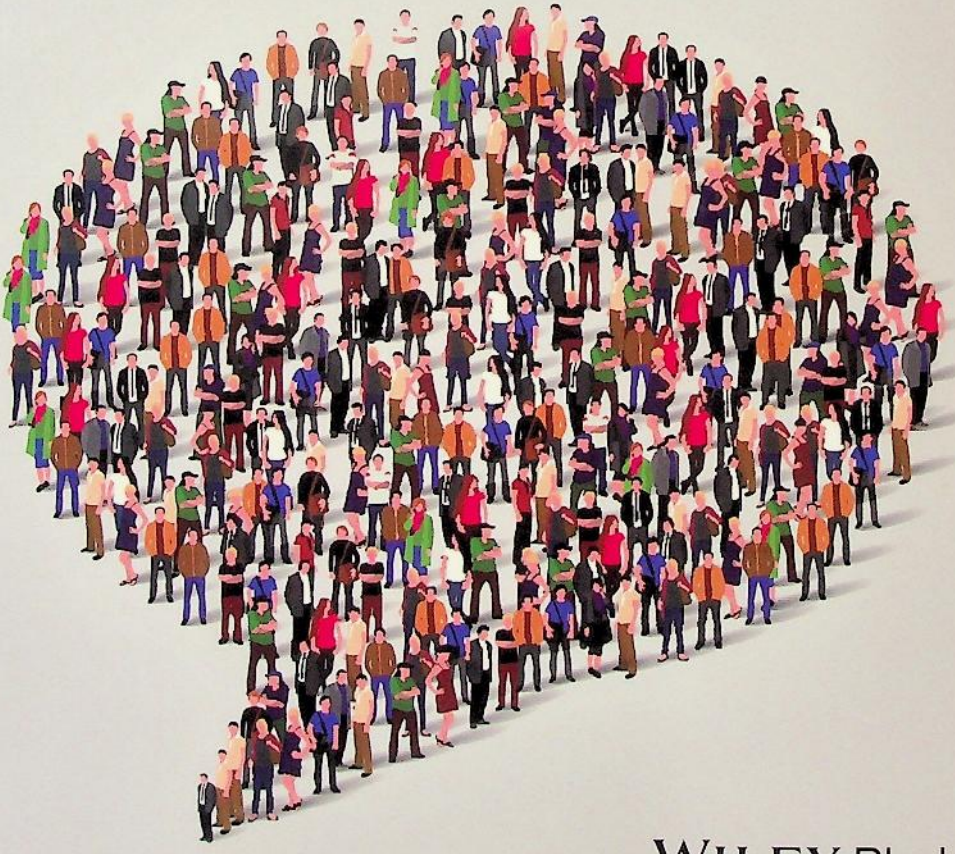
STRATEGIC COMMUNICATION THEORY AND PRACTICE

THE COCREATIONAL MODEL

Carl H. Botan



WILEY Blackwell

A guide to strategic communication that can be applied across a range of subfields at all three levels—grand strategic, strategic, and tactical communication

Communication is a core function of every human organization so when you work with communication you are working with the very core of the organization. Written for students, academics, and professionals, *Strategic Communication Theory and Practice: The Cocreational Model* argues for a single unified field of strategic communication based in the three large core subfields of public relations, marketing communication, and health communication, as well as strategic communicators working in many other subfields such as political communication, issues management, crisis communication, risk communication, environmental and science communication, social movements, counter terrorism communication, public diplomacy, public safety and disaster management, and others. *Strategic Communication Theory and Practice* is built around a cocreational model that shifts the focus from organizational needs and the messages crafted to achieve them, to a publics-centered view placing publics and their ability to cocreate new meanings squarely in the center of strategic communication theory and practice. The author—a noted expert in the field—outlines the theories, campaign strategies, common issues, and cutting edge challenges facing strategic communication, including the role of social media, ethics, and intercultural strategic communication.

As the author explains, the term "strategic communication" properly refers only to the planned campaigns that grow out of research and understanding what publics think and want. This vital resource answers the questions of whether, and how, strategic-level skills can be used across fields, as it:

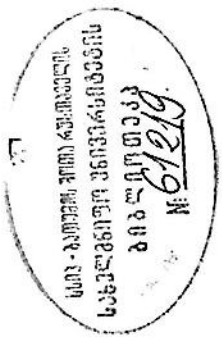
- Explores the role of theory and the cocreational meta-theory in strategic communication
- Outlines ethical practices and problems in the field
- Includes information on basic campaign strategies
- Offers the most recent information on risk communication, preparedness and terrorism communication, and employment in strategic communication
- Redefines major concepts, such as publics, from a cocreational perspective

Carl H. Botan is professor in the Department of Communication at George Mason University.

Strategic Communication Theory and Practice

The Cocreational Model

Carl H. Botan



WILEY Blackwell

This edition first published 2018

Registered Office
John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, USA

Editorial Office
111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, USA

For details of our global editorial offices, customer services, and more information about Wiley products visit us at www.wiley.com.

Wiley also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats and by print-on-demand. Some content that appears in standard print versions of this book may not be available in other formats.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication data applied for

Hardback ISBN: 9780470674574
Paperback ISBN: 9780470674581

Cover image: © arthobbit/Gettyimages
Cover design: Wiley

Set in 10/12pt Warnock by SPi Global, Pondicherry, India
Printed in Singapore by C.O.S. Printers Pte Ltd

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Short Contents

Detailed Contents

List of Figures and Tables

Figures

Table

Foreword

From the mid-1960s to the early 1980s the author worked, both paid and unpaid, on behalf of contests for city council, state house, US House and the Bobby Kennedy campaign, founded and operated the People's Law Program and the Community Law Project, worked with a small and now long defunct community newspaper, served very briefly as a newscaster on an FM station, worked with a number of union campaigns (e.g., United Farm Workers' grape and lettuce boycotts, Clothing and Textile Workers' Farah Pants boycotts in southwestern Michigan in the early 1970s and the Professional Air Traffic Controllers during their strike in the early 1980s), worked briefly as a union organizer in the hospitality industry and as a general public relations practitioner. He began to see similarities across these disparate fields, and how they used the same essential knowledge and skill sets. In 1979 he began an academic career teaching labor studies, industrial relations and parliamentary procedure in several Detroit-area colleges. He defined his academic career as primarily in public relations in spite of the fact that there were almost no public relations courses available in Detroit at that time and he did not get to teach a class actually called public relations until 1984 at Illinois State University. He has taught public relations, research methods and strategic communication at Illinois State, Rutgers, Purdue, Temple and George Mason universities, where he is currently a full professor and recent Director of the PhD program in Health and Strategic Communication at George Mason.

Never turning his back on his chosen field of public relations, the author began to see public relations as one core specialty of a much larger field, so that even in the 1980s he began also to describe his field of work as strategic communication. In retrospect, this was due to no flash of insight or prescience, but probably represented no more than an attempt, possibly motivated by the economics, of finding more consulting clients by describing several years of work in communication-related jobs in a way that suggested some specialization in one kind of work. Academic papers, articles and book chapters addressing strategic communication, beginning with an issues management approach, followed in 1985 (Brock, Botan and Frey), 1993 (Botan and McCreadie), 1996 (Botan), 1997 (Botan), 1998 (Botan and Soto), 2005 (Botan), 2005 (Taylor and Botan) and 2005 (Botan and Taylor), among others. Numerous grant applications, panel discussions, seminars, consultancies, book chapters and international speeches addressing strategic communication also followed.

Thus this book is in large part a pulling together of a lifetime of work in strategic communication that began before that term became popular. The chapters that follow represent integration, updating and expansion of many of these earlier works as well as much new material not previously published. The result is an approach to strategic communication that encompasses, in addition to public relations, marketing, social marketing, political campaigning, health campaigns, union campaigns, community relations, investor relations, stockholder relations, national development, public

diplomacy, military public affairs, risk communication, crisis communication, counterterrorism, social media and organizational intervention and change consulting (cf. Botan, 1990), as well as many other specialty areas of strategic communication.

The reader will be best served by keeping three things in mind while reading:

1) Not everyone who claims to be in strategic communication is. In fact, many who claim to be in the field just use the term strategic communication because it is a common buzzword in the business world of the early twenty-first century. It is best to develop your own view of the field as you read and then make your own decisions about who meets your criteria and who does not, including when evaluating this book.
2) Strategic communication is a subset of the broader field of Communication but there are large numbers of legitimate strategic communication practitioners, a term used in this book to denote both tacticians and strategists together, whose background is in other fields.
3) What follows is one person's understanding of a rapidly emerging and evolving field so, although the book is based on both practical experience and scholarship, the views in this book are just one perspective on strategic communication and even then at only one point in time.

Overview of the Book

Many historically quasi-autonomous communication practices are treated as separate in part because practitioners and scholars do not talk enough with each other and in part because once any organization is structured in some way there can be very strong resistance to change because of perceived budgetary, career or disciplinary/departmental interests. The way strategic communication (SC) is handled in a particular corporation or university serves as a kind of window through which to see how well that organization understands which publics are important to it and what its relationships with those publics are. Many corporations and universities balkanize the strategic communication field, dividing it into multiple organizational compartments because of superficial sensory similarities such as, "we all do a lot of writing," or "we all need to communicate with our customers." Both of these views reflect very similar mental models based in the instrumental metatheory discussed in Chapter 2 and throughout this book. But in the larger scheme of things how much, or even how well, we write is not as important as what content we write because the overriding strategic issue of relationships with publics is determined more by content than by form or quantity. Thus, being message-centered is not nearly as important as being publics-centered and among the goals of this book is helping develop an alternative metatheoretic view of strategic communication focusing on strategic-level matters involving relationships with publics.

Some practitioners, particularly in large firms, are a bit ahead of many universities in this regard because they offer services that integrate a broad range of strategic communication practices, although not always with a full understanding of why such services can sometimes be easily integrated and sometimes not. Universities that teach strategic communication related courses also often separate closely related practices into different departments, different schools and even different colleges. They may also combine them inappropriately on the basis of very superficial similarities that comport well with their own assumptions and needs, such as getting a piece of the enrollment or business pie, rather than any real understanding of strategic communication. This book is organized around different views of strategic communication and how these relate both to tactical-level and more strategic-level considerations, including ethics specific to strategic communication.

Part I: Elements

In Part I, the two themes of the book are discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. Chapter 1 covers the first theme that strategic communication is a single field, including, among many others, the core subfields of public relations, marketing and health communication. It does so largely through discussing

basic concepts that apply similarly across subfields. Chapter 2 discusses the second theme of the book, a new approach to strategic communication called the cocreational approach, by first discussing what theory and metatheory are and then comparing the current metatheoretic assumptions about strategic communication with the cocreational view. Consistent with the cocreational metatheory from the second chapter, Chapter 3 discusses the most important concept in strategic communication, publics. It does so through the lens of the cocreational metatheory from Chapter 2. Finally, Chapter 4 discusses the ethical implications of the cocreational model as they apply across strategic communication subfields.

Part II: Strategies

Part II of the book applies the two main themes, but particularly the cocreational theme, to theory-level and applied-level issues in strategic communication (as distinct from the focus on the metatheory level in Chapter 2). It does so by beginning in Chapter 5 with the strategic core of issues and issues management that apply across all subfields. Chapter 6 then discusses examples of existing well-known theories and evaluates each for its applicability and consistency with the cocreational metatheory. The specific theories discussed are by no means all, or even the best, of the theories available to strategic communication practitioners. They are used here because they are so well known and illustrate two underlying arguments, that there is a body of theory that can help break down artificial boundaries between the subfields of strategic communication and that there is an existing body of theory that supports a cocreational view of strategic communication. Part II of the book concludes in Chapter 7 with a discussion of the strategically focused practice of risk and preparedness communication.

Part III: New Challenges

In fields changing as rapidly as SC, new directions of interest are always emerging as well as new developments in more established areas. Strategic Communication is far too broad, and many of its practices far too new and complex, for any one person, one book, or even a whole firm or university department to keep up with. So in keeping with the primary themes of the book, Part III addresses broad areas of development and practice that cut across many areas of SC practice and scholarship. These include social media and new information technology in Chapter 8 and international and intercultural SC in Chapter 9. Finally, although terrorism has been with us since ancient times, it is a new area of theory and SC practice in the early twenty-first century that may one day become another major force transforming SC, and it is the topic of Chapter 10. In keeping with the second theme of the book, Part III discusses these areas through the lens of the cocreational metatheory. Many other areas of development and practice belong here, including the special character of SC as one emerging field that is both primarily composed of women and increasingly well-paid, the continuing practical and ethical issues of studying under one roof both in-house staff practitioners and external consultants with the large differences in socialization and values this implies, the role of SC in national development and nation-building worldwide, political religious and tribal SC, and others. However, time and space considerations limited the book to these three broad areas of emerging practice.

Part I

Elements

1

Strategic Communication Concepts

Summary

Strategic communication (SC) is practiced in many fields, including communication, the military sciences, business management and marketing, politics, public health and a host of others. All the fields that practice SC have developed terms, practices and definitions to meet their own needs. The first purpose of this book is to unify the understanding and practice of strategic communication across these subfields. The job of this first chapter, then, is to lay the foundation for doing so by providing an understanding of SC that can be used across all constituent subfields at all three levels of grand strategic, strategic and tactical communication. To do that, this chapter briefly introduces the scope of SC and how this book is organized and then defines grand strategy, strategy and tactics and explains their relationships. With this background, the chapter then defines SC and explains four generic grand strategies, which serve as archetypes of the policy views that guide much SC practice.

Strategic Communication Is Big and Getting Bigger

The first challenge for anyone studying or practicing strategic communication is that the field is growing so fast in both its core employment and at its margins that no one can get a good handle on all the places and ways we practice it. In addition, there is no generally accepted list of all the constituent subfields of SC, although as discussed later what data there is suggests that the largest subfields of SC include public relations (PR), marketing-advertising-promotion, and public health education (also sometimes known as social marketing). In the United States, for example, there are separate federal employment statistics available that fit pretty well with these three, which can be called the core subfields because the primary purpose of each is to conduct communication campaigns.

Many other fields have only one or a few members doing SC work per organization where the primary purpose is something other than communication campaigns, so these can be described as secondary or peripheral subfields. These are SC practitioners who might work for units of government, in political campaigns, for charities, for religious organizations, as community advocates, in the armed forces, in corporate communication departments, and in the newly emerging communication industries such as social media, web-page design and online research, as well as some independent practitioners and consultants and so on. Although the primary purpose of these fields is not communication

Strategic Communication Theory and Practice: The Cocreational Model, First Edition. Carl H. Botan.

campaigns, the practitioners who work in them are by no means marginal practitioners and they may or may not outnumber the SC practitioners working in the core subfields of SC. However, there are no separate data collected on these practitioners and as a practical matter they are uncountable today. Then there is the academic field of organizational communication, to which SC owes substantial intellectual and practical debts. Organizational communication is (a) where many SC practitioners, both core and secondary, get their academic training, (b) the historical home of much SC research (see especially the rhetorical organizational communication tradition), and (c) a subject area that does not restrict itself to strategic campaigns, so it is not a core subfield of SC.

Employment in SC

It is very difficult to estimate SC employment in any one country, let alone worldwide. This is largely due to two related issues. First, there appear to be no data published for strategic communication by that name. Second, the enormous SC employment in secondary subfields is not parsed out and reported anywhere. On the other hand, there are some data available for the three core subfields in some countries, such as the United States, that can provide some guidance in understanding SC employment, although the way employment categories are grouped again injects some lack of precision.

In the case of public relations in the United States, the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) separates the 240,700 non-management public relations specialists from the 65,800 public relations and fundraising managers (US Bureau of Labor Statistics, 2016–17). But then BLS data do not similarly report on non-management marketing communication specialists at all. Instead they merely report 225,200 "advertising, promotions and marketing managers," not all of which fit the definition of strategic communicators. These data, in turn, appear to contribute significantly to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016–17) overall estimate of 484,640 in "advertising, public relations and related services." Not included in this figure, however, are all the non-management jobs in marketing or the 63,000 health educators (social marketers or social marketing), many of which are core SC practitioners. Notably, health communication jobs are expected to grow much faster than PR or advertising, promotions and marketing jobs.

