the mass media. They are the gatekeeper for the selection of coverage, they decide whom to give speech, and to what extent (cf. Allan et al. 2000; Gamson 1989). Hjarvard (2008) also argues that mass media play an important role in the production and circulation of knowledge and interpretations of science. Weingart (1998) points out that with the growing importance of the media in shaping public opinion, science and perception on the one hand and a growing dependence of science on scarce resources and thus on public acceptance on the other, science will become increasingly media-oriented. As early as 1985, Atwater (1985) took reference to the original distinction of agenda-setting research between obstrusive and unobstrusive issues: obstrusive issues, like the economy, could be directly experienced by the people, whereas unobstrusive issues are characterized by little or no direct experience by the public.

Global Warming as a Threat?
“Science has established that processes of human origin are influencing the climate – that human beings are changing the global climate” (Von Storch 2009). The emerging consensus among climate scientists posits a non-trivial risk of considerable climate changes (a global average temperature regime above 4.5 degrees celsius pre-industrial conditions) much sooner (within the next few decades) than expected based on past research (cf. Parry et al. 2009). Significant changes in climatic conditions are in evidence already but are likely to become more severe in the future (cf. Parry et al. 2009). Climate changes in the form of more frequent and more intense weather extremes, for example, will impact both natural and man-made environments. And, even if global efforts to slow climate change during the coming decades should be successful (reduction of flow), climate change will continue because of the build-up of the stock of emissions in the atmosphere and therefore affect the living conditions of modern societies for decades to come. Von Storch (2009) suggests that in almost all localities, at present and in the foreseeable future, the frequency distributions of the temperature continue to shift to higher values, the sea level is rising, amounts of rainfall are changing, some extremes such as heavy rainfall events will change. This scientific construct of human-made climate change has been comprehensively formulated by the UNO climate council, the IPCC.3

But, as Anderson (2009:166) indicates, “there is considerable disagreement (…) how best to tackle the problem and who needs to be involved”. Parry and colleagues (2009) assert that even the most restrictive emission policies, thus the reduction of greenhouse gases, leave a sizeable chance that significant climate change will occur over the next several decades, probably surpassing the 2°C warming target adopted by the European Union and held by many as dangerous limit beyond we should not pass. In the past decade, climate policies in North America, in the European Union and in most countries around the world have almost exclusively focused on mitigation, that is, "how best and at what cost to limit global climate change through reducing the emissions of greenhouse gases" (Grothmann & Patt, 2005: 199; see also EC 2005, 2007a and 2007b, also IPCC, 2007). Mitigation is essential. However, it cannot remain the only strategy to develop human capacities to live with palatable climate risks. Therefore, adaptation aims at prevention. We essentially have the choice between two ways of dealing with climate risks: we can try to manage such risks or attempt to avoid them. Each strategy generates its own risks.

Although adaptation has not been neglected (cf. the 2007 EC Green Paper on Adaptation; the 2009 EC White Paper on Adaptation; EC 2007c; IPCC reports), Gwyn Prins and Steve Rayner (2007a:35) argue that "adaptation has consistently been the poor and derided cousin of emissions reduction in the history of the climate regime". News coverage also emphasizes mitigation issues rather than adaptation (Boykoff & Timmons 2007). Climate science is a hotly contested area. Scientists, industry, policymakers and non-governmental organizations are struggling to establish their particular perspectives on the issue in the mass media and the public debate. The mass media also play a crucial role in framing climate change and its scientific, economic, social and political dimensions.

3 Of course, there is no complete consensus in the scientific community on this scientific construct of human-made climate change (cf. Von Storch 2009; Anderson 2009).
We will focus on the communication attempts of governments and policy makers to perform in the mass media debate, because a broad range of empirical studies show the leading role of the political system and policy-makers in the news coverage and public debate on efforts to tackle climate change.

**APPLICATION OF THE ANALYSIS TO GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION AND THE CLIMATE DEBATE.**

**How to deal with decision making and uncertainties**

For a long time, debates on climate change were almost exclusively located in the scientific community. It was only at certain events that the political system became aware of the issue and got involved for a short time. Such couplings were observable at certain summits, for example the IPCC-sessions and the World Climate Summits, where scientists and politicians or only politicians had to struggle for a suitable declaration by the end of the conference. Anderson (2009: 168) points to the proceedings of the Kyoto Protocol in 1997: “Peaks in coverage over this time can be directly related to important policy events such as the Kyoto Protocol”. But despite a huge amount of news media coverage, this peak was relatively short-lived after the event “Kyoto”. As Alex Kirby (2001), former Environment Correspondent for BBC News indicates: “Alarming or not, climate change is becoming an increasingly hard subject to sell in much of the media. (...) Editors are simply bored with what they think is an old story they have heard before”.

Climate change attracted genuine media attention for the first time when the political system made it to its very own issue. Wilkins and Patterson (1991) locate this shift from a scientific to a political perspective in news coverage in the years 1987 and 1988. Several case studies have shown that the news media tend to follow the political agenda. News coverage is closely linked to political agenda-setting. Boykoff and Boykoff (2007) showed that climate coverage is strongly connected to policy developments. Also Trumbo (1996) found that political sources replaced scientific sources from the 1980s in the US newspaper coverage on climate change.

An exception can be seen in the case of Germany. Weingart and colleagues (2002) analyzed that the scientific system first triggered media attention for climate change by using dramatic language to present findings on the impacts of climate change in 1986. They named their scenario drohende Klimakatastrophe (threatening climate catastrophe), which implied potentially great damage and the urgent need for immediate action. The term “catastrophy” is more focused on one single event than the newer term of “change”. Researchers were surprised by the strong media attention and from then on replaced the term “climate catastrophe” with the less dramatic notion of “climate change”. In that case, it was the media presentation that triggered the political debate, leading Weingart and colleagues (2002: 280) to conclude that “scientists politicized the issue” via the mass media. But in general, the effect of politicization and afterwards mediatization of issues is the rule, not only for climate change, as Gelbspan (2005) indicates: “Normally the path follows the track of political reporting, as top editors tend to see nearly all issues through a political lens”. As early as 1978, Stuart Hall and his colleagues drew attention to the ways in which government officials tend to obtain privileged access to the news media and become primary definers of key issues (Hall et al. 1978). Newell (2000) showed these processes of privilege in the climate debate. This has several reasons: an issue benefits from the publicity and the power-demonstration possibilities of politicians. Furthermore, the media and audience can then form stronger links between the issue and politicians who are known from former decisions. Accordingly, the public gets easier an impression of what to think about this issue, as their own experiences with certain politicians can be associated with that image. This effect can also be explained with the empowerment of politics and politicians: issues become interesting for the media when they are located in a decision-making phase and the duty is to establish clarity. Journalists primarily tend to ask for statements from people who possess the power to make decisions. At this point the similarities between the logics of politics (decision-making) and the mass media’s mechanisms of selecting an issue (clearness of a situation, action by an elite person) become obvious (cf. Kaase 1998; Mazzoleni & Schulz 1999; Scharpf 2000).

Science, on the contrary, makes no decisions. Scientists merely present the fundamentals for political decisions or rather the basics for justifying a decision. Usually, they are not interesting for the media. Only if scientists are accepted by political leaders, e.g. as participants in political consultation circles, do certain experts and scientists become interesting for the media (Grundmann 2006). By virtue of their position these experts are assigned to the political system, associated with power and therefore get covered in the media. As a consequence, they get noticed by the public, are cited, receive invitations to media events and are asked for their opinions. The spiral of attention starts to rotate around them: by working with the media, scientists learn the mechanisms of the media and to use them. This situation is good for both the media and the expert: The media can better work with a person who understands their wishes and the expert can profit from their fame and media professionalism in further research allocations. Peters and colleagues (2008) show that, although negative experiences with the media still dominate the perception of scientists, they perceive more positive than negative impacts on their career and media professionalism in further research allocations. Scientists and media act reciprocally: in an analysis on the German climate discourse, Post (2008) showed that those scientists who come into active contact with the media are often those who hold radical positions, and the media select mostly those scientists with extreme opinions. The climate debate is thus dominated only by a few publicly known experts: elite persons in terms of the theory of news-value (Galtung & Ruge 1965) as well as those holding radical positions (Krauss & Von Storch 2005). The government has to integrate various subsystems like the economic and the scientific system in the process of decision-making. Therefore, government officials have to put together different logics and attempts on climate change to form a strategy. Much of this communication is not internal, but public. Various interests from actors from these very specific functional systems struggle for attention in the mass media. The government is one of these actors struggling for attention. The way in which the role political communication is moving away from the pure communication of political activity and towards communication as political activity in and of itself was described in detail in the contextual chapter above.
Which Public Communication of Possible Impacts of Climate Change is appropriate?

We have already referred to the domination of mitigation issues in the news coverage and the neglect of adaptation issues (Boykoff & Timmons 2007). The particularities described above can be observed in the specific question of why the mitigation of greenhouse gases is so popular in the public debate while the adaptation on climate change is hardly discussed. Mitigation appears to be a behavior of virtue in the public debate and the mass media whereas the possibilities of an active climate policy with foresight are presented only to a minor degree. Barely any attention is given to the fact that the possible outcomes of mitigation policy cannot be seen until a long time in the future (Krauss & Van Storch 2005; Stehr 2004). What possible reasons are there for the public monopolizing of the topos of mitigation by the mass media and politics, especially the government? How is this specific media construction to be explained? To illustrate how the public debate on these two approaches to tackling climate change is framed, we refer to the case of the Kyoto Protocol.

Global climate policy is particularly dominated by the Kyoto Protocol. Prins and Rayner describe it as a “symbolically important expression of governments’ concern about climate change” (Prins & Rayner 2007a). This treaty deals almost exclusively with questions of the mitigation of greenhouse gases by the industrial countries, but “it pays no more than token attention to the needs of societies to adapt to existing climate change” (Prins & Rayner 2007a). By focusing on mitigation and reduction strategies, the political system has subdued the political and public debate on other strategies of climate protection. In the public debate, it seemed that Kyoto is the only game in town. With the promotion of mitigation as the only concept facing climate change, however, the politics itself loses policy alternatives. Furthermore, Kyoto became the only indicator for political success in climate protection, therefore it has been turned into a morality play. By hinting at alternatives for Kyoto, government would admit that the protocol has failed and was a political mistake.

Mitigation strategies dominate both public debate and media reports in Germany. German news media primarily present stories about the reduction of greenhouse gases, such as codifications for emission-trades, emission-taxes, or emission-reducing technologies, but they hardly report stories on the topic of adaption (Post 2008). Kyoto is linked to mitigation in terms of the concept of news values (Galtung & Ruge 1965), and one can observe the value of continuity: people know Kyoto and have a vague idea about the topics (mitigation and reduction), which were discussed there. Media can therefore refer to this prior knowledge (Fredin et al. 1996; Price & Zaller 1993).

Furthermore, the Kyoto Protocol is an agreement that comprises the most powerful industrial nations (elite nations) and that was signed by their government-leaders (elite persons). Since the actors in the political system made themselves responsible for means of mitigation, one can assume that strategies of mitigation are more firmly anchored in the political debate than questions of adaption. Through the elite focus of the media and their concentration on political instead of scientific debates, Kyoto stays prominently in the news.

The Kyoto Process possesses further media-advantages: It is clear and definite (clarity) because it is aligned on data and figures: figures of output of greenhouse gases, figures in a defined space of time, rankings of reducing and condemning etc. Kyoto and its process hold comparabilities, which are realizable by the media. They can show which countries try to comply with their reduction guidelines by comparison with other countries. Additionally, the media have the possibility to identify culprits for these developments and start horse-race-coverage. One can assume, that German media could show Germany’s pioneering role in reducing but also could point on the defaults and neglects of other countries. Luhmann (2000) describes figures and the value of quantity as follows: “Quantities are always informative, because any particular number is none other than the one mentioned – neither larger nor smaller. And this holds true regardless of whether one understands the material complex”.

Political action is carried out under uncertainties and with an eye on the next elections. Furthermore, political action is reactive in most cases, e.g. reacting because of media claims after certain events (cf. Downs 1991). Mass media work in certain planning horizons, too. But why do the political system and the mass media react to extreme weather events not in decision-making mode, but only in symbolic political action?

Mitigation and reduction policies are far sighted, but such treaties also postpone political actions to horizons after the next election and to future constellations of governments. These delays are popular in politics. Strategies of adaption, on the other hand, for example the building of coast dams to protect people from floods or the reorganization of health care services for auxiliary extreme heat in metropolises, would show effective decision-making by the political system (cf. Stehr 2004). Those strategies would also adjust to political decision cycles as well as to the attention span of the media. Moreover, such strategies would be easier to enforce in the political system and would bring big mitigation topics forwards against the industrial lobby. Finally, such topics would also suit the mechanisms of the media, because journalists could make stories out of these issues.

What can modern PR theory, e. g. excellence theory, contribute to issues?

The analysis made so far can be applied to the background of current German and international PR theories. These can even provide possible ideas of how the issue can be dealt with differently to ensure a more varied approach. Let us begin with common theories that attempt to explain PR. Examples from the German-speaking world include Baerns’ “Determinationstheorie” (Determination Theory), Bentele’s Intereffikationstheorie (inter-enabling theory) and, as a more alternative model, Burkart’s “verständigungsorientierte Öffentlichkeitsarbeit” (clarification oriented publicity work).

The first theory maintains that media coverage remains constant despite the variety of publications, meaning that the PR professionals primarily determine the message produced by the journalists, as well as the timing of that message.

Bentele’s theory expands on this first theory, positing a relationship between the PR system and the journalistic system in which the two systems adapt to and serve one another on
individual, organisational and systemic levels and in three dimensions: the factual, time and socio-psychic dimensions.

Burkart, basing his theory on Habermas’ theory of communicative action, views PR as a process of mutual understanding. Communication partners must ideally fulfill four basic communicative criteria: intelligibility, truth, trustworthiness and legitimacy. When these are violated, as they inevitably will be in the real world, the communicative parties must resort to a two-way discourse to repair the problem that has arisen. Once the problem has been repaired, mutual understanding and agreement can be reached, providing a basis for joint action.

The issue at hand can be seen as a confirmation of the first two theories, although the “inter-enabling” as Bentele defines it is, as shown above, dominated strongly by politics. Burkart’s approach, however, whilst being admittedly idealistic and extremely strongly influenced by the thinking of the “Frankfurt School”, could, in a diluted version, offer an alternative approach to the issue.

Outside the German speaking world, there is one name above all that dominates PR theory: James E. Grunig. We are particularly interested in three theoretical approaches that are linked with his name: his four type model including the definition of a win-win corridor, his excellence theory and the theory of situative partial publics.