Clearly, adding up all the jobs and job growth in the core and margins of SC would be impossible, but an estimate of SC employment in the three federally reported core subfields in the US alone by 2020 would be in the range of 600,000–750,000. A guesstimate of total SC employment in the US alone by 2020 would be well over a million, suggested in part by the number of job openings in SC today. For example, in August 2015 one internet job site alone listed 149,797 job openings in strategic communication, although some of the listed jobs fell short of what would be called SC in this book (Indeed.com, 2015). The same source listed 64,954 PR jobs, 228,491 jobs in marketing communication and 375,460 jobs in health communication on the same date, although many of these listings clearly overlap, job titles are a bit subjective and, again, not all the jobs listed on this site fit the definition of SC used in this book.

A guesstimate for worldwide SC employment by 2025 might be in the range of 2–2.5 million jobs, with the largest numbers in the US, Europe (France, United Kingdom and Germany leading) and China. This is at best a wild guess, but a quick check of how much SC is discussed on the internet every day can at least hint at the size of the field and maybe at future employment.

SC on the Internet

The number of SC hits found with simple internet searches appears to be in the area of 50–100 million. In 2010, Yahoo alone returned 204,003,168 hits, but with possible changes to their search procedures that number had dropped to only 16,400,000 by late 2015, at a time when Google had 36,900,000 and

Bing 11,700,000. Many but not all of these are clearly duplicates, but since it would take the reader years just to visit this many sites, with no time for downloading or reading to confirm their content, gross estimates will have to do.

SC's rate of growth in the scholarly arena is also impressive. For example, Google Scholar listed 2,700,000 academic-related SC publications by late 2015, more than double the 1,220,000 of 2010. A 2010 search for SC in the most used scholarly database in just the Communication field (ComAbstracts) returned 369 journal articles, a number that grew to 690 by mid-2012, while ProQuest listed 27,597 documents. A search for SC in the largest scholarly database in management sciences returned only 1,355 sources in 2010 but 3,534 in 2012. SC is growing at a tremendous rate but it is probably not doubling every two years, so these data again suggest that search protocols may have changed. In addition, in the same era, military periodicals as a group contain 11,777 articles on SC, and the ISI Web of Knowledge lists 1,428 books and journal articles. The Science Direct database offers 590 sources, EBSCO Host lists 2,421 sources and, finally, Dissertation Abstracts International lists 1,180 PhD dissertations since 1861 that address SC in some way.

Organization and Goal of This Book

This book is made up of 10 chapters divided into three parts. The first part, "Elements," addresses the basic concepts and components of SC in four chapters: (1) SC as a field, the roles of grand strategy, strategy and tactics and basic grand strategies; (2) the relationship of theory and practice, and an explanation of the cocreational metatheory and the cocreational molecule; (3) the centrality of stakeholders, customers, markets, audiences and publics and how these differ from each other, as well as how publics form and function. Finally, Chapter 4 addresses ethics in SC and related subfields, as well as ethical pledges for practitioners and organizations.

The second part, "Strategies," covers strategic implications and issues in three chapters: (5) issues and issues management, including crises; (6) deriving basic campaign strategies and tactics from theory; and (7) a cocreational view of SC in risk and preparedness situations.

The third part, "New Challenges," offers a cocreational perspective on new and expanding challenges in SC, also in three chapters, including (8) social media and other new information technologies in SC; (9) a cocreational view of international and intercultural SC, including public diplomacy; and (10) terrorist and counterterrorist SC from the cocreational view.

Note that this book does not contain a separate chapter on research in spite of its central role in all strategic communication, and particularly in any cocreational approach. Covering research in SC could take up a whole book if done properly, so there is no way a single chapter could do the subject justice. There are also numerous research methods texts and guides in several SC subfields. Two non-objective recommendations would be *Investigating Communication* by Frey, Botan and Kreps (2000), which is a basic text on research methods, and *Interpreting Communication Research* by Frey, Botan, Friedman and Kreps (1992), which is a case study approach to research methods.

The goal of this book is to use the best that each subfield of SC has to offer and combine those into a single comprehensive publics-centered view intended to be useful to those practicing, researching or teaching in all the subfields of SC. In other words, one goal of this book is to answer the question: How can a field like marketing or charity fundraising help improve the practice of SC in political campaigning or public diplomacy? The question is not whether simple tactical skills can be useful across subfields—many can and several good writing books address this tactical level, including Kent (2010), Meeske (2008), Newsom and Haynes (2010), and Rich (2009). The real issue is whether, and how, strategic-level skills can be used across fields.

The next two sections of this chapter help lay a foundation for defining SC from a cocreational perspective by discussing how communication can be constitutive of organizations and what role information plays in SC.

Communication as Constitutive

Because SC is about communication, the discussion in this book assumes an understanding of what communication is, because explaining that is too big a task to add to this book. One important understanding that helps shape this book is that communication plays a much bigger role in organizations than most realize. In fact, as our colleagues in organizational communication have been telling us for more than a generation, communication is more than just a tactical tool of an organization—it is constitutive of all human organizations, meaning that communication is a necessary, but not sufficient, condition for building and operating all human organizations. This means communication is a core function of every human organization, so when you work with communication in an organization, you are working with that organization's very core.

For example, imagine that you have a pile of bricks, money in the bank, a bunch of people standing around who are willing to work, desks and computers. Do you have an organization? No. An organization comes into existence only when repetitive flows of communication are established that allow for specialization and division of labor, as well as coordination. The thing we call an organization is the result (i.e., the "product") of the process of communication. This is not to say that the organization is made up only of communication, but rather that organizations cannot exist in the absence of systematic communication. Thus SC is not just about externally directed campaigns. Instead SC includes all the strategic uses of communication within and by organizations. In this sense, not only are PR, marketing and health communication subfields of SC, but so is much of organizational communication. No nation, non-governmental organization (NGO), corporation or military organization comes into existence without SC playing some role, usually a large one, which means that both armies and countries are, in part, products of the process of SC. The idea that communication as constitutive is also used by some to suggest that reality itself is socially constructed through communication (cf. Berger and Luckman, 1966; Gergen, 1985), although this discussion is, again, beyond the scope of this book.

Role of information Understanding that communication is constitutive of both organizations and publics is important for understanding the role of information in SC. As used in this book, information is simply what reduces uncertainty (Daft and Lengel, 1986; Shannon and Weaver, 1998). In SC this includes both the inflow of information into the organization about publics and the outflow of information to publics that they can use to reduce the uncertainty in their minds. Information is what publics use to create new knowledge and meanings for themselves and others. In a way, information is a fuel for the cocreational process. One major implication of this for SC is that to provide publics with information, what reduces uncertainty, a practitioner must first somehow assess what publics already know. This is another reason real SC always begins and ends with research.

As used in this book, the term "strategic communication" refers only to the planned campaigns that grow out of first understanding what publics think and want. Campaigns based on anything else may be creative, insightful, long, short, well run, poorly run and have other attributes; they just cannot be strategic because their relationship to what publics are thinking is not clear so what are called strategies may not in fact be strategic.

With the size of SC reported, the organization and goal of the book established, and the constitutive role of communication explained, this chapter now turns to one of its two central tasks, explaining and defining SC and closely related concepts, including grand strategy, strategy and tactics.

General Definition and Role of SC

Used by many fields and in many ways, the term SC has taken on a life of its own. Unfortunately, SC is sometimes used as just a buzzword. For example "consultants" selling pre-packaged sets of fill-in-the-blank forms providing a sort of checklist of the questions that should be answered in planning a campaign seem to think they can charge more if they call the paper with blank lines on it a *strategic* plan than if the blanks were not labeled as being strategic. Even more problematic are those who believe that simply following orders from higher ups, or being a tactician in a campaign planned by others, makes them strategic communicators. Following this logic a little further would mean that the tactician working on a poorly conceived (non-strategic) plan would be acting strategically. Perversely, this might even be taken as proof that the plan itself has become ipso facto strategic.

These views of SC are erroneous. In communication, the term strategic should be taken to mean campaign plans based on research. More specifically, as in this book, the term strategic means that good communication strategy begins with what publics think and feel about our relationships with them. Thus it is the *information inflow* portion of SC that comes first and that can be most important to others in the organization as well. Because SC practitioners who practice strategically are often the most aware of, and often best trained to understand, the range of relationships an organization develops with its publics, the department or division charged with leading SC should usually be the default organization-wide collector of strategic information, with other departments and divisions engaging in specialized information collection as needed. As a primary provider of strategic information on publics—information which is often time-critical and can affect both the organization as a whole and relationships among its divisions—there should be a direct reporting link from the information inflow function of SC to at least the COO level of the organization, if not the CEO level.

Thus, SC is one practice with two parts. The first part is collecting *strategic information.* The second part is developing *planned strategic communication campaigns* based on the information collected. From the point of view of SC, the information brought into an organization is strategic information insofar as it is information that can be used to describe, explain or predict the relationship between an organization and its publics (Figure 1). Describing, explaining and predicting relationships with publics are then the foundation of strategic campaign planning. This is why real SC always begins with publics and never with the simple wishes of the organization. Strategic campaigns should be based on a realistic understanding of current and potential relationships rather than on wishes. Starting from the wishes of the organization may be part of why campaigns have historically had extremely low (often single-digit) success rates.

People from different fields and with different interests define the term SC in very specific ways so there is little agreement as to what it means. In fact, what SC is and how to practice it can be disputed even within a single organization if it is a large one or highly segmented. For example, Josten (2006) describes parts of the federal government as unable to agree: "presently the Department of Defense (DOD), US Strategic Command (USSTRATCOM), and other USG agencies are struggling with the concept of strategic communication (SC). There are several definitions of SC within the government, with some consensus that Military Information Operations (IO), Public Diplomacy (PD), and Public Affairs (PA) are primary components" (p. 16).

Figure 1 Strategic information defined

Strategic information is information that can be used to describe, explain or predict the relationships between an organization and its publics.

However, these fields often do appear to agree on at least two things about SC. As opposed to nonstrategic efforts, SC involves (1) research about the publics and the lie of the land, and (2) constructing a *plan* that takes into account both the goals of the organization and the feelings, needs and attitudes of publics. A third common element might be implied, although it is not explicit: (3) SC uses evaluative research to assess how publics think and feel during and after a campaign.

This is an opportune point to introduce a metaphor to help visualize the relationship of subfields to the overall field of SC, and for a definition of SC derived, in part, from my earlier definitions of both the subfield of public relations and of strategic communication.

Tree metaphor of strategic communication as a gestalt SC is a gestalt, a whole. This simply means that while something is made up of parts, the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, and that the whole would be something different if any of its parts were missing. A tree can be used as a metaphor for a gestalt because it is made up of roots, trunk, branches, leaves, etc., but none of these can survive on its own. To be a living whole—and greater than the sum of its parts—each part needs the other parts and when they work in concert they make a new living thing.

SC can be thought of as similar to a tree in the sense that the various subfields and the specializations within them are like the branches and leaves of a tree. Each looks separate to the casual observer, but a trunk and root system supports all the branches and leaves and ties them all together into a whole living thing. Therefore, although there are boundaries between the subsystems of a tree (the trunk and leaves do have differences, for example), the boundaries are often not as important as the function of each as a necessary subsystem, what each subsystem contributes to making the whole viable.

The subfields of SC are a little like the branches of a tree in that each looks separate from the others. But there is something that links all of SC together, much as a tree's trunk links the branches together. This SC "trunk" is made up of at least the three things that are characteristic of all SC subfields: (1) the central role of publics in the relationship between a group or organization and its publics, (2) research as the source of information about that relationship, and (3) communication campaigns using strategies derived from research. The most professional strategic campaigns have three additional characteristics: (4) evaluative research and a willingness to be evaluated on the basis of it, (5) an express willingness of the group or organization to change itself to adapt to the needs of publics rather than just seeking ways to get publics to change, and (6) adherence to an ethical code or set of standards. To extend this metaphor just a little more, the whole tree is supported by its root system, which draws nourishment from the soil *before* there can be branches or leaves. For an organization's strategic communication, the soil we draw nourishment from is our publics, which helps explain numbers 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5 just noted. For the purpose of SC strategy begins with publics at the center of the process, and it is our relationship with them that is most important. The message actually exists only to serve this relationship; thus message crafting or testing should never be thought of as a separate part of SC. Figure 2 defines strategic communication from the perspective of the cocreational metatheory (explained in Chapter 2).

SC is the use of information flowing *into* the organization (research) to *plan* and carry out a communication campaign addressing the relationship between an organization and its publics. SC is research based and publics centered rather than organization or message centered.

Figure 2 Strategic communication defined

This definition involves several components that are discussed throughout the book. For now it is enough to note three things.

1) Both planning and implementation are part of SC, but the planning and implementation aspects can be separate and carried out by different people. When this happens, the planner is practicing SC while someone who only implements the plans of others is basically just practicing tactical communication.
2) To help see that this definition is another thread that runs through the book, it can be linked easily to the discussions in Chapters 2, 3 and 6 by just stopping to think of a campaign plan as a kind of mini-theory. The next chapter, for example, defines a theory as a statement about the relationship between two or more phenomena. In a plan, practitioners basically predict that if they do certain things there may be predictable effects on their relationships with publics. Thus, a campaign plan is a kind of mini-theory.
3) There are meaningful distinctions between the setting of organizational policies, the development of campaign strategies, and the implementation of a campaign, as discussed next in the relationship of grand strategy, strategy and tactics.

Grand Strategy, Strategy and Tactics

The concepts of strategy and tactics are generally not new to experienced scholars or practitioners, although grand strategy may be. Grand strategy helps explain some of the widely disparate assumptions, findings, and advice in the business literature, the public relations literature, public diplomacy, and elsewhere.

Many fields have used the terms strategy and tactics to mean slightly different things but there are some similarities. Drawing on those similarities, this discussion has four goals, to explain: (1) the idea of analoguing, (2) the idea of grand strategy, (3) four archetypal grand strategies (similar to organizational worldviews), and (4) how grand strategy, strategy and tactics are related. Much of this discussion is an adaptation of Botan (2006) and begins with a brief historical background.

History

Strategy and tactics are concepts originally developed in military sciences over about two and a half millennia, so it is no surprise that SC is used by militaries around the world. Acknowledging the military background of an idea, however, does not mean that SC campaigns should adopt a military perspective or discuss "defeating" anyone. Only the most backward practitioner would suggest such a possibility. Among others, Cutlip (1994) and Moore (2010) have written about the history of SC, although Cutlip's large volume was limited to the subfield of PR.

Although it may be a bit of a stretch for some readers, Moore (2010) worked with his own view of what SC is and suggested that the earliest SC occurred in the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods and was introduced to help overcome the uncertainties of life then, often with a religious element.

> This process [SC] may be speculatively traced archaeologically in the cave paintings and rock art surviving in France, Spain, Australia, South Africa, and the southern United States, or the "Venus" figurines found across central and eastern Europe, to the astonishing ceremonial sanctuaries like Gobekli Tepi in Turkey and other burial chambers and temples of seminomadic and

> more settled societies of later hunters and early cultivators in at least the Mesolithic and Neolithic, under excavation in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. These first great attempts at organized as opposed to spontaneous or personal communication are, so far as can be known, ritualistic or proto-religious. (p. 228)

Much ancient architecture had as one of its purposes impressing audiences with how powerful and important the builders were, often by combining the secular with the religious and military. For example, Moore (2010) reported that

> Pharaoh Ramesses II combined these features in the temples to himself, his gods, and his family at Abu Simbel completed around 1264 BC, fronted with statues of himself, decorated inside with painted reliefs of Ramesses worshipping himself and defeating the Hittites at Kadesh (in reality a probable tie). Abu Simbel faces the Nile on the southern border of Egypt. The location was important to awe the Nubians to the south. The orientation was important because it was [the] first thing travelers to his land saw as they journeyed downriver. The function and decoration were important because they defined the Pharaoh's public personality. (p. 233)

I was similarly impressed when visiting the tomb of Ramesses II (also Rameses or Ramses) in the Valley of the Kings in Egypt. You enter the tomb through a large somewhat square entry and are immediately surrounded by hieroglyphs painted on the walls and ceiling. These depict both writings from the famous *Book of the Dead*, a primary religious document of the day, and illustrations of Ramesses's military victories, with prisoners being marched into slavery and his chariot riding over the broken bodies of his opponents. Since the plan was to seal up the tomb, keeping it hidden and dark for all time, it seemed clear the most likely intended audience was the gods of the day. Thus, combining religious sayings with military depictions and gold may well have been an attempt to communicate a strategic message to the gods that Ramesses either was already one of them, or should be admitted into their membership.