The four type model defines four types of public communication, along with their historical development and current usage. The four forms are publicity, public information, asymmetric communication and symmetric communication. All these can be located somewhere on a continuum between a pure asymmetric model, where the communication is dominated by the interests of the sender, and a pure cooperative model, where the interests of the receiver dominate. In the middle of this continuum, where the interests are mixed, is the so-called win-win corridor.

The aim of Grunig’s excellence theory was to produce a general model for excellent PR. The theory consists of variable factors from subtheories, based upon which Grunig reached his conclusions. These were that excellent organisations have participatory cultures, organic structures, symmetric communication systems and a high level of job satisfaction.

Finally, Grunig’s theory of situative partial publics defines such “partial publics” as groups of people facing a similar problem or opportunity, with a particular activation level (between non-active and activist). This activation level can be influenced by many PR related factors, making it very important for PR professionals to recognise potential consequences of their actions for such partial publics.

How can we position our issue in these three approaches of Grunig’s, and what can we learn from them for our issue? Certainly, the government communication on the topic of climate change, as described above, represents at best asymmetric communication, and more probably a public information model with a tendency towards a strong publicity approach. A real win-win model, which would be situated between asymmetric and symmetric communication, can therefore not really work. Governments seem to see their own “win”, to formulate it in the language of game theory, as coming more from their own victories as a victory for the whole of society.

As ideas of how things can be done better, we can hold up both the excellence theory and the situative partial publics. The excellence theory would allow criteria for an excellent government communication on the topic of climate change to be developed. The theory of situative partial communication could create more room for contributions which aim for a stronger role of the state as an organiser and leader of societal communication. This would work because the various aspects of climate change repeatedly represent the creation of corresponding partial publics.

CONCLUSION: THE NECESSITY OF A NEW FORM OF EXCELLENCE THEORY FOR REFORM COMMUNICATION.

With this paper, we aim to put together the academic perspectives of government communication and climate change, and ask how government communication can contribute or, at worst, even be an obstacle to a reasonable approach concerning the “treatment” of global warming. Our analysis has shown that government communication is often more an obstacle than an aid for this issue, but that some knowledge about government communication can help to improve this situation.

The conclusions for the climate debate state the following: Kyoto is a dominant slogan in the news-coverage and the Kyoto Protocol deals in particular with questions of mitigation. Therefore, the audience knows the slogan and has a vague idea about the topics. Consequently the strategies of mitigation dominate the news-coverage and the public debate. Internationally, the concept of “good governance” has also achieved increasing importance. In concepts of the UN and the OECD, particular criteria such as transparency and accountability are named. A publication of the Canadian Institute on Governance said that this concept deals not only with the criteria of “how power is exercised” and “how decisions are made on issues of public concern” but also the question of “how citizens are given a voice”. These European and international developments will also impact the future of national government communication.

For the future, a whole array of interesting approaches emerge from this. Firstly, it is of great importance that we move away from government communication and towards societal communication when dealing with long-term, future relevant issues, without falling into a late-1968 idealism. We are talking about the further professionalisation of political communication in the form of an “excellence development” (cf. Sievert/Novy 2007, 2008) and not in any way improved knowledge of how it is possible to feed the electorate with meaningless words without real content.
What is absolutely necessary is to decrease the delays in implementing reform, not just with regard to this topic. In order to achieve this, it would be useful to develop an “Excellence Theory” especially for government communication, based closely or loosely on Grunig’s theory. This would give society, as well as the government, an instrument to deal with issues differently, more broadly and yet with a stronger target orientation, in order to achieve reform solutions rather than reform delays.

To reach this point will be, to a certain extent, possible on an academic level, but hard to implement on a political level. And the issue of climate change alone cannot solve all the problems with government communication. The journey to get to this point, however, is worth the effort, as is shown by comparing the topic with the topic of “crisis communication” in the business world. Until the 1980s, industries such as the chemical industry aimed only to avoid problems and almost never to adapt to the catastrophes that might arise. This has now changed fundamentally, especially with regard to communication. The two aspects are now more or less equally important. This is a light at the end of the tunnel for government communication on the issue of climate change, and in general on the topic of reform communication.

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INTRODUCTION

The idea that organizations’ success depends in part on how they are viewed by key stakeholders has led both academic and communication practitioners to suggest frameworks and models that prescribe steps towards the 'strategic' use of communication. Hallahan et al. (2007) define strategic communication as the purposeful use of communication by an organization to fulfill its mission. They identify management, marketing, public relations, technical communication, political communication, and information/social marketing campaigns as being the six relevant disciplines for the development, application and measurement of strategic communication.

Their work suggests the growing convergence of theoretical interests, methodological approaches and research themes among communication scholars who have tended to work in thematic silos bounded by journals, divisional conferences and associational allegiances. Forthcoming work on political public relations (see Strömbäck and Kiousus forthcoming) and on government communication (Sanders and Canel forthcoming) suggest that the move by scholars to use approaches developed in cognate communication fields is gaining momentum.

In this study our aim is to apply concepts developed in the fields of public relations and corporate communication to the subject of government communication. Traditionally political communication scholars and political scientists have understandably led the field (see, for example, Edwards 2003, Seymour Ure 2003, Kumar 2007). Their contributions have been significant but have centered on rhetorical chief executive strategies and news media management (see Sanders and Canel, forthcoming). As yet there has been a limited contribution to the exploration of government communication from a public relations perspective (see Vos 2006, Gregory 2006, Fisher Liu and Horsley 2007, Vos and Westerhoudt 2008).

One of the key aims of this study will be to explore how ‘reputation’, a leading construct for the operationalization of the value of intangibles in the corporate world (see Cornelissen et al., 2006), can be applied in the public sector. A second and related aim is to examine how ‘reputation’ is related to the management of the strategic communication function in public sector organizations. In other words, we intend to apply concepts and theories developed for the corporate world from a public relations perspective to the public sector traditionally examined from a political communications or political science perspective. This paper will...
report the preliminary work undertaken in a long-term project examining government communication and its relationship to the reputation of 78 of the largest Spanish cities.¹

As public sector organizations have diversified in function and grown in size during recent decades, the study of reputation has extended beyond the commercial sector (see Jørgensen et al., 1998; Harisalo and Stenvall, 2003). But exactly what ‘government reputation’ is, how it is related to communication functions and policies, and how it should be measured and managed are issues that have still to be clarified. We aim to begin this process of clarification in this study and, as a necessary first step, we will first examine the concept of reputation as applied to the corporate and public sectors and second examine the concept of government communication.

EXAMINING THE CONCEPT OF REPUTATION

Corporate Reputation

For the corporate world, there is now a considerable body of research on the subject of reputation even though, as Barnett et al. (2006: 29) noted: ‘Identity, image and reputation are still often used interchangeably.’ Following Carmeli and Tishler’s review of the concept (2005), corporate reputation has been defined as depending on the observer’s perceptions and interpretations (Clark and Montgomery, 1998: 65), as being a ‘fragile resource’ (Hall, 1993: 616), which can change over time (Ching et al., 1992: 291), yet enjoys relative stability (Barney, 1997: 226), reflects cumulative investments (Fombrun and Shanley, 1990: 254) and exists as a concept distinct from other organizational behaviour constructs (Jones, 1996: 286). Researchers have examined the market benefits of a positive reputation in relation to organizational performance (Deephouse, 2000) competitive advantage (Roberts and Dowling, 2002) and a range of other economic returns (see Fang, 2005).

An important issue in the study of the notion of an organization’s reputation is whether reputation is purely perceptual or purely experiential. This debate is associated with that of whether corporate reputation and corporate image are to be seen as synonymous or as different concepts. Gotsi and Wilson’s (2001) review of the concept of reputation examines some of the field’s debates about the distinctions between corporate reputation and image, reflecting diverging understandings of the extent to which reputation rests on perception and/or experience (through the company’s activities and services or products provided). The latest systematic review of the corporate reputation literature (Walker, 2010) found that the chief distinctions between definitions of organizational identity, image and reputation found in recent literature could be made along two dimensions (see table 1): first the stakeholder dimension where the issue is which groups of stakeholders are invoked, internal or external stakeholders? Second, Walker found that researchers differentiated the concepts of organizational identity, image and reputation according to the perceptual dimension. Here authors distinguish first according to whether the perceptions are desired or are the ones that do in fact exist (actual) and second, they distinguish identity, image and reputation according to what kind of perceptions may be generated. Can they be positive and negative or both? Walker suggests that the definitions for identity, image and reputation respond respectively to the following questions: ‘Who/What do we believe we are?’ ‘What do we want others to think we are?’ and, for the case of reputation, ‘What are we seen to be?’

The various reviews of the definitional landscape (Gotsi and Wilson, 2001; Barnett et al., 2006; Walker, 2010) lead us to underline two key elements in understanding the concept of organizational reputation.

First, to the extent that reputation has to do with stakeholder’s overall evaluation of a company over time, reputation is enduring or continuing (Fombrun and van Riel, 2004: 165-166) and relatively stable. It is not just a function of market position but of past performance (Shrum and Wuthnow, 1988). If taken over time, reputation has to do with the company’s behaviour towards stakeholders, through its products and services.

Second, to the extent that reputation has to do with features that make the company distinctive from other companies, reputation is related to the capacity of a company to identify its strengths and to communicate them to its stakeholders so that the latter recognize them.

Table 1. Definitional differences between organizational identity, image and reputation

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<th>Organizational identity</th>
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<td>Perceptions</td>
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<td>Perceptions</td>
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Source: Adapted from Walker, 2010: 367

Drawing on his analysis of the literature, Walker (2010: 369-70) identifies five key attributes for the definition of corporate reputation:

1. Reputation is based on perception. In other words, it is a socially constructed phenomenon that is not necessarily completely factual. We would underline that defining reputation...
as a social construct should not imply that reputation is nothing more than that. In other words, reputation also implies experience of reality because human beings are embodied beings with natural and practical as well as social relations to reality (see Archer 2000). Furthermore, this reading of reputation is implicit in this attribute and also in those listed below that refer to the experience of time and the existence of standards.

2. Reputation is the aggregate perception of all stakeholders, internal and external, related to specific issues.
3. Reputation is inherently comparative in relation to other companies, specified standards or as assessed in longitudinal terms.
4. Reputation can be positive or negative.
5. Reputation is established through time and, although prey to its vagaries, is relatively stable.

In conclusion, Walker offers a definition of corporate reputation as (2010: 370) ‘a relatively stable, issue specific aggregate perceptual representation of a company’s past actions and future prospects compared against some standard’. We would add, with Gotsi and Wilson (2001), that this representation is related to a stakeholder’s experience and to communication providing information about the company’s actions.

**Reputation in the public sector**

The fact that the efficiency and reputation of the public sector are key values is generally recognized but a number of scholars point to a gap in research on public sector organizations in regard to their reputation and to stakeholder roles in assessing reputation (Mahon and Wartick, 2003, Luoma-aho 2006, Wiedmann and Prauschnke 2006). For example, Walker’s review of reputation literature found only six articles centered on this concept (see 2010: 360).

In most democracies the functions and responsibilities of public sector organization have steadily increased. At the same time, their resources are increasingly strained, as tough economic conditions mean that governments must squeeze public budgets. Public sector organizations seek to legitimize their activities in order to preserve their existence (Luoma-aho, 2007: 125). Building reputation can be understood as an intangible resource. According to Cinca et al. (2003), the public sector has traditionally shown some hesitation in applying and measuring intangible concepts, believing that the facts should speak for themselves. However, these same authors argue that intangibles may even be more important for public sector organizations than for commercial corporations; given that the former have multiple non-financial objectives they need to achieve (Cinca et al., 2003).

Reputation formation and measurement have yet to be systematically explored for the public sector. Given the differences in functions, scope, publics and aims between public and corporate sector organizations, some scholars claim there will also be differences in how reputation should be understood in the two fields (see Luoma-aho, 2007). However, Da Silva and Batista’s definition of government reputation as ‘the aggregate of stakeholders’ images of government over time.’ (2007: 595) coincides in several respects with Walker’s earlier cited definition of corporate reputation. Luoma-aho’s consideration of the concept of reputation in the public sector underlines the influence of the past and hence, the influence of an organization’s deeds (see 2008, 449). In her view, “Reputation is more related to deeds than its sister concept image which refers to impressions” (Luhoma-aho 2008, 449).

For the purposes of our study, we will adopt a definition of government reputation as ‘a relatively stable, issue specific aggregate perceptual representation of a government’s past actions and future prospects compared against some standard.’ In other words, a government’s reputation is partly but not entirely in its hands. Given, however, that reputation is also grounded in perceptions that are shaped by experiences and realities and that stakeholders’ perceptions of an organization will influence their behaviour toward it for better or worse, governments have everything to play for in seeking to build reputation, not least in ensuring their democratic mandate.

A number of authors have suggested that focussing on the building of government reputation requires strategic change for public sector organizations including (Da Silva y Batista 2007):

- a stronger customer-focused orientation,
- a better government performance of day-to-day management and operating activities,
- more efficient and effective communication with the public, and
- a greater emphasis on recognition

How perceptions incorporate reality (experience) and the role of communication in generating perceptions is a complex question but it may be argued that the effective implementation of strategic communication can be a key driver of reputation enhancement. The development of a model for government communication based on the definition of standards and quality objectives would, we argue, help bring about the four strategic changes outlined above. First, however, we need to be clear what is meant by government communication.

**GOVERNMENT COMMUNICATION**

Our starting point for this research is to examine the relationship of strategic communication in building government reputation. This requires us first to explore the specific characteristics of government communication and to provide an initial definition of it.

Public and, more specifically, government communication involves considerable complexity in terms of goals, needs, audiences, definition and resources as compared to the corporate sector (see Sanders and Canel forthcoming). Government communication operates in a multilayered and organizationally diverse environment. In relation to the issue of goals, for example, government communication often has to juggle what appear to be conflicting objectives set by political masters. Communication goals related to persuasion are considered particularly problematic by many scholars particularly by those working in the political communication tradition (see, for example, Franklin 2004). In relation to publics,
government communication operates on a multilayered level, taking into account a very diverse group of stakeholders including other politicians, service users, minority groups, regulatory bodies etc. Political considerations, events and culture structure resources, personnel and goals. Heads of communication, for example, in government ministries, agencies and institutions may be appointed on the basis of partisan rather than professional criteria.

Turning next to a definition of government communication, a review of much of the political communication literature shows that it is often used to refer solely to top-level executive communication at the presidential or prime ministerial level (see Canel and Sanders forthcoming). Indeed the vast majority of political communication research centered on government communication has tended to examine themes such as media management and office holders’ rhetoric exclusively in relation to senior national government. But government communication can also be used to refer to communication undertaken by executive institutions at regional and local levels. Those few studies examining government communication at this level are almost exclusively found in the public relations literature (see, for example, Vos 2009). In order to capture the full range of government communication possibilities, our working definition of it is:

the role, practice, aims and achievements of communication as it takes place in and on behalf of public institution(s) whose primary end is executive in the service of a political rationale, and that are constituted on the basis of the people’s indirect or direct consent and charged to enact their will.

Our research will focus on government communication at the local or municipality level in Spain. The Local Council (Ayuntamiento) is popularly elected and seats are allocated by proportional representation. The members of this Council elect the mayor who appoints an executive committee, leaving the plenary as a debating and checking body, and thus reproducing the system of relationships between government and Parliament (Canel, 1994). While in most Local Councils every member of the executive (city councillor) appoints a press officer, in the case of Madrid it is the mayoral office that appoints members for a press office which works both (and mainly) for the mayor and for the members of the executive committee.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Using a mixed methods design, the research project reported in its early stages here examines qualitative and quantitative data to explore the following research questions:

RQ1. How are the communication functions of Madrid’s Local Council organized?
RQ2 What is the evaluation of Madrid’s citizens of their own city (internal stakeholders)?
RQ3 What are other Spanish citizens’ evaluation of Madrid?
RQ4 How can we establish the linkage between the organization of local government communication and citizens’ perceptions of municipal performance?

These broad research questions are directed to bringing together and probing data sets in order later to develop more precise hypotheses.

As we explain below, responding to question one, required first the development of a model to examine the communication functions of a political public sector organization in order to generate relevant quantitative and qualitative data. This provides the basis for developing an interview schedule to carry out in-depth interviews with key informants and the collection of relevant documentation and data regarding communication functions, resources, policies, strategies and processes. The next stage of the research involves the piloting of this model in the Local Council of Madrid and its subsequent refinement and employment for the analysis of a sample of the remaining 77 cities included in the project.

Complementing and running alongside this research, we also interrogate the public opinion and performance data collected in the second wave (2009) of data collection concerning assessments of Spanish city reputations. This stage of the research involves the results of a large-N survey carried out in 2009 of 9,000 people from the 78 largest Spanish cities of their perceptions of public authorities and their policy performance. We use the data referring to evaluations of Madrid and comparative data referring to other major Spanish cities. These data are examined alongside measures recording the hard facts of delivery of public policies together with the use of other data sources for information about environment, housing, safety, mobility, cultural services, social services, quality of life and infrastructures in Spain’s major cities. These data have been used to construct reputation rankings (see www.merco.info) that rest on the assumption that reputation is more closely related to the result of organizational behavior (see Villafañe, 2004) rather than purely perceptual (what stakeholders think about the organization). According to this view, an organization’s reputation cannot only be measured through perceptions, but also verified by hard facts and reality checks. This important theoretical question will be explored by examining data in reference to Madrid to explore, for example, whether citizens are likely to rate highly their city even when its services are poor or whether positive real life indicators relate to a positive rating in the citizens’ ranking of their city.

How are Madrid and its local council, perceived? A very basic initial analysis of data shows that internal stakeholders rate Madrid differently from external stakeholders. Madrid was evaluated in top place by MercoCiudad’s global ranking of reputation based on public opinion evaluation, expert views and performance indicators. Madrid was also globally considered to be the best city in which to study, work, do business and have fun. These evaluations were at variance, however, with the views of the city’s own citizens. When asked questions such as ‘How would you globally evaluate your city? Or ‘If you could choose any city in Spain to live in, how likely is it that you choose the one you live in now?’, Madrid was outside the top ten places.

What do these data say about a possible gap between internal stakeholders and external stakeholders? What do these data say about a possible gap between what the organization (the local council) perceives of itself (the organizational identity), how it communicates its identity (organizational image) and how it is perceived by stakeholders? What does this
mean about a gap between how Madrid performs and how Madrid is perceived? Data show that citizens are prone to attribute responsibility for different problems to local council authorities, even when powers are shared with other authorities (like the central government and the regional government). But finding responses to these questions requires a thorough examination of the communication office, as we propose in the next section.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Developing a model for the analysis of government communication functions

We rooted our development of a model for examining government communication functions first in an examination of political communication literature. Our review found that the discussion here was mainly founded on normative debates about the impact of ‘professionalization’ on political communication in general and government communication in particular. Originally framed as an Americanization hypothesis, the adoption and development of a set of practices and attitudes collectively known as ‘professionalization’ have often been considered by political communication scholars as driven by developments in US political communication (see, for example, Negrine, 2008). Scholars are now more likely to ascribe these developments to ‘modernization’, the view that professionalization results from processes of social differentiation and changes in media systems and technology (Holtz-Bacha 2004). Within political communication, the professionalization thesis can be summarized as follows: political actors have been forced to adopt and develop complex communication practices in order to deal with the exacting demands of the contemporary news environment. According to many political communication scholars, professionalization has, however, been detrimental to policy making and to the substance of politics leading to the de-politicization of politics and the loss of ideological identity. In this scenario image and communication skills become key; political consultants assume more importance than politicians and politics becomes a strategic game that in part is responsible for the undermining of citizens’ trust in political institutions (see Canel, 2007 and Sanders, 2009 for an overview of these trends). From the political communication perspective, ‘professionalization’ has often been cast in a negative role (Hamelink, 2007), although not all researchers take this view (see, for example, McNair, 2007 and Negrine, 2008).

What is missing both from the political communication literature is a fully worked out understanding of what communication professionalism means. For this we turned to the public relations literature. Here we found that researchers have sought to operationalize indicators of professionalism in government communication. Gregory (2006) provides a framework for British government communicators designed to drive up performance and improve the consistency of the communications function across government. The framework suggests that effective research, planning, implementation, evaluation and management processes provide the platform for effective communication activity that should be underpinned by the acquisition of the appropriate skills and competencies. A Dutch research team (Vos 2006; see also Vos and Westerhoudt 2008), inspired by the quality management literature, have designed an instrument to assess government communication in relation to issues such as required competencies, the priority given to communication, transparency and accessibility. These studies provide pointers for ways in which researchers can explore in measurable terms what is meant by a professional government communication and information service, a necessary first step in understanding the efficacy, efficiency and quality of government communication.

For these reasons, we have built on this public relations work in order to develop a framework and set of indicators for assessing communication functions. The development of this model finds its theoretical rationale in the strategic planning and quality management literature (see Cutlipp et al. 2000; Gregory 2006; Vos 2006). The strategic planning and quality management approaches nicely complement each other. The first underlines the importance of coherent and systematic thinking about and implementation of communication functions and objectives. As Gregory explains (2006), this resulted in the case of UK government communication in the adoption of a process approach in which five process headings were established to provide the framework for training and development. Actions and competencies linked to information gathering and analysis, planning, implementation, evaluation and management were established as the basic framework for assessing training and development needs for government communicators.

There are a range of models available from the quality management literature but a common approach is to survey three basic aspects of any organization namely, structure, processes and results. Structure is the set of conditions in which an activity takes place; processes are the set of ordered actions oriented towards a specific outcome and results are the outcomes or consequences of processes. Drawing on the experience of quality implementation in other institutional settings (one member of the research team is quality director for a leading Spanish hospital), we developed a model for analyzing government communication (see appendix 1) that could serve as our route map for identifying the relevant data required from interviews and documentation in the pilot study of Madrid’s town hall. In addition, as we refined the model in team discussions, we drew upon Vos’ (2009: 365-66) work in clarifying the three functions of government communication as:

- Corporate communication. The communication of the public institution as a whole (in our case the Madrid mayoral office).
- Policy communication. Communication related to public policies regarding, for example, the environment, education etc.
- Organization-related communication. Communication related to internal processes.

The communication model we have developed will be used to analyze communication in each of these areas and we hope it will make a useful contribution to the analysis and evaluation of government communication functions.

2 The strategic planning approach was used in the establishment of a training and development framework for UK government communicators known as EVOLVE (see Gregory, 2006) and Dutch researchers have formulated instruments inspired by Kaplan and Norton’s “balanced scorecard” or the European Foundation for Quality Control to “help government organizations to communicate more effectively with their citizens (Vos, 2006: 250).
CONCLUSIONS

Clearly this research is at an early stage in which our initial tasks have been in the first place to develop an appropriate instrument and theoretical approach to examine government communication functions. In second place, we have begun to probe data to see how we may construct future hypotheses to test the relationship between reputation and government strategic communication. In particular, we hope to examine whether there are linkages between policy and communication priorities and citizens’ evaluations of the city as external and internal stakeholders.

As Walker puts it (2010: 369), key questions for corporate reputation research are ‘reputation for what and according to whom?’ This is true too for public sector reputation. In this paper we have set out what Spanish citizens and what Madrid’s own citizens think about their city in global terms and in respect to specific issues as well as the model by which we will examine the operation of the Local Council’s communication functions. The next stage of our research will be to pilot the communication model and, through the results obtained, together with data related to city policy budgets, develop further our understanding of how public reputation is constructed.

REFERENCES


An Introduction to Political Communication

McNair, B.

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<td>Buildings and installations</td>
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<td>Information gathering Reuniones formales Existen bases de datos, registros de documentos, etc</td>
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<td>Information analysis</td>
<td>Se analiza la información para la toma de decisiones o para realizar recomendaciones</td>
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<tr>
<td>Coordinación y planificación</td>
<td>Se fomenta el trabajo en equipo intra e interdepartamental y la visión sistémica dentro del Ayuntamiento. Hay actividades orientadas a tal fin: informativas, de coordinación, etc. Existe un plan de comunicación interna que se revisa y actualiza periódicamente</td>
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<td>Surveys, content analysis Sistemas para identificar las necesidades y expectativas de los stakeholders</td>
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<td>Comunicación de la misión, visión, objetivos y prioridades a los stakeholders</td>
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<td>Risk and crisis</td>
<td>Planes de crisis Planes de asesoramiento de riesgo</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transparency</td>
<td>Acciones dirigidas a permitir acceso a la información (p.ej. la atención a peticiones de información de los ciudadanos)</td>
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The Prime Minister in front of The Press
The Development of Government Press Conferences in Sweden

by Larsåke Larsson

INTRODUCTION

Press conferences are a significant part of governmental public relations. These sessions can reasonably be regarded as the most standardized form of group contacts a government has with the media. Historically press conferences have been the almost exclusive form of governmental-press relations, alongside the circulating of press releases.

This phenomenon has long been examined by Martha Kumar in her ongoing and extensive studies of US presidential conferences. Her research serves as a foundation and model for studies of press conferences at the office of national political leaders.

This study, part of a broader research project about Swedish government press contacts and conferences1, presents the historic development of these conferences in terms of the use and form of such sessions during the last twenty years at the Prime Minister’s Office. The study will compare the four governmental periods (two conservative-led center-right, and two social democratic) and their prime ministers’ press relations.

The study aims to find out what importance these conferences do have for the government in their communication process. Questions for the study are: What development and what changes can be identified during the period? What differences can be noted between the four governmental terms of office and the four prime ministers? What are the subjects/topics of the conferences? What forms did the sessions take and can they be classified? To what degree are joint conferences held together with foreign statesmen?

1 Project Press Conferences as a Public Arena; Örebro University, funded by the Swedish Research Council.
HISTORY

Press conferences were rare events for the Swedish prime minister in the 1940s, and there is no evidence of any such sessions having taken place earlier. Tage Erlander, who took office in 1946 and stayed at the post for twenty-three years, initially held some few press conferences, and subsequently at most ten conferences per year, most of which were with a very limited body of invited chief political editors, often only from newspapers that labeled themselves social democratic, as he did himself. His conferences had the character of briefings, or when meeting his “own” editors, could also have a conversational and deliberate character.

At this time the press had direct contacts with the prime minister. In 1953, Erlander recruited a young man to perform all kinds of secretarial duties, among them handling press contacts – a person who later was to become much more well known: Olof Palme. Ten years later the first press secretary was appointed, after which (1963) the ministry started holding “normal” press conferences, i.e. press meetings for news and political reporters. At the beginning, two such “common” press conferences were held per year, with all department ministers present. These broad conferences did not work well from either the arranger’s or the media’s perspective and were rather soon replaced by meetings with the press on specific questions with a specific minister, usually the prime minister (Björk 2008).

When Olof Palme became prime minister 1969, the press contacts changed considerably in form and frequency, both the organized group contacts as well as the mere individual ones. Palme was press minded – interested in having press contacts and enjoying them, both in the sense of providing informing and speaking to journalists and playfully interacting with them. He steadily, and on an almost daily basis met with journalists; in a sense he lived with the press. In the later period of his career, group contacts in the form of press conferences increased as the demands from journalists for individual interviews became more and more evident (Björk 2008).

Since the beginning of the 1970s the Prime Minister’s Office has regularly arranged meetings with the press on current issues and on the agenda of the government.

The Social Democratic Party lost the general election in 1976, making way for a non-socialist government led by a Center Party prime minister (Torbjörn Fälldin). Compared to the previous term, fewer press sessions with an international agenda were arranged, due to his focus on domestic politics. In the 1982 election a new political shift occurred, reinstating Palme as prime minister, a post he retained until he was murdered in 1986. Ingvar Carlsson, another of “Erlander’s boys,” was then elected the new leader of the Social Democratic Party and prime minister. Five years later he and his party again lost the election, being replaced by a conservative-led centre-right government headed by Carl Bildt. The present study starts at this moment.

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

LITERATURE REVIEW

The relationship between the media and government actors and officials is described and analyzed in a number of studies, both in general and concerning the forms and methods of this relationship. Government press conferences per se have, however, been studied in a rather limited way. In some British journalism studies from the 1970s, government press conferences are briefly depicted. Tunstall (1971) found that Whitehall journalists spend nine percent of their time at “communal meetings (e.g. press conf.)” while face-to-face interviews with politicians and officials were the most prevalent form of contacts. Half of the interviewed correspondents spent 1-4 hours a week at press conferences while the rest spent 5-9 hours a week, or in some cases even more, at those sessions. Briefings, however, were a more frequent format than press conferences; such sessions were arranged every weekday at 10 Downing Street in the morning and Whitehall in the afternoon, the morning meetings sometimes being led by the prime minister himself, but mostly by a press secretary (Tunstall 1970; Cockereill et.al. 1984).

Government press conferences on US soil, in the dense of presidential press conferences, are the subject of intense and ongoing study by Martha Kumar. Through the years press conferences have been used to highly varying degrees by US presidents. Roosevelt gave on average 84 conferences per year, while Nixon and Reagan gave 6-7 per year, and later on Clinton and G.W. Bush held 24-25 press conferences per year (Kumar 2007).