In business, the term strategy appears to have a much shorter history. For example, Kay, McKiernan and Faulkner (2003) say they trace

> the evolution of thinking about business strategy over the nearly forty years in which it has been identified as a distinct subject ... we begin from the 1960s perspective in which strategy was largely equated with corporate planning, describe the 1970s emphasis on diversification and portfolio planning and observe concern in the 1980s for concentration on the core business and the development of less analytic, more people-oriented approaches to management. (pp. 27–28)

Although the concept is ancient, the term grand strategy has a relatively short history. The authors of the books *Grand Strategy* (Sargeaunt and West, 1941) and *Strategy* (Hart, 1954) are among those who have distinguished between grand strategy and strategy based on the original work of Sun Tzu in the 5th century BCE (Sun Tzu, 1963). For them, strategy operates at the level of a campaign, while grand strategy operates far above the level of a campaign. For example, at the level of a whole country, grand strategy is not a property of the military (except in military dictatorships) but involves questions of policy and planning at the highest levels of government. At the level of a nation, this means, for example, diplomacy and national alliances. Strategy, on the other hand, is a property of campaigns

and is about planning and the maneuvering and allocation of resources. As Sargeaunt and West (1941) explained the relationship:

> We all try to keep informed on military strategy—the maneuvering of the general staff and the commanders in chief. But what of grand strategy ...? This highest type of strategy emanates not from the military chiefs but from the war cabinets and their advisors, above all the Prime Minister or President. (p. vii)

This discussion returns to the relationship of grand strategy, strategy and tactics after a discussion of analoguing, the process being used here to explain grand strategy, strategy and tactics. A short caveat is in order before moving on to analoguing. This discussion of the history of SC has, by virtue of being short, also been very incomplete. Each subfield has its own history, many parts of which may support the view that it is a subpart of SC as described here, and many parts of which may support that view that important aspects of the history of that subfield do not fit within SC. Public relations, for example, has quite different histories in different countries (see the discussion of the matrix in Chapter 9). In the US and Canada, for example, PR largely evolved out of journalism, so views of the field often focus on superficial similarities between journalistic writing and PR writing, as well as the important economic role of media relations practices in both journalism and PR. These similarities exist primarily at the *tactical* level, however, and ignore the fundamentally different *strategic* and *societal* roles of the two fields. The emphasis on using journalism practices at the *tactical* level in PR has led to a tactical self-concept for many in PR (including the author, for many years). This tactical self-concept has in turn contributed to holding down pay levels of practitioners, limiting perceived job opportunities, quite different emphases in PR curricula at the university level and, most important, a message- and sender-centered focus that is diametrically opposed to the cocreational view this book is based in. These difference suggest that some of those in PR who self-identify with a more tactical perspective, including but certainly not limited to the hired gun and technician models discussed in Chapter 4, may be made uncomfortable, or even angry, by seeing their field discussed as a subfield of *strategic* communication. It is easy to imagine that there are many such historical artifacts in other SC subfields that merit analysis but doing so would require specialists from each subfield who understand their own subfield, and its history, far better than the author does.

Analoguing

Analoguing is the metatheoretic practice of overlaying terms and their relationships from one theory or conceptual model onto another so as to better understand a relationship under investigation. Hawes (1975) discussed analoguing at length (cf. pp. 7, 110–117) and Botan and Hazleton (1989) discussed its application in the first chapter of *Public Relations Theory*.

To help make it easy to apply the concepts of grand strategy, strategy and tactics to other strategic communication contexts, it is easiest to start at the grand strategy level and use a hypothetical example. In the military context (recall that SC is not about fighting or conquest), the grand strategic level is government policy and alliances. Therefore, in SC, the analog of the grand strategic level is organizational, industrial, and even society-level policies and laws. In the military context, the strategic level is the war or campaign planning level usually carried out by a general staff. Strategies address the planning and maneuvering of personnel and resources to carry out a campaign-level mission and are a property of campaigns. The analog of the strategic level in SC is the planning and maneuvering of resources such as what information will be collected (research) or disclosed, to which publics, what arguments will be made, and in what order. In a military context, the tactical

level is the actual fighting required to carry out a strategy and is often conducted by low- to mid-level officers and enlisted personnel. Note that both military organizations and corporations often have a fairly clear line of demarcation between those who carry out tactics and those who do strategic planning. Few if any enlisted personnel are likely to be involved in a general staff's strategic deliberations, and few if any staff charged with maintaining clippings files or media relations contact lists are likely to be involved in planning the strategy of a $20 million marketing campaign.

For example, if the company you work for as an SC manager has decided to expand from just web-page hosting into selling advertising, it has made a policy-level (grand strategy) decision to change the fundamental business it is in, work with new partners and suppliers (the analog of alliances for a nation) and to take on new competitors and new risks. As an SC manager you hopefully shared in the decision-making process but you did not have the authority to make this decision on your own. Once the policy-level decision is made, however, you might well take the lead in developing communication strategies for implementing the new policy with customers, investors, the media and employees, among others. You might involve your most senior subordinates in this process but probably not your communication technicians who build and maintain your website. One of your strategies might be to reassure key customers, and maybe investors, before a public announcement so they feel they are trusted and that they can trust you. You might develop several ideas to share with them—strategies—such as emphasizing continuation of their already successful relationship with your company while benefiting from cost savings by having a single company provide both mass media advertising and web-page content. The strategies involve deciding what ideas and evidence to present, what arguments to make, in what order, to which type of customer. Your strategy is the plan, while the steps taken to actually carry out the plan are the tactics. You might assign people to units to develop ideas to implement this strategy, such as personal informational visits to major investors before the public announcement. Tactics for implementing this strategy might include producing visual aids (videos, booklets, diagrams, etc.), requesting informational meetings and so on. Actually producing the visual aids is not a strategic endeavor, any more than writing and mailing letters or making calls is, but the content (arguments and logic) of them is strategic. The tactics are the concrete form your strategies take, so tactics are often directly measurable while strategies may have to be measured indirectly. For example, this strategy of assessing key customers might have to be measured by critiquing the impact of each of several tactics and then summarizing the effect of the overall strategy. Tactics give your strategies substance and make them real. Without tactics to make them real, strategies are just ideas, in the same way as grand strategies are just wishes without strategies to implement them.

Specifically measurable outputs Note that a single tactic such as making a video to show customers is often accomplished by breaking the work down into even smaller measurable tasks that can be called *specifically measurable outputs.* These are the actual units of tactical work that are measured, such as hours used, pages of written script, the number of news releases sent out and so on. Specifically, measurable outputs are not different from tactics in kind (in the way tactics are different from strategy): they are merely the measurable units of work within a tactic. Thus, some tactics are directly measureable because they are specifically measurable outputs. That is, there is no need for smaller units of work to implement some tactics, such as simply giving an oral presentation. Other tactics may be measured through more than one specifically measurable output.

Level of analysis The relationship between grand strategy, strategy and tactics is easiest to see if one is clear about level of analysis. As strategic communicators, our level of analysis is almost always the

campaign level. For us, the grand strategy is the policy-level decision that we must follow, while tactics are the actual work procedures used to implement the strategic plans we create.

Unfortunately, these three simple-sounding levels of SC are often hard to differentiate in practice. *The relationship between strategy, tactics and specific outputs gets complicated when practitioners lose perspective and begin to think from their own point of view rather than from a campaign perspective.* In such cases, practitioners might quite validly say that they got an assignment and had to figure out a strategy for implementing it; or that they are working as part of an SC campaign so they must be being strategic. The level of analysis in SC is the campaign, not the individual practitioner's workload. As long as practices are looked at from the perspective of the whole campaign, it is easy to see that strategies are parts of the campaign plan. Individual practitioners who think of ways to carry out one piece of a campaign may be being creative and doing SC work but their decisions are not about the whole campaign so what they are doing is not campaign strategy—it is implementing someone else's campaign strategies. Remember, however, that those *strategies only become concrete and have a real-world existence because someone is implementing them, so each practitioner is a valuable and indispensable part of SC but not necessarily making decisions at the strategic (i.e., campaign) level* and that work done without guidance from a strategy is not *strategic* communication.

With analoguing complete it is possible to define grand strategy, strategy and tactics in general enough terms to be used across SC applications.

Grand Strategy

Most organizations and many publics adopt grand strategies for dealing with their environments. These are analogous to but different from the grand strategies of nations (see Figure 3). For example, Toyota had a grand strategy that led to making three brands of cars for different market segments. As a result, Toyota developed strategies for three advertising and marketing campaigns covering Toyota, Lexus and Scion, which has since merged back into the Toyota brand. Each brand's marketing strategy must be subordinate to the corporate grand strategy of brand differentiation for different market segments. Corporate grand strategy outranks any one strategic marketing campaign, so, for example, the Toyota brand is not allowed to encroach on Lexus's luxury turf.

Figure 3 Grand strategy defined

> Grand strategy is the policy-level decisions an organization makes about goals, alignments, ethics and relationships with publics and other forces in its environment. (Botan, 2006)

Strategy

Because strategies must be subordinate to grand strategies, the public relations staff of the US White House and the staff of Exxon-Mobil were constrained by the grand strategies of their organizations during different crises. Exxon-Mobil practitioners, for example, were no freer to admit wrongdoing after the Valdez oil spill than were Clinton White House practitioners during the Monica Lewinsky scandal.

Strategies are properties of campaigns that exist to implement grand strategies (see Figure 4). Thus, strategy is always constrained by grand strategy and should not exist separately from a grand strategy. A strategy existing for any reason other than to implement a grand strategy can be called an *orphan strategy*. These are wasteful at best and counterproductive at worst. Each strategy in a campaign should clearly belong to a grand strategy and orphaned strategies should not occur.

Strategy is the campaign-level planning and decision-making involving maneuvering and arranging resources and arguments to meet the needs of publics and organizational grand strategies.

Figure 4 Strategy defined

Strategies are also not static. A plan is not made by specialists and then blindly followed by subordinates because the others in the relationship, including the publics, get a vote on how they want to change the relationship, such as in the marketing context where they can vote with their wallet. Thus strategies are often slightly rough road map from experts that those who actually take the journey fill in and adjust as the relationships between an organization and its publics unfold. Finally, strategies are not discrete in that they do not exist in isolation from one another. Strategies link to and facilitate, or impede, other strategies in a campaign, strategies from previous campaigns, and strategies in future campaigns. One can think of a strategy that is planned to bridge multiple campaigns, such as a theme or jingle that operates below the level of grand strategy. These and strategies that affect the long-term relationships between an organization and its publics are often matters of concern to the higher, grand strategy, level and may require approval.

Tactics

Finally, tactics—the actual activities or doing that comprise the practice of SC in any subfield—have to be designed to implement one or more specific strategies. While it is possible, and sometimes highly efficient, for a single tactic to serve more than one strategy, it is relatively rare and can be confusing. Tactics are properties of a strategy, are subordinate to strategy and exist to implement strategy (see Figure 5). A tactic that exists without serving a strategy can be called an *orphan tactic* and, like orphan strategies, would be wasteful of resources at best, probably confusing and possibly even counterproductive. Each tactic should belong to a strategy and orphan tactics should not occur.

It is no surprise that the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA) has three regular publications, two of which are named *Strategist* and *Tactics* (PRSA, 1995a; 1995b). The former is targeted primarily at the counselor or planning level and the latter primarily at the tactical/technical level, although it also contains news of the field, among other things.

Tactics are the specific activities and outputs through which strategies are implemented—the doing or technical aspect of public relations.

Figure 5 Tactics defined

Relationship of Grand Strategy, Strategy and Tactics

The hierarchical relationship in which each lower level is subordinate to a higher level is only half the relationship between grand strategy, strategy and tactics. Each higher level also gets its concrete existence or "reality," if you like, from the levels below it. That is, grand strategies are basically just ideas without strategies to implement them and, in turn, tactics to implement those strategies. Although grand strategy is at the top of the hierarchy, it is completely dependent on tactics, often many tactics, and one or more strategies to give it any substance. Likewise, a strategy is only an idea about how a campaign should be conducted. The campaign only gets its substance through tactics so strategy is also completely dependent on tactics.

Thus, in the relationship of grand strategy, strategy and tactics there are at least two dimensions. Authority and guidance flows downward but substance flows upward. This relationship can best be understood as a kind of duality much as light and dark are a duality. Each is separate from but

dependent on the other, at least in the sense that one is only really meaningful if the other exists. If there was only light, what meaning could dark have? In somewhat the same way, tactics without strategy lack meaning but so does strategy without tactics.

Finally, *there are no cut-and-dried distinctions between grand strategy, strategy and tactics*, although up to now this book has treated them as distinct. For example, the real relationship between strategy and tactics can best be understood as existing on a continuum from purely strategic to purely tactical, with most of the continuum being comprised of practices that are predominantly one thing but which include aspects of the other, as illustrated in Figure 6. Because this book examines SC at the strategic rather than tactical level, it is primarily concerned with the right side of Figure 6.

Tactics are not the focus of this book on strategic communication and much of the book directly addresses strategic-level issues in SC so, since strategy flows from grand strategy, the remainder of this chapter is given over to a brief summary of generic grand strategies and how they influence SC.

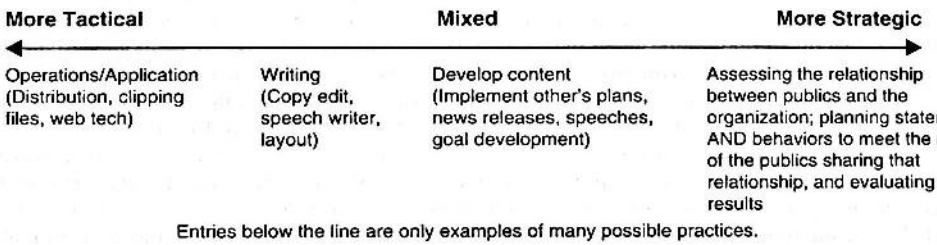


Figure 6 Tactics–strategy continuum

Generic Grand Strategies

Organizational grand strategies develop and then change over time so there are almost an infinite number of possible grand strategies. For the purpose of clarity in explaining grand strategies and what they mean for SC, they can be grouped into four fairly general archetypes involving seven areas of organizational views that are important to SC and, interestingly, to ethics. *The particular grand strategy a real organization develops is likely to include bits and pieces of at least two of these generic models and which model is predominant may change from situation to situation.* For example, an organization that tends to be resistant or even partnering in its overall approach may slip into an intransigent grand strategy during a crisis, often the most potentially damaging time to do so. Newscasts are full of stories about politicians and organizations that, when faced with a crisis situation, become highly intransigent and pay dearly for that mistake.

I want to repeat for emphasis that these grand strategies do not appear in these pure forms in the real world of SC. The use of these generic grand strategies is a pedagogical tool to help illustrate both major components of organizational grand strategies that relate to SC, and what role SC will play in a particular organization. They can also help to visualize what kind of life an SC practitioner is likely to have in a particular kind of organization. From an SC perspective, grand strategy is built from at least seven dimensions of an organization's culture and worldview, including attitudes toward (1) the environment, (2) change, (3) publics, (4) issues, (5) research, (6) communication and (7) SC practitioners. These are summarized in Table 1 and discussed briefly in the next section.

Background

Work by Jones and Chase (1979, p. 6) and, much more importantly, by Crable and Vibbert (1985) provided a foundation for developing these hypothetical grand strategies, although both of those teams of researchers sought only to address strategic options in the narrow area of public policy debate. The work of Crable and Vibbert is particularly important to SC and this book because those authors made the seminal contribution of focusing on publics as the generative force in the life cycle of an issue. In focusing on the role of publics Crable and Vibbert's work provided a foundation for at least the fourth, sixth and seventh dimensions (issues, communication and practitioners) in Table 1. Both Table 1 and the discussion that follows are adapted and expanded from earlier discussions of grand strategies by Botan (2005; 2006).