Three phases can be identified in the relationship between the president and the press, according to Grossman and Kumar (1979): alliance, competition, and detachment. During the alliance phase there exists a silent partnership in which the media look for interesting stories and personalities around the new administration and in which the president also easily dominate the agenda. The second phase, in full swing by the end of the first year, has a more adversarial style with manipulations from both sides, the reporters looking for problems, controversies and conflicts, and the chief executive attempting to steer the media and to integrate the reporters in various tactical ways. Still there is a strong element of cooperation. In the third period, often brought on when re-election is announced, the relationship is managed in a more controlled and structured manner with the aim of projecting an image and achieving massive exposure for the president. There is also a tendency to delegate media relations to “surrogates” (Grossman & Kumar 1979).

Graber agreed with this phase map, also stating that during the later phases, in an attempt to avoid adverse publicity for the president, press relations are delegated from top officials to low-level officials (Graber 1984).
The conferences have changed in other ways as well. One such development can be seen in the fact that alongside the solo conferences that used to be the norm, joint conferences are also being arranged, mostly together with foreign leaders. Another change is that presidents choose to hold short question-and-answer sessions with a smaller pool of journalists instead of traditional conferences with a range of questions from a large body of reporters. The reason for these changes has been to reduce the potential negative impact of these events if the presidents stands alone confronted by many questions of a problematic nature (Kumar 2007).

The use of press conferences and the forms they take differ from president to president. The phenomenon should be seen from an individual president-centered perspective rather than a presidency-centered perspective devoid of political and other contextual factors, Eshbaugh-Soha (2003) claims. Some presidents favor press conferences, as an instrument to express policy, while others avoid them, as they dislike the media or prefer other means of communicating (e.g. Kennedy in the first case and Nixon and Ford in the other). Carolyn Smith, defining the press conference as “a semi-institutional, quasi-spontaneous, inherently adversarial public encounter,” argues in line with this that the exchanges between the presidents and the press are based on a fundamentally adversarial relationship. The level of conflict has, not surprisingly, differed between presidents over the years, and has also changed during the same presidency, with Reagan as one example (Smith 1990).

In the Swedish case, micro studies within our research project indicate a more ministerial-centered than minister-centered perspective. These micro studies also show a less adversarial relationship than is found in the US. All the same, over the years Swedish prime ministers have demonstrated different levels of interest in and approval of press relations. For instance Palme, as already described, enjoyed having contact with the press, while his political opponent, and the only one to have defeated him in an election, Fälldin, showed a more restrained manner. Among the four prime ministers in the present study we are also able to identify varying degrees of interaction with the press. The Swedish governmental press conferences always are announced as having a special theme or topic; there are no general sessions for all types of questions.

**FINDINGS**

The body of information for this study consists of records of press conferences 1993-2006, registered at the government archive and later archived at the Swedish National Archive, plus web lists of press releases including invitations to all press conferences 2007-2009. The records/web lists contain data about dates, places, topics, and participants. This data has been transferred and coded (SPSS) into the following variables: year, ministry, subject, type of conference, type of participants, name(s). The subject variable contains 50 items, collapsed to 15 sector items (e.g. foreign relations, economy, social affairs, education). A problem has been that the topic is not being announced in a number of press conference invitations.

**PRESS CONFERENCES 1993-2009**

The Swedish government arranged in total (by/at all ministries) 2740 press conferences during the period 1993-20093. At the Prime Minister’s Office (or prime ministry), the object of this study, 380 press conferences were arranged in this period, yielding an average of 22 conferences per year4. The number and division of the conferences is described in Table 1.

**Table 1. Press conferences at the Prime Minister’s Office 1993-2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Conferences</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1993</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>1994</td>
<td>15</td>
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<td>1995</td>
<td>20</td>
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<td>1996</td>
<td>18</td>
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<td>1997</td>
<td>22</td>
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<td>1998</td>
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<td>2004</td>
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<td>2005</td>
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<td>2006</td>
<td>36</td>
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<td>2007</td>
<td>38</td>
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<td>2008</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>42</td>
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</table>

The frequency of press conferences at Rosenbad, where the Prime Minister’s Office is located, varies from 8 to 45 conferences per year. Two patterns appear in the distribution of sessions. Two particular years, 2001 and 2009, had a much higher frequency of conferences than the other years. The reason can be found in the fact that during these years (for half a year each time) Sweden held the chairmanship in the EU, resulting in a number of conferences and briefings in connection with EU events and meetings with EU leaders in Stockholm. The other pattern is the dip in the number of press conferences in the middle of governmental terms, which can be noticed especially in 1997 and 2004.

Sweden has experienced four elections in the period being studied. There is reason to believe that governments (those leaving as well as those taking the office) give more press conferences than normal in election years. This is the case in 1994 and to some extent 2002, but not in the other election years.

The number of press conferences differs between governments and governmental terms. In the first period, the center-right government gave close to two conferences a month. In

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3 The Swedish Government Offices are located next to the Prime Minister’s Office, and comprise 12 departments/ministries (e.g. the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Health and Social Affairs, Ministry of Agriculture) though they formally make up one integrated institution (2010) together with the prime ministry.

4 Press conferences at the Prime Ministry (Rosenbad), not sessions with the press in other places, e.g. during ministers’ travels in Sweden or visiting the EU (Brussels, Strasbourg).
the following three terms with social democratic governments the interest in press meetings
was lower. In the last period the center-right government has arranged more than two
sessions per month. Table 2 presents the number of conferences per month.

**Table 2. Press conferences per government term and month**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Period</th>
<th>Government</th>
<th>Conf./month</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1991-1994</td>
<td>Conservative-centre</td>
<td>1.95</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1994-2006</td>
<td>Social democratic</td>
<td>1.7 (1.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-2009</td>
<td>Conservative-centre</td>
<td>2.4 (2.0)</td>
</tr>
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More precisely, the first centre-right government held 1.9 press conferences per month
on average, and the current one has held 2.4 conferences per month, while the social
democratic governments in the intervening period stand for 1.7 conferences per month. If
the years when Sweden has chaired the EU are excluded (2001 and 2009), we find that the
Social Democrats held 1.5 conferences per month while the last and current center-right
government has held 2.0 conferences on average per month. A tendency of having more
press relations can thus be seen for center-right governments.

What do the press conferences held by the Prime Minister’s Office deal with? What topics
are brought up at these sessions? Table 3 presents a breakdown of the 380 conferences:

**Table 3. Press conference main topics**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign affairs/relations</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU-questions</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domestic politic, economy</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Industry incl. communications</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental questions</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Defense</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education/social questions</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other areas/topics</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subject not noted</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>380</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

5 Calculated for the period 1993-1994.

Two thirds of the total number of conferences are about foreign policy and EU-topics.
Domestic political and economic issues, including administrative items (e.g. changes of
government agencies and appointments of high officials) have been the topic of one out of
six conferences. Except for some twenty industrial, infrastructural and environmental cases
central government hardly ever calls the press for sectoral matters. Accordingly, very few
sessions at the prime ministry deal with educational, social, and cultural questions; these are
mostly matters for the responsible government departments and their ministers. The category
of “Other areas/topics” includes, above all, migration and gender/equality questions, but also
IT/telecom questions. Seventy press conferences had two or more subjects on the agenda;
mostly combinations with EU affairs and environmental/global-warming questions.

Most of the sessions with a foreign agenda are so called joint conferences (cf. Marta Kumar
2007), i.e. are held together with a visiting foreign president/prime minister or FN/EU-leader
e etc., or in some cases also a foreign departmental minister.

Governmental press conferences differ in character and type – they can provide information
about decisions taken and about bills sent to parliament, they can include an official
statement on an international event, or they can be briefings on questions the government
is working on. Table 4 shows the division of types:

**Table 4. Type of press conference, Prime Minister’s Office 1993-2009**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign leader visits</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefings</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on decisions/bills</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation reports/commissions</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis issues</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government/Parliament strategy</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars at the ministry</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type not clarified</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>380</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visits by foreign leaders, most of them heads of state, regularly result in press conferences
at the Prime Minister’s Office. These sessions, joint conferences, constitute the most
frequent type. Attending press conferences with foreign dignitaries is normally a task for the
prime minister, but the foreign ministry has also arranged sessions with visiting politicians
from abroad in 45 cases (in some of these cases the guest has participated in conferences
at both ministries).
Briefings are the second most frequent type. In most cases these concern EU matters, for example giving the media information about how to handle questions in the EU machinery. Information on decisions taken (e.g. bills being sent to parliament) is mostly about overall domestic questions and the economy. Reports/commissions that are presented are also primarily about home questions. Less frequent are statements (brief reactions to important, mostly international, events), strategy declarations on how to deal with parliamentary issues, and press meetings in connection with seminars/conferences arranged by the government.

Sessions to address crises are primarily connected with major international and domestic crisis events, e.g. the Estonia shipwreck (1994), terror attacks in the US (2001) and Europe (2003-4), the murder of the Swedish foreign minister (2003), and the tsunami catastrophe (2004/05). A predominant number of the briefing occasions, as well as, not surprisingly, visits by foreign leaders occur in 2001 and 2009, the years when Sweden held the chairmanship of the EU.

A comparison with other departments/ministries shows that these ministries arrange many more conferences presenting decisions, reports, presentation and briefings; 75 percent of their conferences are of this type, compared to 30 percent at the prime ministry.

Who are the actors at the press conferences at the Prime Minister’s Office? Apart from the prime minister, other ministers, as well as secretaries and officials have hosted the sessions. The type of actors heading the conferences are illustrated in Table 5:

### Table 5. Actors at the Prime Minister’s Office press conferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actor heading the conference</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prime ministers</td>
<td>273</td>
<td>72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department ministers</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political and press secretaries</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Officials, commissioners</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others/Actor not noted</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>380</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eight out of ten press conferences at the prime ministry are headed and hosted by a minister, mostly the prime minister who has chaired the sessions in seven out of ten cases. Political and press secretaries, together with department officials and other officials, stand for most of the remaining sessions.

The four actor categories have different tasks and responsibilities in the sense that they responsible for different types of press conferences. The distribution of roles is illustrated in Table 6.

### Table 6. Actor heading the Prime Minister’s Office press conferences, arranged by type of conference, percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Actors Type</th>
<th>Prime ministers</th>
<th>Dept ministers</th>
<th>Pol./press secretaries</th>
<th>Officials</th>
<th>Others</th>
<th>Sum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Foreign leader visits</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Briefings</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation of reports</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information on decisions</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statements</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crisis issues</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gov./Parliament strategy</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminars at the ministry</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Type not specified</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>72</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The prime minister is responsible for almost all press conferences with foreign guests and he (all four prime ministers during the period studied are men) is also the one who stands for sessions dealing with information about governmental decisions and political strategy together with all prepared statements and crisis issues. Holding briefings and presenting reports are, on the other hand mostly tasks for secretaries and officials.

At many, or actually most conferences, other actors take part than the person leading the session, often probably also acting as a spokesperson. Most often it is a foreign visitor. In other cases the podium is casted together with another (departmental) minister or such a minister appears together with an official. The number of actors is presented in Table 7.

### Table 7. Number of actors at the Prime Minister’s Office press conferences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of actors</th>
<th>Freq.</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>101</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>173</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(O)*</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>380</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*For 5 sessions actor(s) not noted.
During the period studied a single actor appears at 101 sessions. For the rest of the sessions 2-5 persons/actors, in some rare cases even more, have participated. Most often, at nearly every other session, the press has met two governmental actors. At every third session other ministers besides the prime minister have participated, a common pattern for the most recent government (2006-2010), in which all four party leaders often share the stage. Up to five ministers participate in some cases (and on rare occasions several more, as when a new government is presented).

The prime minister himself has appeared alone at 63 sessions, or in 17 percent of all press conferences arranged. On 16 occasions a department minister (including the deputy prime minister) has received the role of sole governmental representative, and on 22 occasions an official has had the floor alone, in all cases to present the findings of a government commission for which he/she was responsible. When such reports are presented, ministers seldom participate.

Hence the prime minister has appeared together with one or more other actors on 210 occasions, mostly in the 154 cases of hosting a foreign visitor, as we have seen above. At such joint press conferences, more then one foreign guest has participated in 25 cases. Departmental ministers have participated in a total of 100 sessions and officials in 86 sessions.

A comparison with press conferences at the other (departmental) ministries shows that departmental ministers participate to a lesser degree (57 percent) than the prime minister at the sessions at the prime ministry, while officials participate to a higher degree (32 percent) compared with the ones at Rosenbad, mostly when presenting reports and the findings of government commissions.

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

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

In Sweden the Prime Minister’s Office conducted 380 press conferences during the period 1993-2009, representing 14 percent of all government (all ministries) press conferences during this period. Significant differences can be noted over the years, with rather few sessions being arranged in the “middle” years (years in the middle of the governmental terms), while up to 45 sessions are arranged in the years when the Swedish prime minister holds the EU chairmanship.

One might expect that election years would result in more press meetings than normal, as incumbent governments seek publicity ahead of the election. However, there is no consistent evidence for this presumption; it occurred in only two of the election years during the period studied (1994 and 2002, but not 1998 and 2006).

Government press conferences in Stockholm always are arranged to deal with a specific theme and the announcement takes up a defined question; there are no general sessions where all kinds of questions may be discussed (apart from single questions from individual reporters after an assembled session).

Concerning the agenda for the conferences, foreign affairs, together with EU matters, are highly predominant; two thirds of all sessions deal with these themes. When foreign/state and UN/EU leaders visit the country, the prime minister hosts sessions, not the foreign minister (though he participates at several of these sessions). Domestic questions including the economy and defense, stand for one fifth of the sessions. Prime ministers only give press meetings when such questions are especially important, e.g. when a new government announces the implementation of central campaign promises concerning things like taxation or basic reforms of the social security system. Questions connected with more specialized sectors, for instance, in the most recent election, educational changes, are seldom on the central agenda; they are matters for the different departmental ministries and their press conferences. Defense questions are very rare at sessions hosted by the Prime Minister’s Office (even at the defence ministry), a significant difference from the situation for American presidents in particular.

The Swedish government conferences are of several types. Apart from those held with foreign visitors, one in five sessions can be characterized as “fact” giving (for instance providing information about decisions and bills, reading statements and presenting reports) and one in five can be characterized as dealing with “ongoing” questions (like briefings and declarations on how to deal with issues in parliament). Briefings are often conducted by political or press secretaries as is the custom in 10 Downing Street (cf. Cockerell et.al. 1984); however daily briefings about the prime minister’s schedule do not take place at Rosenbad where the prime minister resides.

A comparison with Kumar’s extensive studies of US presidential press conferences shows similarities in frequency but also in some format aspects (Kumar 2005; 2007). During the period 1993-2007, president Clinton and president G.W. Bush gave 344 conferences, on average 24 and 25 conferences per year respectively, close to the Swedish average of 22 sessions per year (in the same period the Swedish prime ministry held 315 conferences to which 66 sessions can be added for 2008-09).

Another similarity is the design of holding joint conferences together with visiting leading top politicians. These are, however, more frequent in the US. While 72 percent of the US sessions are joint sessions, the corresponding figure in the Swedish case is just under 40 percent. Kumar claims that such sessions should be seen as a strategy to reduce the president’s vulnerability at his meetings with the press and soften the aggressive climate.
The same can hardly be said for Sweden, where the reason for joint sessions is the demand to inform the press when foreign leaders are visiting the country. These sessions can, however, be expected to have a less critical and questioning character than other sessions, like the situation in the US (cf. Banning & Billingsley 2007).

A difference between the two countries is that in Sweden others than the head of the state hold press conferences at the Prime Minister’s Office. Other (department) ministers, and more often officials, are responsible for more than one fifth of the conferences, mostly as presenters of governmental reports and inquiries, occasions when the prime minister normally chooses not to participate.

The last conservative led center-right government has shown a steadily increasing number of press conferences since its entrance in 2006, with a peak in 2009 while holding the chairmanship in the EU. The question is whether this trend will continue in 2010 or if there will be a decline, as previously after the EU chairmanship. The answer is clear: The old pattern with an EU peak thus stands. As for the first part of the year, the Swedish government has only held five sessions, two of which included all four party leaders and can be seen as the start of the campaign for the election to be held in early autumn 2010.

The present study gives new insights into the way governments carry out their press meetings, and how the Swedish Prime Minister’s Office’s sessions partly differ from those of other countries being studied.

A central theme in political communication research is the growing medialization or mediazation of politics (see e.g. Bennett & Entman 2001; Davis 2007; Meyer 2002). This study has not found any quantitative increase in medialization in recent decades – the frequency of press conferences has not increased during the period – but there are other indications that the government have become more medialized in its communication. The question remains whether the government nowadays prefers and focuses on other means of meeting and engaging the press.

REFERENCES


New Public Diplomacy Practices in Public Relations
An Analysis of The Shift Away from the Government Model to a Non-Governmental Organization Model

by Karen Dwek and Toni Muzi Falconi

ABSTRACT

This paper researches new practices of public diplomacy by examining the current scope of public diplomacy functions and analyzing the shift from traditional government-level public diplomacy toward a non-governmental public diplomacy. The overall objective is to comprehend the practical aspects of how public diplomacy is undertaken by non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and determines whether their work is currently to be defined as public affairs or whether, if and when in partnership with governments, they also engage in public diplomacy to influence the policy decisions of other governments. This work focuses on analyzing the work of three non-profit, non-governmental organizations, namely the Open Society Institute & Soros Foundation Network, Human Rights Watch, and the European Civic Movement for Patients’ Right. The research showed that public diplomacy primarily consists of efforts made by a nation’s embassies and consulates around the world that enhance and protect the reputation of the nation in foreign countries and foreign publics. Non-governmental organizations’ field of practice lies principally in the realm of public affairs. However, NGOs – and private corporations – often become involved in governmental public diplomacy activities in two circumstances: first, governments frequently solicit NGOs’ involvement in their public diplomacy programs to increase the credibility and outreach of their messages; and second, NGOs seek to form partnerships with governments to achieve their goals, particularly in influencing foreign public policies.
INTRODUCTION

Traditional diplomacy has changed over the last decades. The actors who practice public diplomacy and the manner in which they conduct it has evolved. Governments are being joined by inter-governmental and non-governmental organizations, which are increasingly becoming transnational and sub-state actors, as they can influence international relations and foreign policies, along with political leaders. At the same time, the growth of large international institutions and powerful advocacy groups, heightened public awareness and participation in foreign affairs, media sophistication, and the establishment of new democracies around the world has transformed the way public diplomacy and public relations are conducted (Seitel 2007, p. 34-35). As the world becomes globally integrated and new communication technologies continue to advance, governments as well as organizations are confronted with a greater need to include, in addition to their own constituencies, foreign publics as part of their stakeholders.

The prominent role played by non-governmental organizations in advancing the Ottawa Process (1996)1 and in creating the International Criminal Court (1998) was a significant departure from the way that international relations had been conducted for much of the twentieth century. Governments were then the primary actors engaging in public diplomacy, which is defined as the way governments engage with foreign publics to defend and promote the image and policies of their countries (Tuch, 1990). In contrast, private corporations and non-governmental organizations primarily engage in international public affairs activities, which refer to the relationships built with foreign publics aimed at influencing their countries' policies. Both public diplomacy and public affairs are part of public relations efforts, as they each seek to create, develop and maintain relationships between the organizations and their stakeholders. Governments and non-governmental actors alike strive to advance their agendas through different types of public relations campaigns, the former through public diplomacy and the latter through public affairs.

In this light, international relations are experiencing a shift from traditional government-level public diplomacy toward a non-governmental public diplomacy. For a number of years, scholars as well as practitioners have defined and described public diplomacy as specific governmental public relations. However, public diplomacy is increasingly less state-centric and scholars seek to better understand and include the significant contribution of non-state actors—organizations, both private and non-profit—in diplomatic efforts and negotiations, as these are increasingly recognized for playing a valuable role in affecting the attitudes and opinions of foreign publics. Within this perspective, non-governmental actors would not only be practicing public affairs activities, but can also become essential public diplomacy contributors when they work as partners with governments engaged in public diplomacy efforts. When non-state actors work independently from governments in trying to influence foreign policies and representing foreign publics, they are instead clearly engaged in public affairs activities.

This paper reviews how non-state actors and governments practice public relations. It examines the work of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and determines whether their work is currently to be defined as public affairs or whether, if and when in partnership with governments, they also engage in public diplomacy to influence the policy decisions of other governments. The analysis contributes to the re-definition of concepts, areas of practices, and actors in public diplomacy. The overall objective will be to comprehend the practical aspects of how public diplomacy is undertaken by NGOs, while building relationships with their foreign stakeholders.

RESEARCH AND METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on analyzing the work of the Open Society Institute & Soros Foundation Network and their contribution to help former Soviet Union countries transition from communism to democracy, as well as Human Rights Watch. In addition to evaluating their reports, primary research through semi-conducted in-depth interviews was conducted with Carroll Bogert, Associate Director, Human Rights Watch, Peggy Hicks, Global Advocacy Director, Human Rights Watch, Jonas Rolett, Regional Director for Southern Central and Eastern Europe, Open Society Institute & Soros Foundation, Washington, D.C., Adrien Ionescu, Program Director, Local Government and Public Service Initiative (LGI), Open Society Institute & Soros Foundation, Budapest, H.E. Ambassador Simona Micleușcu, Ambassador of Romania to the United Nations and Former Director General of Public Diplomacy, at the Romanian Foreign Ministry, as well as Public Diplomacy Professor and Giovanni Mora, political sociologist, Founder of the European Civic Movement for Patients’ Rights and of the European policy program ‘Active Citizenship Network’, President of Fondaca, and Professor at the Faculty of Political Sciences of Macerata University. By interviewing public diplomacy scholars, as well as governmental and non-governmental public diplomacy practitioners, the study offers relevant insight for evaluating new public diplomacy practices.

THEORIES & CONCEPTS

Public Diplomacy as a Governmental Practice

The term ‘diplomacy’ originally referred to the exchange of formal communication between governments, with the goal of peacefully solving international divergences while respecting mutual national interests. Diplomacy, or the practice of international relations by sovereign states, was exclusively the mission of governments’ accredited representatives. In 1966, Deutsch called it the “art of conducting negotiations between governments” (p. 81). From a government’s perspective, public diplomacy, different from diplomacy, is instead described as “the effort to understand, inform and influence foreign publics in support of foreign policy objectives.”

Over the years, the drastic evolution of means of communication has changed the way every entity, including governments, communicates. State leaders began to understand the mutual beneficial need to build relationships with publics from other...
nations. They were progressively obliged to communicate not only with their counterparts and their own national citizens, but also with other non-national groups of publics, within and beyond their own borders. For example, Tuch (1990) states that public diplomacy is a government’s process of communicating with foreign publics in an attempt to bring about understanding for its nation’s ideas and ideals, its institutions and cultures, and its national goals and current policy.

**Public Diplomacy as a Public Relations Practice**

Public diplomacy needs be understood as part of the broader public relations discipline. As stated by Signitzer and Coombs, public relations and public diplomacy share some “conceptual convergences”, and “seek similar objectives and use similar tools” (1992:137). The scholars explain: “While public relations theory may well be suited to explain and to predict the communication behavior of ‘ordinary’ organizations in both the profit and non-profit fields, public diplomacy theories, for now, are better suited to the understanding of the relationship between a nation-state and its foreign publics” (1992:138). Governments practice public diplomacy with foreign publics with the aim of exchanging information, reducing stereotypes and prejudices, creating sympathy for their own foreign policy and practice public diplomacy with foreign publics with the aim of exchanging information, reducing stereotypes and prejudices, creating sympathy for their own foreign policy and society model, reducing misconceptions, self-portrayal, and image-building. Public relations share these same objectives of providing information, correcting misconceptions, and constructing image and perceptions. Both countries and organizations, according to this view, seek to influence their publics through various public relations methods, but they have different means for achieving their goals.

**Governmental Public Diplomacy’s Constraints**

If a government launches a public diplomacy program in order to explain and defend its policies to foreign audiences, the fact that it is promoting its own decisions suggests the subjectivity of its communication. In consequence, its credibility and legitimacy are at stake, and the effectiveness of its messages affected. This criticism of governmental public diplomacy has contributed to the exponential growth of other public diplomacy actors and practitioners. As countries are constantly accused of conducting political propaganda with the premeditated intention of influencing public opinion in a biased way, non-governmental organizations and other non-states actors have emerged to assume the role of representing the international civil society’s interests, relatively unconstrained by national interests.

**A ‘New Public Diplomacy’ Approach**

Scholars have advanced the concept of “new public diplomacy” to enlarge the traditional notion of public diplomacy by governments and inserts the active role of non-state actors. This approach states that public diplomacy now includes the activity of public, private and social organizations – both for-profit and not-for-profit – which seek to create, govern, and monitor effective relationships with foreign publics, whether in other countries, in their respective countries or with migrant communities in their country. Non-state actors now have now become one of the primary players in international relations along with governments and international organizations by contributing to shaping public policies internationally, influencing foreign public opinion and raising global awareness of social, political, economic, human rights and legal issues in countries around the world. Exploring the interaction of non-governmental public diplomacy in the field of international public affairs, Saner (2005) has elaborated upon the concept of Development Diplomacy, which examines non-governmental actors’ attempts to influence development policy-making at national, regional, and intergovernmental levels by organizations mandated to make these institutions’ development policies conform to their own developmental agenda. In most cases, international actors operate in the international arena simultaneously in order to achieve an agenda, which is common to governments, public and private organizations and civil society. However, though actors try to work together, each one is also advancing its own individual interests, values and ideas, which may conflict with those of its international partners. Within this perspective, Valencia (2005) states that in a Multistakeholder Diplomacy platform, non-governmental organizations play an important role in facilitating communication between the civil society, governments, and international organizations, while providing accountability and transparency to the decision-making process. As she states, “The strength of non-states actors lies in working alliance and in co-ordination of their efforts”.

**NGO Activism in International Affairs**

Scholars discuss how NGOs are successful in driving their causes to the top of diplomatic agendas. NGO diplomacy and activism has been instrumental in democratizing inter-governmental decision-making, influencing national policy-making processes, and building mutual understanding and relationships with foreign publics. NGOs have become increasingly active and effective in practicing public diplomacy in order to bring their agenda and concerns to diplomatic leaders and actors in international affairs. Scholars emphasize that by organizing awareness campaigns, lobbying across national boundaries, monitoring national public policies, and publishing policies analysis, NGO diplomacy “has become an international experiment in democratizing inter-governmental decision making” by “advancing their agendas and disseminating their messages in international affairs (Zhang and Swartz, 2009). In order to assess NGO impact during negotiations, Betsill and Corell prepared a table, reproduced below, which provides qualitative results on the level of NGO influence. The authors identified three types of NGO influence- indicators on the negotiating process: issue framing, agenda setting, and key actors positioning. Issue Framing refers to the way NGOs conceptualize an environmental problem during negotiations. Agenda Setting suggests that NGO activities bring a particular problem to the “attention of the international community” before and during the ongoing policy process. Finally, Key Actors Positioning indicates that NGO diplomats have an influence in shaping the position of key states during negotiations.

**Symmetrical Public Relations Communications**

This paper should be understood in light of the Grunig & Hunt public relations models. As many communication scholars and practitioners assert, typical communication goals are to inform, to persuade, to motivate and to build mutual understanding with relevant publics. In their 1984 work “Managing Public Relations”, James E. Grunig and Todd Hunt determined four models of public relations: the press agenty/publicity model, the two-way asymmetric model, the public-information model, and the two-way symmetric model. In

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chapter two of their book, the authors explain that the two-way symmetric model is the preferred model as it stipulates that a two-way communications platform allows public and corporate organizations to effectively create, develop and consolidate their relationships with foreign stakeholder publics. The symmetric model’s characteristics, namely the mutual understanding and two-way balanced effects, allow the organization to maintain its license to operate with its public.

CURRENT LITERATURE LIMITATIONS

A large number of studies have been dedicated to analyzing the public relations and public diplomacy efforts of various countries’ foreign ministries. Regarding the recent shift from traditional to non-governmental public diplomacy, scholars are increasingly acknowledging the role of non-governmental actors in the field of public diplomacy and have elaborated theories of NGO diplomacy. However, existing studies and research in public diplomacy encounter numerous weaknesses. Extensive theoretical and historical research has been conducted, but little empirical knowledge has been developed. Current analysis contributed to re-defining concepts, areas of practices, and actors in public diplomacy, but little attention has been devoted to gaining an empirical understanding of how these new international actors, such as private and public organizations, concretely implement public diplomacy programs. Studies have focused on governments’ collaboration with NGOs, but without emphasizing or describing the NGOs working process.