Intransigent Grand Strategy

The goal of an intransigent grand strategy is to make no changes in the organization in response to outside forces. SC does not typically play an important role in intransigent organizations, which is important to remember when planning a career. Intransigent grand strategies are very uncommon in professionally run organizations but parts of the intransigent grand strategy appear frequently in actual organizational practices. They tend to crop up most frequently in crisis situations, which, as noted above, is also the most dangerous time to fall into intransigence. For example, when the author worked as a consultant years ago, most of his clients were influenced by intransigent views although none was completely intransigent. Organizations engaged in highly competitive work, such as for corporations or political campaigns, tend to be slightly less prone to intransigence, while those facing little competition, like some government bodies, often tend to be slightly more prone to it, in spite of exceptions such as BP after the Gulf of Mexico oil spill.

Environment The intransigent grand strategy assumes the organization should be free of unwanted pressures from its environment yet it will still seek to get what it wants from its environment because, for an intransigent organization, publics exist only to meet its needs. Famous historical examples of intransigence include the mishandling of the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, the leadership of Enron after it was caught stealing millions of dollars in stockholder equity, President Richard Nixon and the erasure of tapes to maintain his stonewall of denial during Watergate and the ensuing cover-up, and Saddam Hussein, who had new victories announced on Iraqi state-run television even as US and Allied tanks were entering Baghdad.

In an intransigent organization, "freedom" to pursue its goals without accountability to the environment is among the highest goods, and those outside the organization are thought not to have any real right to interfere. When threatened, the first instinct is to cut off communication and reject those outside in order to protect the organization, conserve its resources and limit legal exposure. That is, the first instinct is to stop not only communicating strategically but communicating at all and often to just claim that "we did nothing illegal."

Change To an intransigent organization, change is bad, partly because it costs money. Any change may be seen to imply that someone in the current leadership has failed so leaders may try to block any change they do not initiate. Those advocating change may risk the label of not being team players and become marginalized.

Table 1 Grand strategies

	Environment	Change	Publics	Issues	Research	Communication	SC practitioners
Intransigent	**Organization seeks control** • Make environment adapt to us • Outside control is bad and should be beaten back • Stonewall until issues go away • "We did nothing illegal" is enough	**Negative** • Bad avoid/oppose • Costs money • Implies current leadership's failure so leaders often bitterly opposed	**Use** • Exist to meet organization's needs • No legitimate "stake" beyond organization's wishes	**Defend** • Result of wrongful external attacks by those lacking our knowledge and understanding • Illegitimate tries at impeding right to manage	**Bah!** • Already have the experience • Already understand issues and publics • Good research always supports current management	**One-way** • Since organization is right just "educate" publics • The less we need the better our management is • Withholding information is legitimate strategy • Only useful tactically • Seek magic bullet	**Technicians** • Loyalty primary • Only explain management decisions • Communication only a tool for controlling environment • Ethics decided by organization • Strategy is others' job
Resistant	**Organization seeks control** • Avoid/resist outside influence when possible • BUT organization must adapt to its environment	**Negative** • Bad/costly • Usually implies failure • MiniMax principle • Foot dragging is default approach	**Use** • Powerful but dangerous • Appeasing is necessary evil • Fail to understand organization well enough	**Avoid/Solve** • Result of external interference or lack of understanding leaders • Ignore when possible • Put issues behind us as fast and cheaply as possible	**Strategic only** • Only to find how much adaptation is absolutely necessary • Supports current leaders and policy • Test messages to find best way to change publics	**Modified one-way** • Mostly one-way • Some two-way for adapting messages or organization (develop magic bullet) • Media work key • Social media used • Minimize communication	**Technicians** • Explain decisions • Ethics still decided by organization – professional SC ethical standards unimportant • Minimal strategic responsibilities

(Continued)

Table 1 (Continued)

	Environment	Change	Publics	Issues	Research	Communication	SC practitioners
Partnership	**Separate but equal** • Separate from but interdependent with the environment • Organization must adapt • Try to shape issues to organization's needs • "Enlightened" management	**Negative** • Natural but painful • Good change managers valued for reducing pain • Investment in future	**Separate/Equal** • Constructive force • Legitimate stakeholders • Still need to understand organization better	**Solve** • Publics play role in defining issues • Part of organizational life • Avoid when we can but learn from each	**Ongoing** • Strategic and evaluative • Environmental scanning • Up the time stream • Still test messages to find best way to change publics	**Strategic** • Communication is lifeblood of organization • Dialog (two-way) and social media important • More is better	**Communication managers** • CEO is top one • Professionals with own skills and ethics • Strategic advisors BUT usually not at main table
Cocreational	**Organization subordinate** • Publics cocreate environment and its meanings • Organizations must integrate selves into that environment	**Positive** • "Our element" • Lack of change would be unnatural and dangerous • Publics, organization, and relationship constantly evolving • Ability to change is organization's main asset	**Together** • Defines relationships • Legitimate interests, own agendas and meanings • Reason for existence • Sometimes cannot tell where organization processes stop and public ones start	**Build with** • Publics cocreate • Issues = opportunity • Natural part of life • Lack of issues means lack of growth and progress by organization	**Ongoing** • Strategic and evaluative • Organization learns own future and actual values by research • No major decision without research	**Strategic** • Organization and public are both product of communication • SC is core function for all executives • Social media very important within and between publics	**Strategic team** • SC staff are, first and foremost, experts on publics • At main table • Internal and external roles, including leading many change processes • Ethics leadership

Notes: (1) Intransigent seeks to subordinate portions of the environment to the organization while resistant, partnership and cocreational accept that the organization is subordinate to the environment so change is necessary. (2) Resistant seeks to avoid change so long it often appears to outsiders to be intransigent. (3) Intransigent/resistant believes issues are impositions from an essentially dangerous environment while partnership/cocreational accept that publics have legitimate agendas and define issues.

Publics Intransigent organizations believe publics have no right to a voice in or about the organization and its practices. They treat publics as if they exist solely to meet the needs of the organization or are the foils of activist groups; but they also view publics as dangerous. For example, publics are often seen to have a legitimate role only as customers and not as stakeholders in the environment. This view may be justified on the basis that publics do not know as many facts, have as much experience, or know as much about a situation as organizational leaders. So, as was the case with the White House during Watergate, internal and external publics and even government regulatory and investigative bodies are viewed as troublemakers and agitators to be defeated.

Issues For intransigent organizations, issues are impediments imposed by an often threatening environment. (Note: An issue is an unsettled matter the publics say is important; see Chapter 5.) Those raising issues are defined as troublemakers and are sometimes even accused of creating the issue to make themselves look important. Thus the best way to protect the organization is thought to be keeping the media, employees and interest groups from getting information that could be used to interfere with the life of the organization.

Research Intransigent organizations typically have little regard for research. This may be because they believe their leaders know so much more about a situation than do publics that finding out what publics think would be a waste of time; or because opinions that differ from established policy will be ignored anyway. What research is used may be just seeking to find out what is causing the public to be so wrong as to disagree with the organization.

Communication Since intransigent organizations see themselves as both knowledgeable and in the right, communication is of use primarily to educate publics: to inform publics of the right way to act. This is an application of the "if you knew what I knew you'd make the same decision" assumption (Gaudino, Fritsch and Haynes, 1989). One-way campaigns are generally thought to be sufficient for this purpose, so the goal is often simply to find the magic persuasive bullet—that one appeal or great news release—that will help those who do not understand how right the organization is to start doing things the right way.

Practitioners In an intransigent organization, SC practitioners are technicians whose skills are to be used to implement decisions already made by someone else. SC practitioners are not involved in strategy discussions because a practitioner's job is to win support for management decisions no matter what publics may think. Thus practitioners surrender the authority to make all decisions, particularly ethical judgments, to the organization's leadership. How ethical a practitioner can be is entirely dependent on the ethical integrity of those making policy decisions. The old aphorism that "we can get inside and change it from inside" is largely a myth because intransigent organizations see those who are not loyal to the current leadership as not part of the team so they seldom get to a position where they can make meaningful changes. If a practitioner feels uncomfortable about the ethics of what they are asked to do, it will most likely only get worse. Practitioners may also find that there is not enough opportunity for advancement because of the organization's view of the role of communication, almost regardless of the quality of work done.

Resistant Grand Strategy

The goal of a resistant grand strategy is to resist making any changes as much as possible. Some almost raise stalling to the level of a strategy, hoping that if they resist change long enough the pressure will simply blow over. When they are wrong, they may rush into damage control without a plan. Nevertheless, a resistant organization differs significantly from an intransigent one.

Environment Recall that organizations with an intransigent grand strategy seek to control (i.e., "conquer") their environment and to maintain autonomy from the environment. The primary difference in resistant organizations is that they accept that they are dependent on the environment and that ultimately they must adapt to it to survive. For those familiar with systems theory, the distinction between intransigent and resistant grand strategies is somewhat similar to the difference between a closed system (intransigent) believing it can get what it wants out of its environment while returning little, and an open system seeking to maintain homeostasis (equilibrium) in exchange with its environment. Those with a resistant strategy accept, albeit grudgingly, that they are a subsystem within a larger open system and must exchange more equitably with their environment.

Change Even knowing that it must change sooner or later, the resistant organization has to be dragged kicking and screaming into each change. The reason is because it operates on a MiniMax principle in which the minimum amount of change publics will accept is the absolute maximum amount the organization will accept. Change does not necessarily reflect failure in a resistant organization, but it is expensive and disruptive and to be avoided. For example, the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill illustrates resistance as a fallback when intransigent communication strategies fail. After the *Exxon Valdez* tanker hit a reef in 1989 and spilled huge quantities of crude oil into Alaskan waters, the Exxon Corporation further hurt itself by attempting to declare the clean-up finished before it really was, another common behavior of resistant organizations.

Neither external nor internal publics can know what organizational leaders are thinking so they have to read into leaders' actions and public statements. *Although a resistant organization is fundamentally different from an intransigent one in its attitude toward change, it is often so grudging about change that its publics cannot see the difference so they treat the resistant organization as if it were an intransigent one.* The irony comes when leaders of a resistant organization believe that they are being treated unfairly because publics (including the media) see any change as the result of outside pressure so they give the organization little or no credit for any changes it makes (Botan, 2006, p. 230).

Publics Resistant organizations perceive publics as essentially reactive. That is, publics are known to be powerful, but are assumed to be a little like Pavlov's famous dog—their behaviors can be explained as simple reactions to external stimuli so the resistant organization tries to stimulate the reactions that meet its needs at the least possible expense in time and resources—MiniMax again.

Issues Resistant organizations see issues as imposed on the organization from the environment of which they are a normal part. Thus, issues are part of the cost of doing business and need to be gotten

past, or waited out. Issues happen, even to well-run organizations, but the really well-run ones will not allow issues to divert the organization from its original path. Crises are often thought to be the result of meddling by activists, by the media or by government regulators, unless they are the result of clearly aberrant behavior.

Research The use of research by resistant organizations is primarily for one of two purposes, either to support current leaders or to provide data for a MiniMax decision by finding out what is the absolute minimum amount of change that publics will accept in a particular situation. Thus, research by resistant organizations is typically limited to determining what to say to support already set organizational policies. The results of such research are often of little strategic use to the upper levels of the organization or planning and evaluating campaigns.

Communication Except for sales promotions, advertising or finding out the absolute minimum the organization can get away with doing, resistant organizations often minimize their communication with publics. Technical production skills are often valued highly and Sullivan's (1965) craft values are important. This organization might feel like it should have a presence in the social media but often will not understand a strategic role for social media or evaluate whether its use helps build relationships. The resistant organization may utilize social media as an early warning system and a method to get free advertising.

Practitioners Practitioners are primarily seen as possessors of the technical skills to carry out decisions made by others, so, like their counterparts in an intransigent organization, they often work at a structural dead end. A structural dead end can be easily seen by just looking at an organizational chart. If SC reports only through some unit that is not primarily focused on SC (e.g., through human resources), that organization has already decided that SC is not of major importance to the whole organization and the promotion path might end as low as department manager. Similar to SC practitioners in an intransigent organization, those in a resistant organization are expected to accept what the organization's leaders decide is ethical—or at least not illegal—and to carry out their assignments.

Partnership Grand Strategy

A partnership involves two separate entities working toward common goals. An organization with a partnership grand strategy sees itself as a distinctly separate entity from its environment but one that is very dependent on its environment and should work in collaboration with it even in matters that go beyond the financial. Ongoing relationships with all publics are thought to be desirable and change is accepted as natural.

Environment Partnering organizations try to shape issues to meet their needs rather than avoiding or ignoring publics. They often practice what is called enlightened management, and many modern organizations, particularly those with well-educated leaderships, perceive themselves as partners with their publics. The real test, however, comes when the organization's self-perception is challenged by a crisis. Then they may adopt a resistant, or sometimes even intransigent, posture.

Change Ongoing change is expected by partnering organizations and it is not taken to mean failure on anyone's part, but it still consumes scarce resources. Unlike in intransigent or resistant organizations, the partnering organization treats making changes as an investment in the future so skill at managing change is a valuable asset for upper managers.

Publics In a partnering organization, publics are seen as having a legitimate, sometimes almost a cocreational, role in the issues organizations face and, partly because of the attitude toward change, publics can be seen as a constructive force.

Issues Partnering organizations see publics defining issues in much the same way Crable and Vibbert (1985) described. That is, publics are independent of the organization and decide whether the organization has a problem, what stage that problem is at, whether the organization must respond immediately, and, to a large extent, the menu of strategic options available to the organization.

Research Ongoing environmental scanning is an integral part of a partnering organization's day-to-day behavior. Since publics are seen as the definers of issues, the partnering organization accepts the need for consistent research to see what issues are developing, why, and at what stage. Research is counted on to help the partnering organization "move up the time stream" (see Chapter 5), meaning that they try to identify issues early enough in their development that joint responses are likely to work.

Communication Management in partnering organizations is often defined as a communication activity and skill as a communicator is seen as a prerequisite for leadership positions. In addition, either publics or the organization can initiate communication with equal validity so skill in dialogic communication is essential, the complete opposite of the intransigent organization.

Practitioners In partnering organizations, building ongoing relationships with publics is a primary job of leaders and members, including the CEO or president. In contrast to intransigent and resistant organizations, the president or CEO of a partnering organization may even describe the job as primarily SC so the practice is highly valued. Information collected by SC practitioners plays an important strategic role in the organization, although SC may not have a formal seat at the main table. SC practitioners are expected to know and be able to explain the ethical standards of their field and how the organization can best meet those standards.

SC practitioners usually have a clear and well-marked path toward higher leadership positions. For example, the CCO (Chief Communication Officer) of a partnering organization is as likely to be an SC specialist.

Cocreational Grand Strategy

An organization with a cocreational grand strategy seeks to integrate itself into an ever evolving web of relationships with its environment (see Botan, 1993c, for background on what was then called the integrative grand strategy). While organizational identity is important, maintaining a clear separation, as partnering organizations do, is not particularly important in a cocreational organization.

Environment Cocreational organizations see themselves as an integral part of the environment so they work toward open two-way and communication. Publics are not usually seen to be in need of being educated about how right the organization is.

Change Cocreational organizations embrace change. In 2006 Botan said, "while intransigent organizations try to put up a stonewall against all changes, resistant organizations have to be dragged kicking and screaming into each major change ... and even [partnering] organizations see change as a painful and often unpleasant experience, integrative [now cocreational] organizations believe change is 'our element'" (p. 234). Cocreational organizations expect to flourish by being better than others at identifying the need for change, as well as better at implementing change.

Publics As with a partnering organization, publics are understood to play the central role in defining issues and are themselves seen as products of the process of communication (Botan and Soto, 1998). Publics are neither static nor reactive but are seen to mutually create and recreate themselves and the organization.

Issues Cocreational organizations see issues as defined by publics and the resolution of issues as also determined by publics (see Chapter 3 and Crable and Vibbert, 1985). This sophisticated understanding of issues can make available strategic options that even partnering organizations may miss.

Research Like partnering organizations, cocreational ones engage in ongoing environmental scanning and see it as an integral part of day-to-day behavior. Here, however, publics are seen as cocreators of issues so research focuses not only on how publics think and feel but also on the relationships between the organization and its publics.

Communication From a cocreational perspective, an organization is literally a product of the process of communication so there is little need to explain the importance of SC as in intransigent or resistant organizations. Repetitive flows of communication between the organization and its publics, both internal and external, are seen as a central function of the organization and they define its structure (see Giddens, 1977; Weick, 1979).

Practitioners Because practitioners are part of a core function of the organization, they can be a part of the strategic leadership. For example Chester Barnard, then president of AT&T, said, "the first executive function is to develop and maintain a system of communication. This involves both a scheme of organization and an executive personnel" (1938, p. 271).

Change in Grand Strategies

Grand strategies evolve slowly, but they do change. So the names, content, and understanding of grand strategies probably should change as well. For example, what is now called the cocreational grand strategy I used to call the integrative grand strategy. The new name still reflects many of the assumptions and values of the old, but a new name is needed to emphasize some of the changes in

communication, in our understanding of publics and, most importantly, in how publics see and practice their own meaning-making process. Some of these changes in publics and communication are better discussed in the context of Chapter 8 on social media and new information technology than in this chapter.

It is doubtful that any one SC department or staff can bring about substantial changes in an organization alone, but over time SC has a major role to play in the evolution of an organization's grand strategy. Given the growing understanding of the constitutive role of communication in organizational life, as well as the expansion of mass and social media, that role may be expected to expand in the coming decades.

2

Theory in SC and the Cocreational Metatheory

Summary

This chapter lays the foundation for the discussion of concepts and theories in upcoming chapters by exploring several metatheoretic issues, including what theories are, two basic kinds of theory (lay and formal), the relationship of theory, practice and experience, and sender- and message-centered lay theories in SC. It then concludes with a discussion of the well-established instrumental metatheory (i.e., world view) in SC and introduces the new cocreational metatheory, built on a publics-centered view of what the field of SC is, how its major components relate to one another and what metatheoretic criteria will be used in the rest of the book to evaluate the strategic potential of the concepts, theories and plans used in SC campaigns.

Introduction

Metatheory

Do not let the term metatheory concern you (see Botan and Hazleton, 1989). It is used in two ways and both are easy to understand. First, a metatheory discussion just means talking about theories, such as comparing them. Second, a metatheory is the set of assumptions, values and beliefs we use when deciding what should be studied in a field, how that field should be approached, what is right and wrong and so on. For example, if we discuss, with the person sitting next to us, Pavlov's operant conditioning (Nobelprize.org, 2012; the famous salivating dog), that is a theoretic discussion. However, if you discuss how Skinner's theory does or does not meet your expectations of what a good theory should be like, that would be a metatheoretic discussion because you are discussing your theory about theories, in this case your theory about what makes other theories good or bad in your eyes. Similarly, if your supervisor says, "You don't need theories to do strategic communication when you work for this company," that is also a metatheoretic statement, although a naive one.

Metatheory is only one of a number of terms used to discuss these questions. The term metatheory is chosen because, as Hartel explained,

> Bates has defined *metatheory* as "the philosophy behind the theory, the fundamental set of ideas about how phenomena of interest in a field should be thought about and researched" (Bates, 2005, p. 2). Elsewhere, metatheories are characterized as "the often unarticulated

Strategic Communication Theory and Practice: The Cocreational Model, First Edition. Carl H. Botan.

> premises upon which empirical research and theorization is based ... broader and less specific than theories, they are orientation strategies to the world" (Tuominen, Talja and Savolainen, 2002, p. 272). There are several near synonyms to *metatheory*. In some instances a metatheory could also be referred to as a theoretical framework, paradigm, sensibility, worldview, approach or perspective, although these terms are less precise. (2012, p. 1)

Some fields have just one dominant metatheory. Hartel (2012) used the example of how the natural sciences accept evolution as their "overarching perspective on life" to illustrate this. Hartel also pointed out that her own field of information sciences has 13 "major metatheories" (p. 1).

For some authors, metatheories and paradigms are essentially equivalent. For example, Hjørland (2005) said metatheories are "about the description, investigation, analysis or criticism of theories in a domain. They are mostly internal to a domain, and may also be termed 'paradigms'" (p. 5). Others, such as Ritzer (2014), citing his own earlier work, disagree, saying, "In fact, a paradigm is broader than a metatheory because it encompasses not only theories, but also methods, images of the subject matter of [sociology], and a body of work that serves as an exemplar for those who work within the paradigm (Ritzer, 1975)." Agreeing with Ritzer, Bates (2005) said,

> The concept of a metatheory has a lot of overlap with the term "paradigm," which was given its modern understanding in science by Thomas Kuhn (1996 and earlier). In the terms used here, Kuhn considered a paradigm to be the metatheory, the theory, the methodology, and the ethos, all combined, of a discipline or specialty. So paradigm would have a broader meaning than metatheory. (p. 2)

Paradigms often have a metatheory at their core but, as Kuhn (1970) suggested, paradigms go far beyond to include "differences in assumptive world views, vocabularies, goals, and, maybe most important, loyalties" (Botan, 1993a, p. 108; see also Botan and Hazleton, 1989). A paradigm is also "a set of assumptions, concepts, values, and practices that constitutes a way of viewing reality for the community that shares them" (Caldwell, 2009, p. 1). The interesting thing about metatheories and paradigms is precisely that they include *assumptions*. This means they carry within them taken-for-granted beliefs about how things are or ought to be understood so they are often adopted, advocated, defended and even fought over with little thought as to their validity or usefulness. The role of metatheories in SC is discussed later in this chapter.

This chapter talks very little about specific theories because that is the job of Chapter 6. The goal in this chapter is to explore what SC needs from theories, how to decide which theory or class of theories is most likely to be useful in SC, and which are less likely to be useful. Then the chapter introduces the new cocreational metatheory around which this book is built. Thus this chapter is mostly a metatheoretic chapter.

What Theory Is

As Kaplan (1964), a theory is "a way of making sense of a disturbing situation" (p. 295) and Frey, Botan and Kreps (2000) wrote, "a theory is simply a generalization about a phenomenon, an explanation of how or why something occurs" (p. 30). Thus theories are the way we make sense of our experiences by organizing them and explaining how and why they happen. In this very broad sense, all humans are theory makers every day, particularly when we explain to ourselves how or why something works or can work (such as a campaign plan).

For example, when you first figured out that putting your finger too close to a flame hurt, you drew a lesson from that experience that was a very small low-level theory. That theory said

something like, "The relationship between flames and my finger takes the form of pain." Your theory had two independent (predictor) variables, your finger and the flame, and one dependent (outcome) variable, pain.

Thus, you learned to avoid putting your finger, or any other body parts, too close to an open flame. Even smart people have to learn from such experiences, but the truly smart learn more because they form more complex theories from the same experiences. Thus some of us learned to keep our fingers away not just from open flames but from any source of high heat.

As discussed next, developing low-level theories is one important way humans learn because we can then transfer our experience to new situations in the form of these small, sometimes personalized theories. For example, when employers advertise for experienced applicants they do not really want someone who has just experienced things: they really want employees whose experience taught them lessons that can be applied in their new job. Thus theory and experience are dependent on one another in order to be really useful.

Minima for a Theory

At the very minimum, "a theory consists of at least two concepts and a statement explaining or predicting the relationship between those concepts" (Hazleton and Botan, 1989, p. 7). Recall the finger and flame example. The theory you developed was that bringing your finger into contact with fire results in pain. Note that you predicted not that the finger alone, or the fire alone, results in pain; only the relationship of the two results in pain.

No one would deny that Einstein's famous $E = mc^2$ is a theory because it explains the relationship between mass and energy. But do all theories have to be at such a high level of abstraction to be real theories? No! For some people the example of your finger, fire and pain does not rise to the level of what *they* think a theory is because they only accept highly abstract or formal statements (on the far righthand side of Figure 7) as theories. In reality, there are many kinds, or levels, of theories that cover the whole distance from everyday commonsense theories (do not put your finger in fire) to $E = mc^2$.

Along with language use, this ability to develop everyday commonsense theories is a big part of what differentiates humans from other animals and a big part of what makes SC an emerging field. Theory also helps make experience transportable and, thus, more valuable. Those with more experience can build more commonsense theories about their jobs, and the more such theories one builds the wider the range of jobs a person's experience can be applied to. For example, people with a lot of experience in political or nation-building communication campaigns can transfer much of their experience to other subfields within SC, such as public relations or product marketing. Indeed, SC

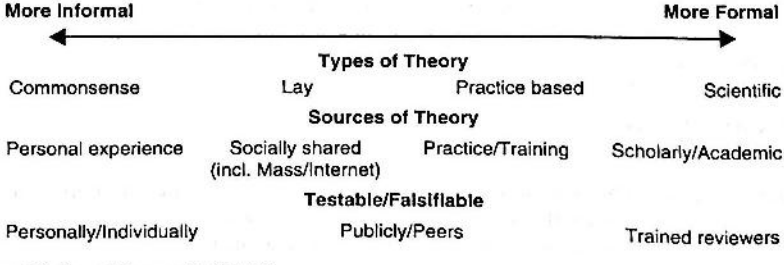


Figure 7 Formal–Informal theory continuum

practitioners in one subfield usually have experience and credentialing that can be applied in other SC subfields if they just think about it. There is no real need for a marketing communication person to apply only for jobs in product marketing communication. They can also apply in fundraising, charitable work, health communication and some of PR work such as, maybe, national development. The next section explores the different kinds of theories useful for making our knowledge and skills transportable in SC.

Kinds of Theories

Differences between kinds of theory have been talked about in many ways, using different terms and categories. There is often considerable overlap between the terms used in different category systems, although you cannot simply analog one category system onto another. Four category systems for comparing kinds of theory are brought together in Figure 7. This section starts with a brief discussion of formal and informal theory but focuses most attention on the second and third category systems, *types of theory* and *sources of theory* because these are most important to SC.

Formal and Informal Theory

One popular way of distinguishing kinds of theory has been to differentiate between informal and formal theories. For example, in 1989 Hazleton and I, while contrasting formal with substantive theories, said, "A formal theory consists of at least one analytic proposition, postulate or axiom from which at least one analytic theorem can be deduced" (p. 10, see Hazleton and Botan, 1989, pp. 7–11 for explanations of unfamiliar terms). Others view formal theories as those that can be expressed using mathematical symbols. Still others, such as Glaser (2007), also differentiated between substantive and formal theories, but equated formal theories primarily with general (e.g., widely or universally applicable) theories. SC is an emerging field-based practice so it does not have much by way of formal theories to offer. On the other hand, SC does have a number of practice-based, lay, and other less formal theories.

Even with SC's focus on practice based theories it is useful to indicate how close to formal a theory is by designating it as more formal–formally worded and openly and widely presented as theories along with their supporting evidence and documentation–or less formal. Offering more formal presentations intentionally makes it easy for others to question and test a more formal theory, and possibly invalidate it. Theories that are further removed from open and wide distribution and challenges are called *more informal* here. Because informal theories often summarize experience they abound in applied fields like SC. In an example important to SC, a theory kept in the mind of a single person can be no more than a commonsense theory, if it rises even to that level.

For the purposes of SC, it is best to think of informal and formal theory as simply two ends of a continuum that covers development of shared SC knowledge based on everything from personal experience to formal theory, similar to the way strategy and tactics were discussed in Chapter 1 and illustrated in Figure 6.

Less Formal Types of Theory

Although there is no agreement among the labels that have been used to discuss less formal theory, the most common seem to be commonsense theory and lay theory. Although there is also no agreement on what these labels mean, the former is often associated with more individually held theories that are based on perceptions of commonsense relationships, while the latter often refers to informal theories that are more socially shared.

Commonsense or everyday theory Many widely held beliefs about SC are probably best described as commonsense theories, also sometimes called everyday theories (cf. Wellman and Lagattuta, 2004). According to Astington, Harris and Olson (1988), "The commonsense view of the world (CS) is the interconnected network of implicit beliefs about the world and our relation to it that informs our everyday thought and behavior as adults, and to which we appeal in defending our everyday claims and explaining our own and others' actions" (p. 226). These are the everyday explanations of why things happen that we use in our lives.

Commonsense theories can be beneficial because they help organize our day-to-day knowledge but they can also be damaging. For example, theories of racial, ethnic or gender superiority are theories that are touted as common sense by some but are wrong. On the other hand, constructive commonsense theories—for instance, that you can avoid bad traffic by taking road X instead of road Y after 4:00 pm—help explain or predict things in our environment and thus offer increased control over our lives. Finally, experienced SC practitioners know that clients at the extremes of many divisive social and political issues frequently claim the mantle of common sense for their position. This serves to free them from having to resort to evidence or logic to support their position, while at the same time casting those who disagree as outside the bounds of reason and rationality.

Lay or naive theory Lay theory, also called naive theory (cf. Sloutsky and Spino, 2004), is more socially developed and shared than commonsense theories so it often seems more valid to its users than commonsense theories. For example,

> Laypeople, like scientists, develop and use theories to help them understand and respond to their social world. *Lay theories*, then, are the theories people use in their everyday lives. Lay theories are often captured by proverbs such as "the early bird gets the worm" ... Lay theories are readily used in everyday life in part because they are socially transmitted and shared but also because they are functional. Like scientific theories, lay theories provide understanding, prediction, and a sense of control over one's social world. However, unlike scientific theories, lay theories need not be objective, testable, or true. (International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences, 2008)

Some lay theories are based on hundreds of years of experience and are quite sophisticated, like some of those involving some folk medicines. For example, although leeches may have been overused on the sick during the Middle Ages, they are still used in some hospitals when blood accumulates where it should not. However, a closely related lay theory, that bleeding the sick would make them well, proved to be usually wrong (with the exception, for example, of hemochromatosis). Lay theories are sometimes not based on much more than superstition or one-time happenstance. For example, some of our ancient ancestors tried to improve rainfall or hunting by wearing blue face paint or offering human sacrifices to appease what might be angry gods—a widely accepted and socially approved lay theory of the time.

Wide acceptance of a lay theory does not ensure validity in spite of the fact that it sometimes gives the false impression of validity to the untrained and those already looking for reasons to support a position. For example, 7 percent of Americans subscribe to the theory that the moon landings were faked, and 21 percent still believe the government is hiding a UFO that crashed (Johnson, 2013).

My favorite naive theory is that according to something called the law of averages a coin that has come up heads five times in a row is supposed to be "due" to come up tails. Kerlinger (1986)

explained in his statistics book why this is not true but naive gamblers no doubt keep many casinos in business by doubling or even tripling their bets on what would be the sixth flip—when the odds of a tail are the same 50 percent as they were on the first flip.

Much less benign—even catastrophic—lay theories exist. For example, Hitler's consciously constructed lay theory about Aryans as a master race was tangentially related to legitimate scholarship that reached a different conclusion (Thapar, 1996), and the widely accepted lay theory among Pakistanis that the iodine in iodized salt causes sterility leads up to 30–40 percent of even business and religious leaders in Pakistan to "spurn" iodized salt (Leiby, 2013, p. A6). This contributes, according to Leiby, to nearly half of the 200 million Pakistanis suffering from some form of iodine deficiency disorder that "can cause spontaneous abortions, stillbirths, goiters, mental retardation, birth defects and other developmental problems" (p. A6).

Conspiracy theories are a kind of lay theory that can be every bit as bad as they can be good. As Chapter 4 asserts, the touchstone of SC ethics is that professional strategic communicators have ethical responsibility for both the content and the *reasonably predictable* results of the campaigns we conduct. Thus it is important for strategic communicators to develop an easy-to-use tool to examine whether a particular lay theory may possibly be valid. Thought experiments are one such tool.

Thought experiments Thought experiments are a way to test a theory or theoretic relationship without carrying out a real test. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Brown and Fehige, 2011, sec. 1) suggests that thought experiments "serve as examples in conceptual analysis (see Cohnitz, 2006). Most attention is received by those that are taken to provide evidence in favour of or against a theory, putting them on a par with real-world experiments (see Gendler, 2004)." Thought experiments can be used with any kind of theory, from the very informal to the very formal, but they are particularly useful for explaining or testing widely held lay theories that affect SC practice.

Most thought experiments are *fairly simple exercises in logic*, although some, like Einstein's famous train to explain the effects of the speed of light, can be a little challenging. Thought experiments are imaginary experiments run in "the laboratory of the mind" (Brown, 1991, p. 1) to test or explain a theory about the relationship between two or more phenomena and have been the subject of many books, articles, papers and conferences. Because they are carried out entirely in the mind, thought experiments are clearly part of the rationalist epistemology discussed below.