ANALYSIS

The Perspective of a Government Representative

Miculescu describes her current position at the Romanian Mission at the United Nations as the ‘purest’ form of diplomacy. Clarifying her function as diplomat, Miculescu explains that she practices traditional diplomacy in the sense that she seeks to “promote, persuade, and influence a government of another country.” She presumes that the “best example” of traditional diplomacy is the one practiced within the walls of the United Nations: states’ representatives use traditional multilateral diplomacy in order to influence the opinion of the other 191 ambassadors who sit at the U.N. According to the ambassador, public diplomacy is, “all the efforts that a government makes to inform, persuade, and influence the public opinion in a foreign country.” Her work includes not only participating in negotiations and plenary meetings, but also attending public discussions and events, which are all meant to influence both foreign governments and the foreign public. In the ambassador’s opinion, public diplomacy is the dialogue between the government and the public opinion of another country; it is “all the coordinated efforts made by a government to improve the image of its country abroad.” Specifying that governments and diplomats are the only public diplomacy practitioners, she believes these efforts can include the services or the help of other entities. As the objective is to address a foreign audience, which may have another mindset, other cultural patterns and different language, Miculescu believes in the importance and necessity of soliciting public relations agencies as well as non-governmental, public and private organizations, which may be better positioned and equipped to contribute to public diplomacy activities. Miculescu states firmly that NGOs are not public diplomacy practitioners, but public communication practitioners. By not being bound to diplomatic jargons imposed to member states, they have the advantage of addressing and touching the public opinion effectively.

Open Society Institute (OSI): policy advocacy, agenda setting, debate framing roles

As stated on the organization’s website, the “OSI seeks to shape public policies that assure greater fairness in political, legal, and economic systems and safeguard fundamental rights. On a local level, OSI implements a range of initiatives to advance justice, education, public health, and independent media. At the same time, OSI builds alliances across borders and continents on issues such as corruption and freedom of information.” Over the years, OSI has been increasingly active in shaping the policy decision-making process of Eastern European countries, managing to get its voice heard by policymakers. Rolett believes that the organization has been able to ground its credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the international political community based on the three following factors: its worldwide local institutions, its expertise and George Soros’ personal reputation. OSI implements a ‘development diplomacy’ mission as its objective is to influence development policy-making at national, regional, and intergovernmental levels in order to make these institutions’ development policies conform to OSI’s own developmental agenda.

The 2003 Foreign Affairs publication called Beyond Public Diplomacy recognized the work done in this respect by the Soros Foundation in the Balkans, together with USAID and European governments in maintaining democratic opposition. By networking and building dialogue with decision makers, OSI is very involved in both regional and international advocacy process. In order to illustrate their policy advocacy role, Rolett describes how his organization managed to bring the human rights situation in Chechnya back on the table of politicians in Washington a couple of years ago by working jointly with Amnesty International. When asked how successful the organization is in shaping the agenda of policymakers in D.C., Rolett found it very difficult to answer due to the complex interaction of numerous actors. The ability to influence policymakers varies according to the campaign contribution, but Rolett admits that OSI is definitely “not the only voice at the table”. He strongly believes that working in consultation or in coalition with other organizations is “an effective way of adding some weight to their advocacy campaign.” At an OSI triennial meeting held in London early October 2009, staff members gathered to discuss together their performances and coming challenges. OSI employees assessed together their agenda-setting impact. Rolett says, “One issue which there was some consensus about, was putting Roma on the European agenda, because it really wasn’t there when OSI started pushing it, and it really is there now”. OSI has also been successful in changing the frame of policy debates. While defending the Roma in Bulgaria, for instance, the organization advocated for a couple of years, that the Gypsies have the same rights as any other citizen. As stated on the organization’s website, the “OSI seeks to shape public policies that assure greater fairness in political, legal, and economic systems and safeguard fundamental rights.” Over the years, OSI has been increasingly active in shaping the policy decision-making process of Eastern European countries, managing to get its voice heard by policymakers. Rolett believes that the organization has been able to ground its credibility and legitimacy in the eyes of the international political community based on the three following factors: its worldwide local institutions, its expertise and George Soros’ personal reputation. OSI implements a ‘development diplomacy’ mission as its objective is to influence development policy-making at national, regional, and intergovernmental levels in order to make these institutions’ development policies conform to OSI’s own developmental agenda.

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perspective to an economic question made a drastic difference, and the country was then willing to address the Roma situation. Finally, an important component of LGI/OSI work is to be involved in policy decision-making processes, in order to build democracies where governments will be accountable for their citizens. In this respect, the organization’s target audience includes not only government officials and policymakers, but also the citizens and the civil society concerned by policy changes. OSI plays a considerable role in facilitating communications between governments and their citizens. On the one hand, the organization translates governments’ public policies to the public. On the other hand, it also reports and explains the citizens’ need for public services to the governments. The population should understand the policy decisions undertaken by the government, in order to be able to hold it accountable for how they spend public funds. OSI not only helps civil society understanding how to measure performance, but also teaches the government how to present the information in a way that is understandable and relevant for the civil society.

But if OSI seems to be a significant contributor to public diplomacy efforts in Eastern Europe, its staff and actors firmly consider themselves outsiders to the political world of state leaders and politicians. Both Rolett and Ionescu refuse to qualify themselves as diplomats: they agree they are merely communicators, even if they are actively engaged in foreign policy-making debates.

Human Rights Watch (HRW): Top-down advocacy mission & human rights diplomacy

Since its creation 30 years ago, HRW has been committed to protecting and defending human rights around the world. The organization’s primary objectives are two-fold: to raise international awareness of human rights abuses, and to bring to justice those responsible for these crimes. With offices located on five continents, HRW achieves its mission and values by focusing its work around two mechanisms. On the one hand, experts conduct and report “rigorous, objective investigations” directly from the field. On the other hand, its international staff actively engages in “strategic, targeted advocacy.” Hicks provides her conceptualization of HRW’s work: “We define ‘Advocacy’ at Human Rights Watch as the process of taking the research and expertise that we have on human rights issues and translating them into policy changes. “It is how we engage with policymakers and the public, in order to use the information we have to influence human rights situations and translating them into policy changes. “It is how we engage with policymakers and the public, in order to use the information we have to influence human rights situation worldwide, and to try to enhance protection of human rights.” As the ultimate goal is to obtain policy changes, publishing reports only serves only as a tool to pressure those who have the power to stop human rights abuses. “Getting the word out and exposing human rights” represent intermediary steps to generate policy changes. As HRW is not a mass membership organization, Hicks explains that their advocacy strategy tends to focus on engaging more directly with policymakers, referring to what some people often call “top-down advocacy.” As Hicks stresses, “I don’t see the civil society itself as a target as much as a mechanism or tool that we use to try to influence policy changes.”

HRW—like most other NGOs—bases its international reputation and credibility on the following factors: private funding, independence from governments, the quality of its expertise, and the coverage scope of its reports. Bogert believes that the advantage of Human Rights Watch lies not only in their reporting, positions, and advocacy skills, but in the fact that they have experts in the ground with technical expertise, which gather facts that would not otherwise been known. Explaining the differences between governmental and non-governmental public diplomacy, Bogert believes that NGOs are leaders in public affairs, as they have the expertise, and the capacity to bring new ideas. Governments by their nature do not innovate. “That’s the role of the civil society”, she says. In other words, creating the impulse to initiate and drive policy changes is the public diplomacy task of non-governmental organizations.

Human Rights Watch adopts different types of tactics and reporting according to the situations they are dealing with. One category of reporting seeks to bring to light and expose unknown human rights abuses to the international community. Other types of work aim at “moving standard processing forward.” These types of reports describe the organization’s role in influencing and setting the agenda of political leaders and policymakers. By conducting and writing about fact-finding mission, HRW makes the international community aware of human rights violations, and held abusers and policymakers accountable for their actions or for their lack of actions. Other reports aim at stressing and “bringing up the human rights dimension of a broader global issue”, by tackling global issues with a different angle, which may not have been initially obvious or apparent to the public or the international community. Framing the debate implies in some cases using a language, a theme or jargon, which will resonate in politicians’ mind.

A citizen’s perspective: concept of active citizenship

Founder of the European Civic Movement for Patients’ Rights and of the European policy program ‘Active Citizenship Network’, Giovanni Moro built his thoughts, work and career on the belief that citizens have the ability to shape and influence public policies. Moro describes activism as an exercise of responsibilities of organized civil players in the public policy making. If they are organized and if they act together, they can effectively engage with policymakers during the whole cycle of policy-making, including the agenda, planning, decisions and evaluations. He stresses that this notion of active citizens is relatively new. Before the 1960s, citizens used to be only involved in public affairs by voting, or being members of political parties or associations. Now, citizens are recently carrying on their own public policy agenda, acting in the public realm, beyond the simple exercise of the right to vote. He believes citizens’ participation has aroused due to the increase lack of public trust in governmental institutions and representatives, as well as in political parties, which failed to provide effective public services to the population. Whether it is, by principle, governments’ responsibility to serve its citizens, civil society are increasingly in charge of building, organizing and delivering public services. In this respect, the concept of active citizenship implies three rights: “to perform general interest activities, to perform advocacy activities, as well as to participate in policy making”. By putting in place collective initiatives, citizens implement existing rights, take care of common goods and empower citizens.

4 Human Rights Watch website.
5 Same.
DISCUSSION

Defining tasks, boundaries and overlaps in the public diplomacy profession

Ambassador Micleanescu from Romania, as well as the representatives of Human Rights Watch, the Soros Foundation and the European Civic Movement for Patients’ Right, all gave evidence that they are - each with their own particular contribution - engaged in public diplomacy efforts. These actors use different concepts and terminologies to define their work, but they have similar objectives: to bear consequences on specific foreign publics. Whether states refer to government public diplomacy, non-governmental organizations practice NGO advocacy, or Giovanni Moro calls its contribution civic activism; they have the common characteristic of engaging in public relations efforts, as they seek to create, develop and maintain relationships with their foreign publics and stakeholders.

The government representative states that it is the only public diplomacy practitioners who are responsible for enhancing and eventually protecting the reputation of the nation in foreign countries and foreign publics, while welcoming and soliciting the involvement of other non-state actors. Also, interviewed non-governmental actors did not identify themselves as public diplomacy practitioners, but rather as public affairs actors, acknowledging as well that public diplomacy is the governmental representatives’ field of practice. NGO representatives refused to characterize their work as similar to that of governments, as their raison-d’etre is also based on the idea that the civil society does not normally trust governments. The NGO representatives perceived their mission and work as completely independent from governments’ sphere of action. Yet, NGOs are often required to partner with governments to accomplish their goals and in these cases, they contribute significantly to the field of public diplomacy, particularly in the development of foreign public policy. They effectively attempt to frame their agendas in a way that would attract policy-makers’ attention, and get involved in the policy decision-making process in foreign countries. Generating policy changes requires a fortiori an interaction between governments and NGOs. Whether their contact is cordial, conflicting or collaborative, a relationship between the two actors needs to be established for impact and change to take place.

NGOs are sometimes unable to develop a dialogue with certain countries for various reasons. In those cases, NGOs often seek understanding and support from governments of other countries who may have a say and the will to exert pressure on recalcitrant countries or to generate policy changes. Non-governmental actors turn to governments and policymakers to achieve their own public affairs agenda. When partnering with governments or contributing to governmental programs, NGOs continue in their public affairs role, but also begin to move in public diplomacy circles. They capitalize on their relationships with governments to influence the behavior of public diplomacy practitioners and, in the process, advance their own public affairs agenda. They seek to build and maintain effective relationships with foreign publics, whether in other countries, in the country they are based, or with migrant communities in their country. Additionally, representatives of the civic society builds relationships with national and international governmental entities with the aim of seeing public policy programs implemented in a region which includes the territories of those countries. Even if civil societies and private institutions perform a public service, they are obliged to receive the approval of government bodies to maintain their license to operate and contribute to public affairs efforts and programs.

Public diplomacy collaboration as a tool for third-party endorsement

Effective public diplomacy practices require joint and coordinated efforts between different public diplomacy actors. Each interviewee narrated the importance and necessity of working in partnership with other public affairs actors. Interlocutors expressed extensively how State and non-States actors’ collaboration is mutually beneficial for the achievement of respective agendas. By seeking to connect their efforts, public diplomacy practitioners often welcome a third-party endorsement, which increases the credibility of their work and improves their access to their publics. On the one hand, government relations strategy relies on non-state actors’ third-party advocacy to promote their national interests. On the other hand, NGOs’ advocacy strategy solicits governments’ endorsement of their public policy activities. Due to the vast number of players in the field of international relations, governmental and non-governmental actors are compelled to cooperate. In doing so, they increase the reach and impact of their messages. While the use of third-party endorsement is historically at the center of public relations theories, and belongs to public relations’ body of knowledge, public diplomacy appears to be referring to the same mechanism in order to gain credibility and facilitate outreach.

As communication technologies and the global network society continuously facilitate interactions between people, citizens and international relations actors, the necessity of third-party endorsement in the context of public diplomacy should be re-evaluated. New digital communication tools, such as the Internet and specifically social media platforms, have simplified and accelerated the extent to which people are accessible and the manner in which they communicate with each other. In a world where Web 2.0 (interactive applications) has made communication easier, the need for third-party endorsement and partnerships is no longer as apparent as it was. However, in the case of non-governmental organizations and civil society, interviewees from the Soros Foundation, Human Rights Watch and the Civic Activism Network emphasized that working in partnership with governments and other non-governmental organizations gives their opinions more weight. Addressing the roles of NGOs in the field of international public relations, Tkalic and Pavicic (2003: 499) explain that, “NGOs have to struggle to gain public attention among many competing interests while also overcoming indifference of this international audience. They also have to compete with various powerful opponents such as governments, multinational companies, and international financial institutions that are supported by highly organized public relations”. In other words, the multiplicity of non-state actors in the field of public diplomacy presents a challenge that can, in some cases, be addressed by joining forces. In public relations terms, this has always been referred to as coalition building. In the case of governmental public diplomacy, governments suffer from a lack of trust and credibility, which hinders their ability to communicate with civil societies. By associating their initiatives with NGOs, governments can gain access to public opinion shapers and their constituencies. Furthermore, Web 2.0 not only extends communication initiatives’ reach but also creates fragmented groups and individual identities. Coalition composition and character will vary depending on causes,
interests, and involved actors. Coalition building implies that one actor will be more credible or powerful than the other as per each situation.

CONCLUSION & IMPLICATION

Representatives of governments and non-governmental organizations agree that public diplomacy is exclusively a governmental practice. Non-governmental organizations’ field of practice lies principally in the realm of public affairs. However, NGOs – and private corporations – often become involved in governmental public diplomacy activities in two circumstances: first, governments frequently solicit NGOs’ involvement in their public diplomacy programs to increase the credibility and outreach of their messages; second, NGOs seek to form partnerships with governments to achieve their goals, particularly in influencing foreign public policies. But whether they engage in public affairs or public diplomacy, governments, non-governmental organizations and private corporations all are involved in public relations efforts to create, develop and maintain relationships with foreign publics.