Thought experiments are commonly used in the physical sciences to explain or illustrate ideas or to challenge existing theories. For example, the reader may have been taught about gravity using Galileo's famous cannonball and musket-ball thought experiment. As Brown's favorite, this experiment was explained on the first page of his book. Before Galileo offered this thought experiment, the accepted theory of gravity was based on Aristotle's teaching that heavier objects fall faster than lighter objects. Galileo simply posed the question of what would happen if you dropped a cannonball alone and then dropped it again with a much lighter musket ball attached to it? Would the two together fall more slowly than the cannonball alone because the lighter musket ball, being lighter and falling more slowly, would act as a brake on the cannonball? Or, would the attached cannonball and musket ball fall faster than the cannonball alone because together they are heavier than the cannonball? These two mutually exclusive alternatives were equally clear implications of Aristotle's theory, thus Aristotle's theory had to be wrong.

A thought experiment can be used in a like manner to expose the so-called law of averages, discussed above, that supposedly says a coin is due to come up tails after it has come up heads five

times in a row. Imagine that after the fifth head in a row a new person is brought in to flip that coin and the person who flipped it for five heads in a row picks up a new coin to flip. Which way does the law of averages travel? Does the old coin carry the law of averages with it so that it is due for tails? Or, does the old flipper carry the law of averages to the new coin so it is due to come up tails? Or does the so-called law of averages cease to exist because of a new flipper and the new coin?

Now is a good time to briefly consider the fourth subscale in Figure 7, Testable/Falsifiable. One of the most important attributes of a theory is that it can be proven wrong—that it can be tested and found false. This is the property of falsifiability, a term often associated with the philosopher Karl Popper, which says that a theory could conceivably be proven false. This does not necessarily mean that observations exist today that could falsify the theory (e.g., it took a long time to develop the technology and knowledge to make observations that could falsify the old Ptolemaic understanding of the universe), but that it is possible to conceive of such a thing. This is important because, for example, non-testable ideas such as a religious belief are accepted or rejected on the basis of faith, not testing by neutral outside parties, so they are not usually thought of as theories.

For the purpose of SC practice, three different sources of testability/falsifiability of a theory, roughly corresponding to types of theory in Figure 7, would be

1) Testing only by personal or individual insight that applies mostly to theories of the commonsense type and often sourced from personal experience. Note that there is no external influence in testing these theories so they can be extremely subjective and not meaningful to outside parties.
2) Testing by peers and/or in a social arena that introduces a public dimension to testing, taking falsifiability out of the hands of the lone individual. Theories tested in this way include the theories generally of most interest and use in SC. These theories are typically lay and practice-based and their source is shared, either socially (e.g., mass communication or the internet) or from professional practice and training.
3) Testing by trained reviewers under rigorous conditions, including formal blind review. These theories are often of the type called scientific (sometimes formal) and their source is scholarly or academic. This kind of testing is more rigorous than social/public testing because it is conducted by trained reviewers and the testing procedures used as well as the results are fully reported so the testing itself can be reviewed or challenged.

Positive and negative effects of lay theories Lay theories often do much good, but one potential problem with them for SC practitioners is that an event or opinion that has no relationship whatsoever to a second event can, because of honest mistake or preconceived outcome, be erroneously thought to cause that second event. This can be a problem for SC when the original error is widely communicated as if it were tested fact and becomes a widely held lay theory. One such current lay theory, that could be deadly, is the idea that childhood vaccinations cause autism.

Much of the recurring surge in resistance to vaccines is associated with a single medical article by an experienced physician and established medical researcher who claimed to scientifically establish such a connection. This article was published in the *Lancet*, a leading medical journal, in 1998 and literally became world famous and a key link in arguments against childhood vaccination. Unfortunately the *Lancet* editorial and review staffs and British government reviewers all failed to catch what turned out to be major issues with the article. After a panel of the British General Medical Council conducted a full investigation, they "found that [the author] conducted

his research dishonestly and irresponsibly and lacked regard for children by performing invasive tests ... In 2004, nearly all of the author's collaborators distanced themselves from the findings" (Weeks, 2010). The serious problems found in this single paper are summarized by Weeks:

- The study group only involved 12 children.
- It was later revealed that the author was getting paid by lawyers mounting a lawsuit against vaccine manufacturers were paying the author, and that some of the children involved in his study were also involved in the lawsuit.
- Researchers didn't find a link between MMR vaccine, gastrointestinal problems and behavioral problems. Rather, parents told the researchers they remembered their child's symptoms emerging after they received the vaccine. (2010, para. 14)

Partially as a result of this frequently questioned study, a lay theory about the relationship between childhood vaccines and autism remains popular and many children are endangered because of it. Thus, lay theories are

1) often developed from the experience and beliefs of one or a few people, although some are very widely held;
2) have not been subjected to formal testing and replication by others;
3) typically can be usefully applied only to fairly similar situations;
4) can range from very positive to very negative in effect, with most falling in the middle range.

The question remains, what is the difference between the kind of lay theories we all find useful every day and the more formal theories taught in textbooks? Simply put, lay theories have not been rigorously tested by disinterested parties so that we know their limits. The next section discusses more formal theories that have been formally tested.

More Formal Types of Theory

Although they typically do not meet the criteria for formal theories, practice-based theories are often developed and used in professional or quasi-professional settings where they can be evaluated or falsified by practicing professionals. Some in fact cross over into formal theories, such as in the fields of medicine and psychology.

Practice-based theories The term practice-based theory is much less common in the literature than formal, informal, lay, naive or commonsense theory. Nevertheless, the idea of practice-based theory is important to understanding the relationship of theory and practice in SC because it directly addresses theory derived from practice and practices directly guided by theory. For example, in the field of education, Gabriel (2011) discussed practice-based theory in professional education, Ball and Bass (2002) and Ball et al. (2005) explained a practice-based theory of mathematical knowledge, and Marshall (2007) explored cognitive and practice-based theories of organizational knowledge and learning. In nursing, Peden (1998) and others have used Peplau's work on practice-based theory. On the organizational and business side, Gherardi (2000; 2001) addressed practice-based theorizing about learning and knowing, the same basic topic as this section addresses. Other scholars have used the term practice-based theory, although, again, there is no consensus as to exactly what the term means.

Practice-based theories have some of the characteristics of full formal theories but also still have some of the characteristics of informal theories. These are theories of how things work or do not work in a particular field that grow out of the ongoing work of usually formally educated

practitioners. A body of practitioners develops them through exchanging ideas and results, working together, taking part in professional conferences or continuing education, and by dissemination in professional publications and other means. Thus, practice-based theories are usually tested many times—they are not, however, formally tested by disinterested experts who set about the sole task of testing a proposed theory. They are also typically tested in practice rather than under controlled conditions.

Thus practice-based theories are very different from commonsense theories in that they are not the ideas of a single person but are developed by a body of practitioners over time. They are also not the same as lay theories in that lay theories are not tested by qualified practitioners who use both formal and semiformal channels of communication to share results of those tests, including results which disconfirm a practice or theory. Lay theories often exist in a world of uncritical acceptance, while practice-based theories often must face challenges to their utility so they can evolve over time.

The term practice-based theory covers a range of theories just as the other terms in Figure 7 do. As with the other kinds of theory depicted in Figure 7, it is probably an error to try to make clear and distinct divisions among kinds of theories because there will always be some that span boundaries. Rather, as in the discussion of grand strategies in Chapter 1, it is most important to identify the key characteristics of different kinds of theories so as to become comfortable with seeing both the strong and weak points of each.

Scientific theories For some scholars, the term scientific theory is almost synonymous with the term formal theory. Toth (1986) said formal theories are "more formally organized knowledge, more explicit and more abstract knowledge [that] can provide a framework for coping with reality" (p. 30). Scientific theories share these characteristics and have been formally tested (or made readily available for formal testing) through the procedures explained in any basic research methods text. This book does not summarize these procedures but communication, public relations, marketing and health communication texts that explain them in detail abound, and literature in the philosophy of science explains the value of these procedures.

Scientific theories only become widely accepted after much experience with them in the form of controlled tests, usually by independent testers, in which the theory is supported. Even one negative result is taken as evidence that the theory is wrong (no matter how many confirming results have preceded it), in contrast to lay or commonsense theories in which negative results are typically not recorded or reported and are sometimes simply ignored.

One key idea here is replication or repeatability by others. For example, if others with no political or economically investment in reporting any particular result had tested the Lancet's vaccination article in advance, a red flag would probably have appeared. Thus, the most important distinction between informal theory and formal theory is rigorous controlled testing, and the most valuable kind of such testing is that carried out by others not invested in the results. For example, if a single researcher replicates his or her own study and gets the same results it counts a little. If coauthors or students of that researcher replicate it and get the same results, it counts a little bit more. But if completely independent and equally qualified researchers replicate the study and get the same results, it counts a lot. Karl Popper, often mentioned as a great philosopher of science, said: "We do not take even our own observations quite seriously, or accept them as scientific observations, until we have repeated and tested them. Only by such repetitions can we convince ourselves that we are not dealing with a mere isolated 'coincidence,' but with events which, on account of their regularity and reproducibility, are in principle intersubjectively testable" (Popper, 1959, p. 45).

In fact, one of the most obvious warning signs of fraudulent or undependable research is when the results either cannot be replicated or when the original researcher refuses to release enough specifics to allow for full replication. Maybe the most famous example of unlikely research that could not be replicated in modern times was the announcement by the University of Utah in 1989 that one of its researchers, Stanley Pons, chairman of the chemistry department, working with Martin Fleischmann of the University of Southampton in Britain, announced that they achieved nuclear fusion at room temperature in a jar of water. Unlimited, completely clean and very cheap energy forever was, of course, the holy grail of energy research so they got massive media and professional attention. However, Pons and Fleischmann seemed unable to reproduce their results or release the technical information others would need to reproduce their results. In their defense, billions of dollars worth of patents could have been stolen or worked around if their results had been valid and they released all their procedures. Nevertheless the results were not conclusively replicated. Because neither Pons and Fleischmann nor any other researchers could replicate the original results, the idea has been almost entirely rejected and this research, and these researchers, discredited.

This brings us to the relationship of theory and experience gained from practice in SC.

Theory and Practice

Experience versus Theory

Applied fields such as SC sometimes suffer from uncertainty about the value of experience versus theory and formal education. Hopefully the discussion of practice-based theory above helps resolve this artificial distinction, but a little more needs to be said regarding the relationship of experience and theory.

Some practitioners devalue theory and formal education, but that is not surprising given that many of the most senior practitioners and scholars (including the author) got into SC by practicing it in the workplace. We learned through informal workplace apprenticeships, whether our subfield was public health, advertising, marketing, political campaigns, national development, public diplomacy, public relations or whatever. For example, the author had been practicing SC, but thinking of it only as PR, in Michigan for about a decade before the first formal graduate-level university course in the topic was offered in the metropolitan Detroit area. Like most practitioners of the day, I learned by doing. The idea of studying a theory about existing practices just seemed silly. In the 1970s and early 1980s this attitude still was a viable option. Forty or 50 years later that attitude no longer works. The old way of learning SC was based on the fact our knowledge base 30–50 years ago was relatively small and not highly specialized (except for a few more technical areas like photography or video production), so one could learn almost all the important things about the field just by practicing it for a decade or more.

Today SC and its subfields are immensely complex and in some cases, such as corporate annual reports and public right to know in certain environmental accidents, regulated. A license is even required to practice some of the subfields in, for example, Nigeria and Brazil. SC today also involves much technology and the impact of what we do can be immense, with the fortunes of large companies, presidents, and sometimes nations hanging in the balance. The field of SC was once a field small enough to be largely understandable through one's personal experience. Today the total knowledge of the field dwarfs the experience of even 40-year seniority practitioners. What was once a field of generalists is today a field of specialists. What was once a field primarily of small independent jack-of-all-trades practitioners (which is how the author started) is today a field of highly educated and

specialized practitioners where the jacks-of-all-trades may not even get hired because they cannot fill the specialized needs of a department in a large firm or corporation.

The need for specialists is in part a result of growth in SC. For example, according to IBISWorld (2012), advertising in the US alone was a $31 billion industry in 2012. Further, in what we believe was the largest ever survey about the educational views of senior PR practitioners and academics, DiStasio, Stacks and Botan (2009) reported that 46.6 percent of high-level practitioners had bachelor's degrees, 44.4 percent had master's degrees and 8.3 percent had PhDs. It is possible that the other seven-tenths of 1 percent of senior practitioners were "old school," having gotten into PR and moved up the ladder without formal education, but that tells us again that the old 1970s–1980s model no longer works in SC (business majors constituted only about 4.6 percent of the bachelor degrees and 22 percent of the graduate degrees in this report).

All this does not mean practical experience has become unimportant in SC. If anything, experience may be even more valued today than in the past. Today it is critical for junior people to have worked in one or two internships while in college and to get work experience, often by cycling through a few departments. However, the equation has changed dramatically. The old view that you can learn everything in SC by just working in it has transformed into the view that most new hires have to have a degree to start and then only become very useful to the employer when they also compile meaningful experience. As an applied field, SC will always put a premium on experience, but now such experience usually has to come on top of formal education rather than in place of it.

Learning from Established Fields

SC is not the first field to face the question of how experience and formal instruction should be balanced. One way to do this is to look at how other fields have addressed it.

Often the state boards or national associations of established and officially recognized professions such as medicine, law and engineering have resolved this issue by deciding that keeping up to date academically is a requirement for being licensed and allowed to continue to practice. For physicians, for example, Illinois and North Carolina require 150 hours of Continuing Medical Education every three years; Maine and several others, 100 hours every two years; and Texas 24 hours per year (American Medical Association, 2012). In the legal field, the American Bar Association reports that California requires 25 hours of mandatory Continuing Legal Education (CLE) every three years while New Jersey requires 24 hours every two years and Minnesota requires 45 hours every three years, but some states do not require CLE (American Bar Association, 2012). According to PHDengineer.com (2017), more than 40 states now require continuing engineering education to maintain licensure, including Maryland which requires 24 hours every two years, New York which requires 36 hours every three years, and Illinois with 30 hours required every two years. Other fields such as nursing also have varying requirements. Of course, such continuing education is by no means purely theoretic but may include components based on or contributing to theories in the practice-based range of Figure 7.

SC does not have licensure today so these examples of continuing education requirements are not directly applicable. They do, however, clearly show that other applied fields see value in both education and practice. While theory education per se is not mandated, practice-based theory is often an integral part of continuing education at some level. It is clear that if SC desires professional status, some kind of continuing education, and probably some kind of licensure, will be necessary. The International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) initiative called the Communication Management Professional certification, through its Global Communication Certification Council (IABC, 2017a), provides potential guidance in this. IABC indicates that its efforts might eventually

be linked to both the International Standards Organization and the American National Standards Institute. Opinions vary on what constitutes a profession, but Schmidt (2008) said professions possess (1) systematic theory, (2) authority, (3) community sanction, (4) ethical codes, and (5) a culture. It is not clear that SC fulfills all these criteria today, so it might be best understood as an emerging profession rather than an established one.

The whole issue of certification or licensure is not central to the purpose of this book, other than as a means to begin addressing the theory–practice relationship, and ethics, in SC (see Chapter 4). Thus, Chapter 2 discusses the experience–theory link and Chapter 6 discusses the application of theory to practical situations in SC.

Experience–Theory Link in SC

Although experience is the bedrock of SC, the lessons it teaches cannot be fully understood or exploited without one important concept that links theory and practice, that old devil word abstraction.

The term abstract comes from the Latin *abstractus* which means drawn away from. Abstractions are usually what we draw out of something to talk about it without getting caught up in specifics and details. For example, you can abstract a business report, government document or academic article. In the case of a business report, the abstract is often called an executive summary. A good abstract (see Frey, Botan and Kreps, 2000, for examples and how to write abstracts) should get the main points of a whole book or article into a couple of hundred words or less. Some are as short as 50–75 words. A good business abstract, according to Markowitz (2010), "should include the major details of your report, but it is important not to bore the reader with minutiae."