Future research by political scientists and public relations scholars should analyze the practical aspects of how public diplomacy is conducted by private and multinational organizations. Studies should determine to what extent for-profit organizations are public diplomacy practitioners, and explore how they work with governments and non-governmental organizations to implement their international public affairs agendas. With respect to governmental public diplomacy, current literature already tackled public diplomacy’s role in promoting a country’s culture, values and policies. Upcoming studies should further explore how public diplomacy coordinated by governments can effectively promote a country’s economy abroad.
INTRODUCTION

Throughout history the feature that has shaped international relations is “power.” Power is the ability to influence the behavior of others to get the outcomes one wants. But there are several ways to affect the behavior of others. You can coerce them with threats; you can induce them with payments; or you can attract and co-opt them to want what you want (Nye 2005, 11). Neo-imperialism or the process known as the new world order even if it’s a means to simplify the expansion of the capitalist economy must recognize the development of human rights, living standards and democracy. In other words, in the new democracies that have taken over from authoritarian states, the power to affect public opinion has become an important issue. In this process, attached to related statements, political powers have less freedom than autocracies on the subject of developing tactics.

Galtung points out that, “only a faulty and amateurish imperialism will resort to arms, and professional imperialism is based on structural violence rather than direct violence (Bağce 2003, 73). In this new phase of capitalism-imperialism the objective is to facilitate the control of the sources of raw materials, export of capital and the surveillance of markets without the need for direct violence and war. Here as well, public diplomacy has expanded political, cultural and communication imperialism within the framework of the population mechanism thereby serving the requirement of this process. To summarize, in the classical imperialist process while wars and military means are intensely used and while international relations continues as a rough power relations, in the world that is attempted to be build, particularly after 1980, with the new world order and statements on globalization, imperialism accompanies global capitalism in this process. Public diplomacy, as a way to increase the national interests of a state and to expand its area of influence by qualifying the relationships established with the citizens of another state was first used by the United States. Despite the fact that public diplomacy was first used towards the end of the 1990s, a complete consensus has not been attained in the concept’s Turkish equivalent and its coverage. Many times the concept is used synonymously with public relations (Bağce 2003, 71). In particular, bearing in mind the method expanded to influence public opinion in the transition from authoritarian states to new democracies, public relations becomes significant.
PUBLIC RELATIONS AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

One of the first lasting definitions of public relations was given in Edward Bernays’ book “Crystallizing Public Opinion” published in 1923. Later, according to his definition (1955, 3) in the “Engineering of Consent,” public relations are the efforts to gain public support by means of information, persuasion and arrangement for any activity, cause, action or organization. Like Bernays, Cutlip includes public relations within social sciences, associates the structure of society with its workings and combines it with the functionality of “the democratic society.” In Utica College, Cutlip (1991) said the following to his students in public relations: The public relations practice is an integral part of our country’s public information system. In taking political, economic, social and humanitarian decisions by our citizens, information is a system that is connected to them. The public information system of a democratic country encompasses all communication channels and elements of information required by a citizen in his daily life and daily decisions. Public relations by providing about half of daily media content provide an important support (subsidy) to the news media and by doing this affects public opinion. Through the workings of this system, history is made and society is molded (Grunig 1991, 357-376). Walter Lipmann mentions an “art” that he names as “consensus manufacture” for democracy and points out that it is build on what is said to public choices and attitudes.

In examining the development of public relations it can be seen that it was based on asymmetric methods in the nature of propaganda. In particular, during the First and Second World Wars, the United States’ use, through the Committee on Public Information and Office of War Information, with tactics and methods in persuading the public on the legitimacy of going to war can be described as a function of public relations. This indicates that propaganda and the art of consensus manufacture are related to the beginnings of public relations.

After 1980, together with the new world order and statements on globalization, the need was borne to go beyond raising the national interest of a country and expand the sphere of influence and in order to accomplish. This, the need to establish a relationship with the citizens of the other state emerged. In a speech delivered by Ronald Reagan in 1989 on public diplomacy, he emphasized the importance of the information age, and in realizing the interests of America, traditional diplomacy had become inadequate. For this reason, he argued, the United States must not only establish a dialogue with the leaders of the other state but also with its citizens as well and expand her influence. Stating that public diplomacy had provided the strongest power to the American government in changing the course of history, “gave his thanks to the public diplomats who have told “the American story” from Washington to Shanghai (Bağçe 2003, 76).

Grunig’s article addressing diplomacy and international affairs sets out to “analyze the effects and ethics of international campaigns and derive recommendations on how PR can contribute to global diplomacy without obfuscating or corrupting the process. PR has been, “prevalent in international PR throughout history” with a view to influencing political events and public opinion” (Grunig 1993, 137-163). In a similar manner, Gilboa (2008, 57) emphasizes the connection between public relations in the PR model—in the context of the need to gravitate to the international public– and public diplomacy. The strategies to reach international targets rest with PR firms and lobbying activities. Ham (2002, 249-269) sees public diplomacy as an important element in “managing national reputation.” As can be understood from these statements, with public diplomacy, reaching the public of targeted countries and directing their public opinion and perceptions, PR tactics and strategies becomes a natural player in this process.

TURKEY IN THE GRIP OF EAST AND WEST AND PUBLIC DIPLOMACY STRATEGY

Is world history an unavoidable event where structurally it is divided in the middle and thus becomes a history of a chasm? What are the place, affect and results of this chasm? These questions have been the main subject of academic writings for decades. What is the geographical boundary of our comprehension of ‘East’ and ‘West’ that stands on either side of this dilemma? Namely, what in fact are ‘East’ and ‘West?’ Where is it and why?

First, to us, the geographical reference point in defining East and West, where Turkey is the focal point, is the Mediterranean. The reason for this is that the Mediterranean is the location where the longest and most intense relations took place between Eastern and Western civilizations and where to this day symbols are present in the minds of each side, where the center of the chasm is located. Thus, the locations we call ‘East and West’ can be considered to be the two sides to this chasm. However, this acceptance does not mean the absolute geographical distinction that we give to the meaning of East and West separation. On the contrary, the ‘East and West Dilemma’ is to us completely ideational and in reality it is an imaginary line. For this reason, whichever criteria are taken as a basis, geopolitical boundaries will never be clearly defined. This ambiguity means that for societies that are in the middle of these two worlds, because it cannot distance itself from the definition of clearly belonging, an eclectic ‘Westernization’ will continue to generate debatable events in the foreseeable period. Such that: According to the general perception, there are two “choices” that define non-western histories: The will to be westernized or modernized or the will against westernization or to remain traditional. One of these views based on this perception is that of Huntington. According to Huntington (2005) -that classifies humanity according to religion and civilization; of the six religion-civilizations that exist presently two are notably important: The West and Islam. Islam is the factor that threatens western civilization in its most severe form. However, Huntington as with many other points has missed an important matter that is also significant from Turkey’s perspective. That religious and cultural conflict can arise within the same state’s structure and, moreover these conflicts with the right policies will not be an obstacle to the continuity of a state, on the contrary it will support the state.

In the history of Turkey almost always the existence of two main groups can be observed:
the group that seeks to integrate with the West and the Islamists by leaning to the Islamic world that has shown a strong reaction to the West. Furthermore, the existence of these two groups, as has been widely asserted, did not commence with the Republic period. During the last two hundred years of the Ottoman State the most notable line of thought to save the state has been ‘Westernization.’ The period that started with the ‘Treaty of Karlowitz’ in 1699 is also considered as the beginning of the movement towards western civilization by the Ottoman State. Later, despite the resistance of the traditional society, the first western bureaucrats undertook reform movements in the most important areas of the military and technology, such that the French Revolution in 1789 was first hailed by the Ottoman State. Thus, Islamists and Westerners appeared as two opposed cultural groups that go back to the past in our history (İnancık 1998, 7-28). Thereafter the Ottoman State, with a movement towards Westernization that has a past of over two centuries, passed through three phases. The first phase is dominated with the concern to prevent foreign aggression. For this reason, a renewal is seen that encompasses only the military during this period. The second phase is the start of the “Reform Movement” (‘Tanzimat’). In this phase the reforms spread to other institutions in society. During the third phase, starting with the Republic period on the assertion of protecting East-West relations, this duality with a final decision was ended and the western path chosen (Ersan 2006, 39-49). Despite this, the central question is whether westernization completely took place or to what extent it was westernized and at the same time remained traditional.

In the end we can say that Turkey possesses the same experiences with other Muslim countries in the Middle East for centuries and is a Middle East and Muslim county that shares numerous religious, cultural, traditional, legal and other close ties. Beyond this, the official policy differences, in explaining total national identity and civilization, by identifying certain changes that have taken place are merely based on strategy and political reasons which are insufficient (Lewis 1980, 153). Such that the stand against the West has become an important determinant in identifying political, societal and intellectual identities in Turkey. For example, open or closed sympathy to the West or adopting Western values has been considered, depending on various views, along the line of ‘progressivism’, ‘modernity’, ‘revolutionist’ rejecting the West and adopting or protecting the East-Islam civilization considered as ‘conservatism’, ‘reactionary’ or ‘non-modernist’ (Ünder 1995, 293).

In summary, Turkey true to her geographical location is a country that is deeply torn between two civilizations. While certain elites state that the future of the country lies in complete integration with Western civilization, the Islamists long for a religious and cultural union with Islamic nations and based on religion are systematically organizing public opinion. Turkey is the most notable example of the “Westernization” process that provides a special reference in disunity between tradition and “westernization” or “modernism” and is very relevant to societies that are in between East and West. This disunity stems from the most part in tradition and modernity existing together silently in our lands. At this point, the one matter that provides meaning to public diplomacy strategies that Turkey has established today is, “Under what conditions is westernization taking place in Turkey and what effects and results has it met?” Namely, as with almost all non-Western societies, a paradoxical search can be discerned between identity and Western type modernity in Turkey’s history because the discord between those that are not “Western,” by its own definition, and the definition of modernization has resulted in tension. While on the one hand modernism has worked against local “particularists” on the other hand nationalist, “culturalists” or religious identities are attempting to state their difference against Western modernization.

The Turkish state has been the catalyst of active societal changes, the planner and transformer of societal life. Within the history of modernization of Turkey, the transition to Westernization should not be considered as a change from a traditional to a modern society but as a “modern national state” that aims to convert traditional society to a modern society (Kahraman, 84). In short, “Turkish modernization” that deserves its name, that is particular to our identity, societal and the political process is an adventure that expresses us. A society which is rooted in a bridge between East and West and is neither completely East nor completely West (Türköne 1998, 120).

Accordingly, “Westernization” becomes a state policy for Turkey, due to its geopolitical location, that is a free floating course between Eastern and Western identities because of her language and religion. The most important reason for this from a historical perspective is that Westernization was a process starting with the Ottoman’s that was introduced based on deus ex machina strategies rather than what was right and according to the demands of the common people and consequently met from time to time with resistance. In other words, non-Western modernity has been shaped by applying modernization without creating a modern individual. This resistance is a manifestation of the inner conflict arising from religious elements that are rooted in Islam in this country. In this context, the resistance points relating to these religious elements in Turkey can be discerned as opposition to Westernization. Obviously all of these contradictions can be seen in the strategic openings by Turkey in the international arena.

‘Turkish Public Diplomacy’, as the subject of this study, follows the footprints of this acceptance. Public diplomacy’s objective in expanding the national interests and image of a country also supports classical diplomatic activities by influencing through all legitimate means the public opinion, governments and all individuals that participate in societal activities, agencies and organizations and thereby contribute to closer relations between these countries. Here the central question is how a country like Turkey that continuously goes forward and backwards in her East and West identity continues or can continue her public diplomatic activities based on this contradictory identity. This study not only assesses this dilemma cyclically in the country’s international initiatives but also strategically as it relates to public relations tactics and techniques.

In this context, aside from the international alliances and agreements that Turkey is attached, the relation she has developed in the Middle East in particular, makes her a representative to both sides through her East and West identity and contributes as a
‘negotiator’ in diplomacy. There are various attractive ways present in public diplomacy and for Turkey it is using her political influence rather than military and economic weight by being a peacemaker rather than taking sides. At times, however, in the light of experience, the impression given by correct and limited siding efforts can contribute to diplomatic activities. Turkey possesses experience due to her identity. Appropriate to her geopolitical and social standing is developing a public diplomacy strategy that is neither completely East nor West. In this respect in certain situations she takes a clear part on behalf of the West or the East. The attitudes and explanations by representatives and the strategies pursued in which side she takes place echoes among public opinion on both sides. The most meaningful and current example from the point of Turkey is the Davos Summit of 2009.

THE DAVOS SUMMIT AS AN EXAMPLE OF TURKISH PUBLIC DIPLOMACY

As a reference to her contradictions between East and West identities, the Davos Summit in terms of public diplomacy strategies is considered as an example in this study. As is known, in the Davos Summit that took place on 29 January 2009, Turkey's Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdoğan's outburst against Israel's President Simon Perez on Israel's occupation of Palestine caused important repercussions around the world and in particular in the international media.

This study focusing on the articles of the international media analyzes the statements and attitudes as an image of a leader of a country that is in this East and West dilemma and its place in public diplomacy. The reason for the astonishing statements made during the Davos Summit is that it went outside the role of “general inclination” as a peacemaker-arbitrator showing a side that has not been preferred up to now which may be related to a new phase in public diplomacy.

This study, in addition, supported by comments made by the Turkish media, debates the events and perceptions that reflect or affect Turkey's public diplomacy strategy; how it has affected the Turkish domestic agenda; how it was met by national public opinion and a comparison is provided of the comments made by the national press. At this point, the subject that is at the forefront is that in accepting the Eastern and Western identities of Turkish public opinion, contradictions and conflicts can be said to be still present. Turkey's role as a “bridge” is frequently on the agenda due to certain global events and because of her geopolitical location. Efforts to constructively assess Turkey's “two faces,” one that faces the East and the other the West, comes back full circle to the same point. Turkey's role as a bridge or its “mission as a synthesis” appears on its own as presenting a “bridge function” beginning in the 21st century and has been subject to changing international and regional conditions. However, the appearance of such an opportunity in an objective sense and its use is not equivalent to becoming a foreign policy (Çandar 2007). It appears that Turkey is using this opportunity for the first time.

THE REPERCUSSIONS OF THE DAVOS SUMMIT IN THE MEDIA AND AN ANALYSIS OF THESE REPERCUSSIONS

The International Media Scene within the Context of its Power to Affect

As its known, beginning with the work on the media, the media’s “power to affect” as become a constant issue in criticism and the approaches that focuses on the relations between the government and media has been considered as the media being “extreme and one-sidedly effective” and every event that is the subject of the media has been looked at from the perspective. According to these approaches, the effective role that the media plays in shaping the consciousness of the masses in order to protect the economic and political interests of the dominant classes is taken into consideration in this study. Based on Marxist tradition, these theories have different preferences in converting the media into a research object and their reference to the East-West dilemma has a suitable set-up to what is put forward. This we consider as interesting and analyze an event as a reference point in this “East-West Dilemma.”