Thus, to abstract, as we use the term here, means to focus on the gist of something, the key information, by separating it from all the little details. As you might imagine, in theory work this means focusing on the main lesson by drawing it out of the concrete experience where it was learned and focusing on the relationship between two phenomena. Recall that the minima for a theory are the same, looking at the relationship between two or more things. In the area of Figure 7 called practice-based theory, then, we can summarize the role of abstraction in SC by saying abstraction is the art of pulling the most important theoretic lessons out of practical experiences. But what does this do for us?

When SC knowledge is abstracted from concrete experiences, two very important processes come into play. First is *portability*. Abstraction makes that bit of knowledge portable, meaning that when freed of unnecessary details (some details are very necessary and must be kept with the main point, however) the knowledge gained from that experience is more readily transferable to new situations. To the extent that we are able to apply that knowledge or skill in a new situation, we are engaged in some level of theory development. Thus, when employers say they want to hire experience they may really be looking for a person with concrete experiences in their past from which they can abstract knowledge to apply to new concrete situations for the new employer or situation.

Second is *applicability*. When the key knowledge has been taken out of its concrete context it takes a little bit of work and judgment to apply it in a new context. For example, to take knowledge learned from selling fashion clothing and apply it to a campaign to stop the spread of HIV/AIDS would take some thinking and judgment. But there are pieces of knowledge learned in sales that could be helpful in planning and carrying out such a campaign *if* that knowledge could be abstracted from the money-focused sales context in which it was first learned. When the degree of abstraction needed to make knowledge useful is quite high, or its reapplication is complex, a high level of training may be required, such as a graduate education, and this brings up the question of the scope of a theory.

How widely a theory can be applied is called its scope. Scope means, according to Littlejohn and Foss (2008, p. 26), that "a theory's explanation must be sufficiently general to extend beyond a single observation." A theory's scope is how far it can extend beyond the original observation from which it was drawn, how inclusive it is. If a theory cannot be extended beyond a single observation or event, it may be better thought of as just an observation. So if the importance of trust in one person's decision to buy one product were known, it might not be very important. But it would be much more important if that knowledge could explain how trust works in all purchase decisions between individuals and all companies selling goods—if it had more scope. If the understanding of the role of trust could be applied even more broadly, such as to all decisions by individuals regarding human organizations like governments, corporations and schools, its scope would be even greater and so would its importance. It is easy to see that scope is related to the concepts discussed in the last few paragraphs: abstraction, applicability and portability,

There is one more caveat about how abstraction affects the theory–practice link, however. At least one scholar has said that if moved far enough away from the original observation, all theories will ultimately fail (Deetz, 1992). Thus, although abstraction is usually necessary for linking theory and practice, if overdone it can become useless and maybe even counterproductive. Abstraction is not *always* overdone and useless—as some anti-intellectuals and other assorted curmudgeons sometimes claim—but it can be.

The more abstract a theory is, that is, the further the key knowledge is removed from concrete experience, the more portable it becomes but the more difficult it becomes to apply it in practice.

To summarize the relationship between experience and theory in SC, the more broadly we want to apply the knowledge gained from experience, the more it needs to be abstracted into a theory and the more mental work required both in developing the theory and applying it. On the other hand, easier application means less work and less wide applicability. It is kind of like the old line about high performance automobiles: speed costs money, how fast do you want to go? Portability and applicability take work; how widely would you like to apply your knowledge?

Schools of Thought, Metatheory and Paradigms in SC

When a group of scholars or practitioners share an opinion on how to look at a field that includes assumptions, theories, methods or ways of doing things, this is a school of thought. In other words, a school of thought grows up around a metatheory. So, for example, some authors say the field of psychology includes seven major schools of thought (Cherry, 2016), while others discuss schools of thought in management (Connor, 1991) and marketing (Palmer, Lindgreen and Vanhamme, 2005). Some would say each school of thought *is* a metatheory.

Earlier in this chapter, metatheories were described as typically characterized by a kind of mental schema explaining how concepts or actions are related, as demonstrated in the famous division of symbolic interactionism between the Chicago School and the Iowa School, and the later emergence of the "Dramaturgical School" (Reynolds and Herman-Kinney, 2003, p. 9). A slightly extended example may help make the role of assumptive worldviews in metatheories clear.

Caldwell (2009) gives the example that "the Copernican system (the sun at the center of the universe) overthrew the Ptolemaic (the earth at the center) one." For several hundred years BCE, the Greeks and others believed Earth was the center of the universe, with the sun and stars revolving around it. Even great philosophers like Plato and Aristotle *assumed* this to be true. In the second century CE, Claudius Ptolemy codified this long-standing Greek view into what came to be known as the Ptolemaic or geocentric system (Ptolemy Project, 2017). For more than another millennium,

everyone got up and worked or played each day *assuming* the Earth was at the center of the universe. After all, everyone witnessed the sun, moon and stars rotate across the sky every day.

In other words, a universe with *their* Earth at the center was the metatheory that explained what they saw in the sky and how their world worked, while confirming their importance as the center of all creation. This view of the universe was accepted by slaves, workers, academics and rulers alike. In 1543, Nicholas Copernicus published his book *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium* that upset that model by placing the sun at the center of the solar system. As so often happens, even people who were not aware they had a metatheory felt threatened by a change in it and eventually the Catholic Church of the day opposed this paradigm, even ruling more than a hundred years later in the famous case against Galileo that he was under grave suspicion of heresy "for following the position of Copernicus which is contrary to the true sense and authority of Holy Scripture" (de Santillana, 1955).

While guest editing a special issue of *Public Relations Review* I wrote a little about paradigms in the subfield of PR (Botan, 1993a), but that understanding needs some refinement for use here. That article identified "a dominant applied model" (p. 108) which is now subsumed under the instrumental school of thought discussed later in this chapter. This represented an early—and somewhat erroneous—understanding of paradigms in general. Over the more than 20 years since, I have discussed paradigms in SC and its subfields again, including the *functional* approach and the closely related *technician* and applied approaches, now grouped together under the instrumental school of thought because all of these are used to instrumentalize, to control or use, publics (cf. Botan, 1993a; 1993b; 1993c; 1997; Botan and Taylor, 2004; Taylor and Botan, 2006).

Recall that this book focuses on the underlying similarities between subfields of SC. So the last major sections of this chapter attempt to combine these similarities into what may be a new unifying model, a metatheory, for SC. To possibly help the reader in evaluating that new model, the following first offers a brief discussion of the three traditional metatheoretic issues that provide a snapshot of the major pillars under any theory, metatheory, school of thought or paradigm: epistemology, ontology and axiology.

Epistemology of SC

Epistemology is the study of knowledge and how we come to know things. It addresses a number of substantial issues, including what knowledge is and how it is justified as being true. Arguably the key epistemological question in SC, as in many other areas, is whether knowledge comes primarily through internal reasoning or from sensing and observing our environment through research and practice. If the former, research and practice may not be as important as many of us think. If the latter, reasoning and creativity may not be as important as many of us think.

Rationalism focuses on the power of the human mind to know things independently of the external world or, at least, that we use our minds to go beyond or unify what is learned through our senses. For example, the sense-making (actually a constructivist theory) and attribution discussions in Chapter 6 are essentially rationalist explanations of how publics come to know things. Because knowing is largely a function of the human mind, from this view it is possible and even probable that individuals and groups with different experiences and positions in society will develop not only different ways of knowing but actually different knowledge. Empiricism, on the other hand, is the belief that we gain knowledge primarily by what we experience through our senses by looking outside ourselves.

Thus, an SC practitioner or scholar who focuses on how publics come to know things through their own rational efforts is working largely in the tradition of rationalist philosophers such as René Descartes or Baruch Spinoza. On the other hand, many practitioners believe they just have

to "get our story out there better" because "if they only knew what we know they would make the same decision" (Gaudino, Fritsch and Haynes, 1989). This view is based more in the empirical tradition because these practitioners assume that if publics just knew more about the objective world of the practitioner and client those publics would agree. A practitioner like this is working more in the tradition of empiricist philosophers such as John Locke and John Stuart Mill.

The important lesson for SC practitioners is not that one way of knowing is inherently superior to another, but rather that *the knowledge possessed by publics may be very different from that possessed by clients and still be equally or more important.* For example, if a public's knowledge about a particular matter is based on a largely rational approach, while your client adopts a more empirical approach, the strategic plan created by the practitioner may well be out of sync with its publics and therefore be rejected out of hand. Instead, that plan needs to be sensitive to both, not necessarily by adopting a rationalistic approach but by developing a plan that reflects an understanding of the limitations of an empirical approach for a particular public since it is the publics that decide the success or failure of an SC campaign.

The cocreational metatheory focuses on the meanings cocreated by publics and thus tends a bit toward rationalism. Acquiring an inflow of strategic information and planning a campaign based on it, however, implies an equal or greater tendency toward empiricism. Thus, it might be fair to accuse the cocreational view in SC of playing both sides of the epistemological fence. On the other hand, it is not clear how standing strictly in one epistemological camp or another is either necessary or desirable. Ralph Waldo Emerson famously suggested that a foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds (Emerson, 1908, p. 23). In addition, humans are often not epistemologically consistent and, since building relationships with them is the purpose of SC, it may be that SC should not seek to always be epistemologically consistent.

Ontology

Ontology is about the nature of being and how we can categorize or group things that exist. Thus strategic communicators who categorize publics, such as active, latent, target, primary, secondary, etc., are engaged in ontological work. The strength and weakness of this kind of work is that categories express what we think exists so a list of publics also implies exclusions. For example, the traditional types of publics just listed are clearly categories constructed from the organization's point of view because they describe how useful a public is to the client or practitioner. Thus a practitioner relying solely on this typology lacks labels for thinking about publics as self-motivating, creative and cocreators of the important meanings in a relationship. Indeed, this practitioner might not even have the tools for thinking about any two-way relationship with publics or about learning from publics, since most of these categories suggest only one-way relationships that benefit the organization.

The cocreational view in SC ascribes independent will, internal processes and primary power to publics so it ontologically assumes that while organizations and publics are interdependent, publics hold the upper hand and are usually the primary generators of change in the relationship with the organization. This is a very different ontological assumption than the one behind thinking of publics as targets or as secondary. Because the cocreational view focuses on publics as cocreators of meaning, relationships, and outcomes, it values their intellectual and creative capacities and, thus, implicitly challenges designations like target publics. This does not mean that organizations cannot or should not cocreate meanings of their own, including, for example, valuing dollars and profit, as long as those organizations adjust their thinking to the reality that publics may not share this value and that publics will primarily determine the kind of relationship they will share.

Axiology

From the Greek *axia* for value or worth, axiology is the study of value, how to assess value and make judgments about it. Some cultures, and theories, for example, value individualism, while others value collectivity. Axiology in SC would be the study of our values, how they developed and what judgments of good and bad or right and wrong they lead to. In other words, a cocreational view brings some axiological positions to SC and Chapter 4 on ethics in this book is largely an axiological chapter. Because cocreation focuses on the meaning-creating function of publics, it puts great value on openness and full disclosure of the information publics need for the meaning-making process. Thus, someone adopting a cocreational approach would find withholding information from publics until an issue "blows over" to be very negative and unethical behavior because *withholding is an attempt to strip publics of part of their power—and their right—to cocreate their own meanings.*

This chapter now turns to describing and explaining the cocreational metatheory and a model that helps explicate some of its assumptions, values and views.

Cocreational Metatheory in SC

In 2004 and 2006 Botan and Taylor and Taylor and Botan introduced what we then called the cocreational model as the foundation for a cocreational school of thought referring to the kind of communication campaigns SC practitioners conduct. Although we failed to put an actual model into those articles, it is included in this section.

The cocreational metatheory is a set of assumptions, terms, values and goals that provide a single perspective from which to view, understand and interact with the SC campaigns in the world around us. This metatheory is used later in the book as a means for comparing and assessing various theories such as in Chapter 6. If, on the other hand, testable hypotheses were to be generated out of this metatheory, it would then be functioning as a theory.

Background

Botan and Taylor (2004) and Taylor and Botan (2006) identified the cocreational school of thought as a term to summarize the shift we thought we saw occurring in the literature over the last quarter century. *The cocreational metatheory views publics as cocreators of meaning and communication as what makes it possible to agree to shared meanings, interpretations, and goals.* Individuals also cocreate meanings for themselves, but that is not the focus of the cocreational metatheory because it focuses on publics. Individual cocreation of meaning would involve using one's own knowledge and experience along with information contained in messages as raw material for internal cognition, which is the domain of psychology, or individual sense-making (see sense-making theory in Chapter 6), both of which are related to interpreting messages. Cocreation focuses on how publics function rather than individuals. Drawing a clear line between how publics cocreate new meaning and how individuals cocreate new meaning would admittedly be hard, particularly since publics are made up of individuals. Like many other questions about where one aspect of communication ends and the next begins (e.g., between interpersonal communication and small group communication or between the organization and individual members), it might be best to think of the relationship between the parts the social group contributes to cocreation of meaning and the parts individual cognitive efforts contribute as points on a continuum, rather than investing time in deciding where one ends and the other begins. (See also "Positioning Cocreational Metatheory in SC" later in this chapter.)

The cocreational view is long-term in its orientation and focuses on relationships among publics and organizations. Research is used to advance understanding, and the perspective embraces theories that either explicitly share these values (e.g., relational approaches or community) or can be used to advance them. The major relationship of interest is between groups and organizations, and communication is used to build and negotiate changes in these relationships. The cocreational perspective places an implicit value on relationships going beyond the achievement of a mere organizational goal. That is, in the cocreational view, publics are not just a means to an end. Publics are not instrumentalized (cf. Botan, 1993b; Botan, 1997), but instead are "partners" in the meaning-making process (Botan and Taylor, 2004, p. 652), so they cannot and should not be taken for granted or controlled.

In the years since that first article, the cocreational model has caught on a bit in the literature, most notably in Europe. For example, two well-known international PR scholars (Frandsen and Johansen, 2012) presented a discussion paper at the International Public Relations Research Conference in Miami in which they reported 138 primarily European citations of the 2004 Botan and Taylor article by 2011. Of these, 95 were in scholarly journals and most others in books. Four of these books were in German, three in Spanish and one in Dutch, while the journals included *Anàlisi: Quaderns de Comunicacio i Cultura, Ámbitos: Revista Internacional de Comunicación, Israel Affairs, Jurnal Komunikasi, Sphera Publica: Revista de Ciencias Sociales y de la Comunicación, Cuadernos de Información, Razón y Palabra, Marketing Review St. Gallen* (in German), *Nordicom Review*, and several business and economics journals, including *Journal of Legal Economics, Management and Organization Review, Organization Science, Journal of Communication Management, Journal of Public Affairs* and *Place Branding and Public Diplomacy*, among others.

The cocreational view is part of the even wider worldview of social constructivism that sees meaning as socially constructed through communication, in this case between an organization and its publics, as well as within publics. From this view, research about what publics think and feel is the starting point for all strategy in SC. Thus cocreationality offers a way to evaluate theories for their SC potential by assessing how well a given theory opens a window into the social meaning-making process going on within publics as well as between organizations and their publics. In this sense, the cocreational view plays the role of a metatheory—a theory about how to evaluate other theories.

Lineage The cocreational view is far from new because it derives from decades of work by many scholars. Research in the marketing communication subfield of SC is probably the most advanced in thinking cocreationally. For example, several of its scholars have embraced the idea of value being cocreated by customer publics that decide a good or service has value by buying it (e.g., Bhala, 2010; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a; 2004b; Vargo, Maglio and Akaka, 2008): a very publics-centered view of value in which publics cocreate value by cocreating the meaning of that product or service in their own lives. Marketing folks have always seemed to understand that when a company takes a product to market, it is, in effect, asking if any publics see value in it. No takers means writing those products off as a loss, as having no value. The cocreational perspective on marketing communication highlights and explains the primacy of publics in this relationship, something marketing folks may be more at ease with than practitioners and academics in several other subfields of SC, including health communication and PR, as suggested by the title of Edvardsson, Tronvoll and Gruber's (2011) article, "Expanding understanding of service exchange and value co-creation: A social construction approach."