Among these theories the most important, based on our area of focus, is the new opening to the “economic and political theory” of the classical view that “the media will always reflect the ideology of those that pay the money,” and that the control tools are in the hands of the classes known as the “power elites.” Among the thinkers in this area is Charles Wright Mills who in his work on “Power Élites” describes the relationship between individuals and their influence on governments (Shoemaker 2002, 144).

The general approach to this economic and political theory is not the absolute economic indicators but the general approach that appears after including the power feature and this general approach can be summarized as follows: The researchers related to the media on economic and political issues, the ownership and propriety structure of media establishments are assessed according to its relations with political power and its function in society based on the general dynamics of the capitalist economy is considered at the forefront, the practicalities of economic relations within the context of the media and is a subject of cultural studies.

Instead of this economic and political approach’s ideological and media writings, cultural studies, as a result of their emphasis on a reductive economic approach, by rejecting Marxism’s simple infrastructure-superstructure link, conceptualizes an area of struggle in the general approach can be summarized as follows: The researchers related to the media on economic and political issues, the ownership and propriety structure of media establishments are assessed according to its relations with political power and its function in society based on the general dynamics of the capitalist economy is considered at the forefront, the practicalities of economic relations within the context of the media and is a subject of cultural studies.

Instead of this economic and political approach’s ideological and media writings, cultural studies, as a result of their emphasis on a reductive economic approach, by rejecting Marxism’s simple infrastructure-superstructure link, conceptualizes an area of struggle in which the media gains society’s consent, the context of the relations between the media and society. According to Gramsci (1971, 15-23) the domination of the ruling classes, beyond the use of force and direct control, is obtained with the consent of subject masses that is even more effective. The importance of the media in terms of their approach is based on their description of being a “hegemonic apparatus,” namely, the main factors in generating consent. Media writings as one area where hegemonic battles are being conducted require a solution as well.
Thus, supervision or control that is not openly domineering and based on consent is more effective. The media defines the borders of the areas of reality that is in the running. In large part the media will adopt a stance that is appropriate to the position or posture of Easterners and Traditionalists and marginalizes and illegalizes “other voices”. The only incontrovertible fact within the context of these institutional openings is the effective power of the media at the societal level. For even if only receptive coverage is considered, there is no doubt that mass media writings are the most widespread. Obtaining information and forming an opinion of events that place in the world, takes place in large part on media news dispatches that are shared by millions of people.

Thus, historical and occupational conditions exist in an internationally widespread news network that is based on a Western format and lies in Western dominance and power. Because the world, thanks to these critical communication agencies, is aware that the most important tools in “one-sided globalization” and in the “otherizing” process under the mask of the West’s technological expansion and globalization is the international media. The said media scene as an expression of logo-centered world view has met with reaction to its distinct orientation in geographical regions such as the Middle East and within this process, even if to a limited degree, has led to an opposition (Eastern-Traditionalist) media scene. This process documents the media’s dispatches of the friction between the East and the West.

The most important area of the cultural difference between East and West is words and attitudes. Both cultures use special sets of concepts in news articles to stress their own perspectives and their way of expression is very different from each other. This situation could be based on the difference in the communicative development process between both cultures. Massimo Baldini (2000, 15), in his work “History of Communication” (Storie Della Comunicazione) distinguishes developments in communications as verbal, manuscript, typographic and electric-electronic media cultures. Eastern and Western societies can be distinguished as verbal and typographic (written) people in the context of these cultural phases. The Easterners are people of verbal culture and the most important features of this culture can be said to be: hearing is the most important sense; it is excessive in verbal communication, because there is the need of repetition and enthusiasm in order to keep the listeners alive; prefers the contest-run type in communication and as the people of verbal culture are more warmhearted and noisy crowds, thus their communication is also vivid and participatory. Hence it can be seen that people of verbal culture tend to be effusive and fully identified instead of being objective and carefree.

No doubt this difference shows its explicit expression in the media which is the mirror of societies. As neither the global nor the local media organ, it is a body that cannot be considered singularly. Every medium has historical, traditional, political, ideological, economic and social bases and these factors are inevitably reflected in their understanding of broadcasting. The most important of these bases is the Eastern-Western focus which leads us to look from the perspective of the related geography and from a regional point of view. For example, with the use of language including cultural codes, the Eastern news language (regional, linguistic and religious) is very different from the Western type. That is to say, it is far from being calm, cool and austere. Within this context, executive editor of Al Jazeera states about the sense of Arab-origin news as, “feelings are part of the news for us. The spirit of the news lies within the feeling and it is a very important reality” (Dobbs 2003). On the other hand losing calmness is the same with losing objectiveness for the Western type. Therefore, in order to persuade people effectively under “Western conditions one should control the expression of his or her feelings. Fast hand gestures or effusive facial expressions are discouraging. Consequently, the feelings of Eastern cultures are more extroverted and are inclined to be acceptable” (Zaharna 2006, 206-208). Mr. Erdoğan’s effusive and emotional attitudes in the Davos Summit appeal to the acceptances of the East.

If we consider these acceptances within the concept of a leader image transferred and maintained via media, there appears a picture of a leader image in terms of public diplomacy in a new enlightenment process in which public opinions rebuild their views positively about their leader. The objective is to form a potential for perception of success of the leader’s country in foreign public opinion where they have common interests. In terms of public diplomacy success the image of the leader as a representative of the codes of values and culture of the country in international platforms is an extremely important area of work. Erdoğan’s Davos reaction is important in presenting the image of a leadership which the frustrated Eastern societies expect. Thus, the ways of issuing related news by Eastern-Western media refer to the expected image of leadership and its reverse. In this way the difference of perceptions between the East, to which this image of this leadership causes East-West contradiction that is reflected in the media, and the values of the image of the leader as a carrier of appeal, and the other side, the West, is revealed. The leader image of Erdoğan referring to the East oriented face of Turkey after the Davos Summit is a crucial indicator of the difference of perception in the East and West media. This differentiation is definitely natural for it stems from the established structure of belonging to the Eastern and Western societies for centuries which leads to the perspective of the geography and regional focus, but which is also closely worth examining.

This study is evaluated within the framework of the handling of this event by foreign news resources. Thus, the difference of Eastern and Western approach to the image of leadership built by the related event will be revealed. This difference of approach, for both sides, also shows the will that does not avoid from being a party. As seen in the news headings below, they do this, to a great extent, with views as to whether to confirm or reject the featured image of leadership.

**Western Media**

- **Hadashot Ha’aretz** (The oldest daily of Israel, established in 1918): “Turkey PM storms off stage over Peres remarks on Gaza”.
- **Yedioth Ahronot**: “From Peres to Erdoğan: What would you do if a rocket is launched into Istanbul?”, “Turkish attack”, “Drama in Davos”.
- **Maariv** (a newspaper of Israel published in Hebrew): Turkey is against Peres.
- **Jerusalem Post** (a newspaper of Israel published in English): “Erdoğan walked out very red”, “Israel gradually gets more tired of long slams of Erdoğan and the possibility of chasing after Turks is descending. These harsh reactions of Erdoğan are the result of domestic policy. He plays up to strong Islamist base before March local elections”.

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Dealing with the Davos Summit in news headlines in Western media organs mainly stresses the identified attitudes of an Eastern leader. All of the terms like debate, anger, row, chaos, accusation, blast, speech of hatred, attack, where Erdoğan is placed as subject and Peres as object, stresses that the East oriented image of a Turkish leader against the West and which cannot not be accepted. Furthermore, about the reaction of Erdoğan to Israel or righteousness of Israel with such statements like, “You know how to kill very well”; what would you do if rockets are launched to Istanbul?” confirms this perception. The gestures of Erdoğan bearing no calmness and objectiveness as a part of the image of leadership are highlighted as a source of this negative view. The leader image that could form the potential of perception that Turkey returns to its East identity is negated as much as possible.

**Eastern Media**

Qatar based Al Jazeera: “Erdoğan hailed after Davos walkout”. As Safir, published in Arabic in Lebanon: “Erdoğan to Peres: You know well what killing is”. El Kuds El Arabî published in Arabic in London: “Thousands of thanks to Erdoğan”, “Like a cavalier”, “Walkout of Erdoğan is a lesson for Arabs”. Lebanon based Dar Al Hayat: “It is necessary that the Ottoman Empire is re-founded and Erdoğan takes the leadership of all the Muslims in the world as a caliph”. Islamonline.net: “Erdoğan is a hero. Is he not also a descendant of the Ottomans?” Russian “Lenta.ru” named website: “Erdoğan gets a national hero’s welcome in Istanbul airport”. Komsomolskaya Pravda newspaper: “Erdoğan having a row with Peres became a national hero in his country”. Greek State TV NET: “PM Recep Tayyip Erdoğan spoke out yesterday in Davos what most people on the planet want to say.”

“The perception of the owners of the new media emerged in 1990’s in our country has a feature that could be based on the reflection of the East-West contradiction in the country to the media. More explicitly, Turkish media, as a result of the relationship between its capital and the government, is an ideological tool of this special disjointedness between tradition and being Western (or modern) which is valid for the societies between East and West. That the approaches of the media about this disjointedness are clear when either confirmation or criticism about Erdoğan’s highlighted “image of an Eastern leader” is seen. Media realizes this by such methods like highlighting affirmatively, accusing by highlighting the marginal identity (stressing violence), (highlighting the entertainment side) insulting by humiliation, applying them by abiding the content and discourse of the news articles and revealing the approaches of the media to the disputable issues like being Eastern-Western is possible by statements of the media and is a revelation of these related methods. This perception of course, has different inclinations in Turkish media like Turkish public opinion troubling about both Eastern and Western identity and belonging. There is a conflict between media groups in Turkey; on the one hand it is pro-Western or pro-modernization thereby against-government media; and on the other hand stands as a pro-government media representing the will of being traditional and being against Westernization. This image is indeed a reflection of the division in Turkish society between these two cultures.

**Pro-Western Media in Turkey**


The main target of the pro-Western secular or anti government media in Turkey is Erdoğan and his leadership image. In this context, that Erdoğan is a spokesman of Hamas, reference to him being a commoner, belonging to a lower class and frivolity and emphasis of him being from Kasımpaşa is in the foreground. This approach can be named as insulting by humiliation and accusing by highlighting the marginal identity in terms of media strategies stated above.

**PRO-EASTERN MEDIA IN TURKEY**


The emphasis in pro-Eastern, Islamic, conservative or for various reasons pro-government media organs in Turkey is Erdoğan’s righteousness, his siding with suffering people and his heroism in an incident who’s time had come.
After Erdoğan's Davos exit, hope is given to the possibility of a return to the wide geography of the past by the new foreign policy of Turkey by emphasizing her own region with a clearer Islamist Eastern emphasis. This hope also sparks a large-scale identity debate. And indeed this debate is directly linked to the image of leaders being party to one side and the conflict prevailing in a country between the will of standing against Westernization, namely being traditional within the society on one side, and the will of Westernization or modernization on the other side.

The debates within society emerging from questions like, “Who are we?” “Do we belong to the East or West?” brings about the separations of being Eastern or Western based on secularism in Turkey. For in her history Turkey is “a society rooted between East and West, neither fully Eastern nor fully Western.” (Türkone 1998, 120) Şevket Süreyya Aydemir (1999), in his novel titled, “The Man Searching for Water” tells the trauma of society living on the remnants of a torn empire and the endeavor to create a new nation from what is left remaining. Being the remnant of society of an empire it is anxious for identity and belonging. It is possible to sum up this process of Turkey being a remnant or in between as follows: Since the Sultanate and caliphate had been abolished in the founding process of the Republic, Turkey became the sole inheritor of the Ottoman Empire; young Turkey saw the West as a belonging point. Currently it has been said that Turkey has the possibility to be a model and mentor again in these territories with its democracy, economy and military force. It is frequently stated that the ruling AK Party Government’s policy focusing mainly on the region increases Turkey’s soft power (Bilgici 2009). The new era Eastern-oriented public diplomacy of the AKP Government follows closely with the domestic political stance of the party. The emphasis on Islamic values, unity with Muslim countries and even the image of a strong and great country with attributed leadership features for Muslim countries is attempted. Moreover, the policy of solidarity for an extended period with the Western countries continues. The new structural approaches are among the special issues for the AKP Government for this designated or applied strategy in political diplomacy.

In 2008, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs stated its intention of establishing a “Public Diplomacy Agency” because of the serious problems in communicating foreign policy with the public. Later, another study was launched under the name of “Public Diplomacy and Communications” again by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. This work aimed at public diplomacy to be managed in two sections under daily affairs and strategy (Milli Gazete 2010). After these preparatory works the emerging structure, following work by the Prime Ministry, became “The Public Diplomacy Coordinatorship” announced by Circular No. 2010/3 of the Prime Ministry. This Coordinatorship’s objectives in the related circular were explained as cooperation and coordination between the studies in diplomacy and strategic communication and publicity activities between state institutions and non-governmental organizations. Moreover, the necessity to govern public diplomacy by a central unit systematically was explained as, “Currently, as a result of globalization, international relations has become more complex, aside from official diplomacy between states, public diplomacy has gained crucial importance as a means to affect and orient the international community. In international platforms, it is necessary that the international community is informed in a right way with the means of public diplomacy for the success of our work to prove our rightness against the problems and accusations that our country has been subjected to for long time” (Official Gazette 2010). This work on addressing the responsible units and the activity areas of public diplomacy and finally the structuring of the Coordinatorship can be evaluated as an indication that Turkey’s public diplomacy will be managed systematically.

The predicted efforts in the field of public diplomacy of Turkey, according to our point of view, the new international initiatives of Turkey, and the relations created in both West and East, particularly in the Middle East, the fact that it could be the representative of both sides, for it has both Eastern and Western identity, bear especially a “negotiator” feature. Since the beginning of the 21st century the changing international and regional conditions has given Turkey a “bridge function” per se. However, in an objective manner, the emergence and usage of such a facility and its becoming a policy are not synonymous (Çandar 2010). Turkey possibly for the first time in her history has used such a facility with the public diplomacy activities of AKP Government and even the image of leadership formed within this framework. In our opinion, Erdoğan’s image of leadership that is reflected within the framework of public diplomacy towards international public opinion – the one balancing East and the West – should be continued systematically and continuously in public relations and greater importance should be attached to PR. Otherwise, disintegration in terms of identity will be reinforced at the national and international level by the above mentioned media. Getting accustomed to Turkey’s double identity structure and remembering her historical base will become inevitable in time. Thus, Turkey will be able to form a balance point between both cultures as it should be. Nonetheless, the point to take into account is not to convert this double identity, which should be conceived as the richness of this country, into a contrary identity outside and inside the country by excessive emphasis on the “Eastern” involving foreign public opinion.
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