Business management has also used the term cocreation, but sometimes with a different or more restricted meaning than in this book. For example, Dervojeda et al. (2014) advocate the cocreation of

design, meaning that "a multitude of stakeholders is actively involved in the design process," which "allows the customer to co-construct the service experience to suit his or her context" (p. 3).

Research in the PR subfield (e.g., Botan and Hazleton, 2006; Botan and Taylor, 2004; Heath, 2001) also often reflects elements of a cocreational paradigm. Such research includes some of those pieces focusing on organizational-public relationships, community theory (e.g., Kruckeberg and Starck, 1988), coorientation theory, accommodation theory, and dialogue theory (e.g., Kent and Taylor, 1998; 2002). Rhetorical pieces are also often implicitly cocreational in their approach. For example, the work of Botan and Hazelton (2006), Botan and Taylor (2004), Broom, Casey and Ritchey (1997), Heath (2001), Huang (2001), Ledingham and Bruning (1998; 2000), among others, has helped to focus PR research on relationship building. Ferguson (1984) was the first to advocate a relational approach to PR, while Broom, Casey and Ritchey (1997) situated PR research within relational communication theory when they explicated the concept of relationship. Ledingham and Bruning (1998) extended it again when they argued for viewing PR as building relationships with publics that constrain or enhance the ability of the organization to meet its mission, thus shifting the emphasis in PR from managing publics and public opinion to a new emphasis on building, nurturing and maintaining relationships (p. 55). The cocreational perspective on PR extends this analysis by recognizing that, while there are many relationships of interest to public relations, the relationship of central importance is that of the shared creation of meaning with publics. The shift away from functionalism to relational communication and dialogue as frameworks for PR is in part a reflection of the transition to a cocreational perspective that had simply not yet been articulated. Cocreational theories may be what Molleda and Laskin (2005) note are missing from the international public relations (and presumably SC) research literature, which limits theory development in that subfield.

There has also been a lot of cocreational work done in health communication, although much of it is marketing oriented. For example, Nambisan and Nambisan's (2009) article "Models of consumer value cocreation in health care" is clearly marketing oriented, as is a McColl-Kennedy et al. article from 2012, "Health care customer value cocreation practice styles." Halkes's (2014) publicly available PowerPoint presentation is a little less marketing focused, even though he describes himself as a consultant to pharmaceutical firms. There has also been non-marketing oriented work in health communication, such as Elg et al. (2012) and Wallace et al.'s whole book *Co-creating Health: Evaluation of the First Phase* (2012). Some work in the general field of communication (Stadler, 2013) also used the cocreational construct.

Thus, cocreational is not a new idea. Rather it has been used in several fields with the term clearly meaning different things. It does not appear that any have offered a clear explanation of the tenets of a cocreational worldview as it relates to communication, how it is different from other metatheories, or how it can work across fields. However, Dervin (1989) argued unequivocally for its importance without actually using the term, saying, "Communication cannot be conceptualized as *transmission*. Rather, it must be conceptualized in terms of both parties involved in creating meanings, by means of *dialogue*. The sense people make of the media messages is never limited to what sources intend and is always enriched by the realities people bring to bear" (p. 72).

This chapter next turns to outlining both the boundaries and core ideas of the cocreational metatheory.

Positioning Cocreational Metatheory in SC

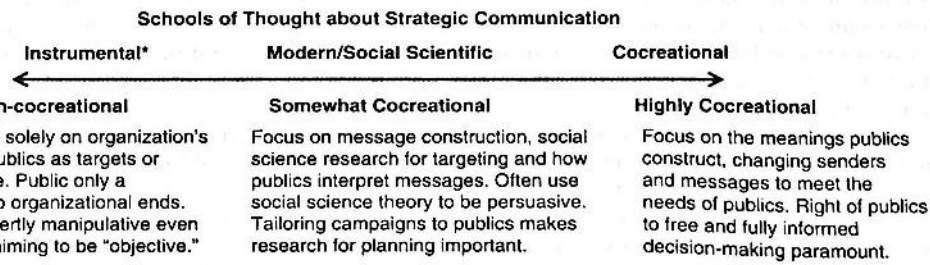
Cocreation of meaning does not refer to the relatively passive interpretation of messages that individuals and publics engage in when communicating, but rather to the much more active social role of publics as cocreators of new meaning that may or may not include the meanings intended by a

sender. As the model in Figure 9 shows, the cocreational process begins with publics before any messages are sent by the organization that might need to be interpreted, and that interpretation and cocreation are by no means the same thing.

This separation of emphasis between understanding what someone else means and cocreating your own new meanings is, of course, not an all-or-nothing matter, because cocreation takes some interpretation and interpretation involves constructing at least some new meaning. Thus, *there is no such thing as a completely non-cocreational campaign just as there are no perfectly cocreational campaigns*—whatever that might mean. So the real question is not whether a campaign is or is not cocreational but *rather how cocreational it is.*

Although intended to support the discussion of the instrumental, modern/social scientific and cocreational schools of thought in SC, Figure 8 can serve as a kind of continuum on which public communication campaigns can be placed according to the degree to which they focus on publics' cocreation of meanings, as well as roughly defining what may be the three primary schools of thought (or metatheories or paradigms) within SC. Thus, Figure 8 also demonstrates using the cocreational view as a metatheory. By locating any two campaigns on this continuum, for example, they can be compared according to how cocreational they are in planning or execution. Degree of cocreationality can also provide a yardstick for assessing non-SC theories and schools of thought that may be used in SC campaigns by comparing them this same way, which is what Chapter 6 does.

Sequencing schools of thought in SC by metatheory and metaphor This section identifies three schools of thought—each built around a metatheory—in SC today: the *instrumental, modern/social scientific* and *cocreational.* Probably the best way to see the relationship of these three schools of thought is to *look at the different metaphors (metatheories) undergirding* each, as the following subsections do. A second way is to think of each school as incorporating the skills and practices of the one(s) on its left in Figure 8. Thus modern campaigns often incorporate the kinds of skills used in instrumental campaigns but start the planning earlier to make it more strategic by focusing more attention on publics and how they think than instrumental practitioners typically do. Cocreational campaigns can use the often tactical focus and skills seen in instrumental campaigns as well as the modern campaigns, and research methods that characterize those campaigns, but start at a still earlier point. However, cocreational campaigns build from the



**Note that altruistic campaigns concerned only with the welfare of publics (see Chapter 3) are morally good but are not automatically cocreational when the power—to decide what publics want or need is kept in the hands of the sponsors. So the question the cocreational view poses for such campaigns is not whether they are good or bad in purpose, but how well they respect the right of publics to make their own fully informed decisions—how cocreational they are.*

Figure 8 Cocreational continuum

starting view of the relationship that publics have and also go further to consider how new meanings cocreated by publics can determine future relationships.

The easiest way to see this relationship, however, is that the instrumental and modern schools are both primarily concerned with targeting publics to meet relatively short-term goals, with the latter using a much more sophisticated approach to reach the same goal as the former. The cocreational school, however, seeks to balance the achievement of short-term goals with the long-term goals of the organization and the long-term relationship between the organization and its publics that result from the new meanings publics cocreate.

The focus of the first two schools is on the result from one campaign (did we achieve our short-term goal?), while the cocreational is concerned with *all* the new meanings and changes in the relationship that result from the campaign. Thus, the cocreational model integrates a concern for grand strategy within it, while that concern is mostly external to the first two schools because they start with the current state of the relationship and end, ideally, by evaluating how the campaign has impacted the relationship and what this means for the future.

Moving organizations along this continuum means being able to clearly explain how SC is more than just an instrumental or modern social scientific practice and this requires that practitioners are able to explain how our work contributes beyond a single campaign. For example, evidence of larger contributions may be seen when the long-term interactions of multiple campaigns are assessed or when campaign research and results provide other divisions of the organization with important new strategic information, as in Box 2A in Figure 9. For example, when a financial division changes long-term risk assessments based on strategic information gained through SC, a community activist group refocuses from more limited behavioral goals to broader social policy goals, or publics use parts of campaigns to cocreate new meanings in their own interest.

Instrumental school I have written several times about some of the attitudes and practices that go into the instrumental school of thought (Botan, 1993a; Botan, 1993b; Botan, 1993c; Botan, 1997; Botan and Taylor, 2004; Taylor and Botan, 2006). This view, as depicted on the left end of the continuum in Figure 8, would include those campaigns focusing solely on the goals and desires of the sponsoring organization. This school of SC thought reflects a strong mass media bias and mass audience bias with large, sometimes huge, amounts of waste coverage so at least some of the publics reached may think of the campaign as spam. Nonetheless, there are many honest campaigns found on the left side of Figure 8, and even many highly motivated campaigns such as environmental, religious, and some public health (most of these are modern). Unfortunately, the most overtly dishonest campaigns and cover-ups would also be found there. The characteristic they all share is a lack of concern for the meanings publics cocreate—and sometimes even for the rights of those publics.

The extreme instrumentalist, also known as functionalist (see Botan and Taylor, 2004), approach to SC assumes that the advancement of one's own organization is the best way for a practitioner to contribute to the economy and to society. In this view, SC is used to put the interests of one's employer above all others. The old adage that "what is good for GM is good for America" may have changed today into what is good for investment banking ... but the sentiment remains unchanged for many. It is useful to remember that this sentiment did not evolve in SC, in any of our subfields, or even in business. Rather it is a simple variant of Bertrand Russell's (1966) explanation of egoism in ethics. Russell said,

> Egoism: that a man's first duty is to himself, and that to secure his own good is more imperative than to secure other people's. Extensions of this view are, that a man should prefer the interest

> of his family to that of strangers, of his countrymen to that of foreigners, or of his friends to that of his enemies. All these views have in common the belief that, quite apart from practicability, the ends which one man ought to pursue are different from those which another man ought to pursue. (p. 45)

On the other hand, Kenneth Boulding (1973) talked about public and private and knowledge. For Boulding, one person's image of what is real or true or of value is a "subjective knowledge structure" (p. 11) and for the "individual organism or organization, there is no such thing as 'facts'" (p. 14). Thus, for Boulding, the opinion of any one organization about what should be communicated, to whom and why, is only one opinion and the cocreational perspective joins Boulding in challenging whether that opinion is in any way more valuable than the opinion of a public. For Boulding, such subjective knowledge becomes social when others who agree with it share it. This is what Boulding sees as real (public) knowledge and is an intersubjective definition of knowledge that fits well with the view in this book, specifically, that the new knowledge or meanings generated by the interaction of senders' and publics' messages together is the focal point of SC.

Instrumental approaches to SC such as the hired gun and technician models (see above and Chapters 3 and 4) assume a campaign should be conducted solely in the interest of one's employer and solely from that perspective, so they are manifestations of the egoism Russell talked about. It is no surprise, then, that organizations with an intransigent grand strategy (see Chapter 1) are typically quite instrumental in how they view the role of SC, as are the farmer and pig perfumer in Chapter 4.

Evaluation of instrumental campaigns should reasonably include assessment of the new meanings publics cocreate during and after a campaign, but given the underlying assumptions of the instrumental view such evaluation often does not. Instead it simply consists of output measures of tactics, such as number of leaflets printed, number of news releases sent out or number of graphics or videos produced. Sometimes instrumental campaigns can also report exposure measures such as the electronic equivalent of old-fashioned clipping files of articles printed: media, impressions and the like, homepage visits and click-throughs, unique page views and so on. None of these measures directly addresses the meanings publics cocreate so they do not provide strategic-level evaluation.

In short, the key characteristic of the instrumental school is the attempt to turn publics into instruments for achieving the organization's goals. They are generally not strategic as the term is defined and used in this book.

Modern/social scientific Modern SC campaigns typically use or test social scientific theories to guide campaign planning and strategy. These are therefore a kind of transitional campaign between instrumental and cocreational campaigns. In the subfield of PR, Hazleton and Botan started *Public Relations Theory* (1989) by saying, "We should be able to apply communication theory to explain and to predict public relations practice, and use public relations practice as a site for the development of communication theory" (p. xiii).

Although we then proceeded to edit a book in which most of the theories discussed were from social sciences other than Communication, the whole book was an example of the social scientific approach to theory in SC. Hazleton's thinking is scholarly and incisive so his was the guiding thinking in this early collaboration effort.

Modern campaigns are quite different from instrumental campaigns because they evidence a concern for what publics are thinking by adopting one or more theories that describe, explain or predict what publics think or how they process information. Some, such as is often the case in the subfield of

political communication, already address publics in the electorate, or publics seeking entertainment as is also often the case for the subfield of marketing communication. Others, however, focus on individuals and even the cognitive processes within an individual. When these latter are used in planning communication campaigns, the planners sometimes fail to account for the fact that individual-focus theories, such as cognitive psychological theories, may not inform the understanding of publics well because publics and their meanings are usually the product of a social process, and not just a cognitive one (see Chapter 3 for more about how publics function internally).

Modern campaigns also often share with instrumental campaigns a focus on finding that one silver bullet that will help the organization instrumentalize its publics. Still, the modern approach is a large step up from the instrumental approach in how it views publics. Modern campaigns retain a few of the underlying goals and values of instrumental campaigns, however, and are thus different from cocreational campaigns. This difference reflects different answers to the old quality vs. quantity question. Fully cocreational campaigns, in part because they treat each public and the meanings they cocreate as unique cases, require some new research and a new plan for each particular campaign. This can be somewhat more expensive and time-consuming than a campaign based on a preexisting theory and data about it but offers the best chance of successfully negotiating a new relationship with a public. Modern campaigns may sometimes offer more bang for the buck than cocreational ones so there are times when, all things considered, an SC practitioner should run a modern campaign rather than a more fully cocreational one. This decision should never be made without careful thought, however.

Evaluation of modern campaigns tends to focus much more on publics than does evaluation of instrumental campaigns, and is therefore more informative at the strategic level. Modern campaigns may integrate evaluation into campaign planning by specifying publics-centered measurement standards for the variables used, a big step up from many instrumental evaluation efforts. For example, campaigns in the health communication subfield often have the goal of reducing morbidity or mortality from smoking or disease transmission. In the most sophisticated anti-smoking campaigns, such as those run by the US Centers for Disease Control, the social scientific theories adopted may specify a theoretic relationship between self-reported behavior change and reduced morbidity or mortality. This facilitates short-term campaign evaluation by assessing self-reported quitting well before more long-term data on actual illness and death from smoking come in.

One theory used for guiding modern campaigns is symmetrical/excellence theory, which was developed in the subfield of PR. This view is concerned with publics and their rights, as evidenced by its focus on balance in the relationship between the organization and its publics, so it reflects some important aspects of a cocreational view. On the other hand, it is primarily focused on the sender's attitudes, behaviors and messages, with the fair treatment of publics left almost exclusively up to the good intentions—or claims of good intentions—of practitioners and their clients. For example, in the best-known publication by symmetrical/excellence scholars (Grunig et al., 1992), an edited book covering more than 650 pages, there is little or no focus on what meanings publics cocreate about organizations that claim to follow this theory, or, more importantly, whether publics think the actual campaigns of organizations claiming to follow a symmetrical model are more ethical, balanced or effective than the campaigns of organizations that do not claim to follow the model. In addition, only three pages (pp. 507–509) appear to discuss the power of publics. Thus, campaigns based on this theory appear to have about as much of an instrumental underpinning as a cocreational underpinning.

Modern campaigns show some concern with the meanings created and cocreated by publics, but they also carry much of the instrumental school in them. Social science based campaigns can also be called modern campaigns because the practice was developed and refined primarily during

the period from about World War II to the 1980s or 1990s, whereas the practices and values of the instrumental school developed largely in the years around World War I with the work of the Creel Committee, also known as the Committee on Public Information, standing out. The newer cocreational school of thought is discussed next.

Cocreational Molecule and Model

This final section explains the cocreational molecule by using a model to help visualize the relationships between parts of the molecule as well as the larger relationship between practitioner and publics. In chemistry, a molecule is the smallest fundamental unit of a substance that can take part in a chemical reaction. By analogy, an *SC molecule* is the smallest complete unit of strategic communication. Two observations follow. First, the component parts of the SC molecule are not, in and of themselves, strategic. So working on any one part of the molecule does not constitute being strategic. The molecule represents a relationship so if there is a property that could be called *strategicness* it is a property based on the whole relationship represented by the molecule, not each individual component. Several graduate students and I presented a paper in 2011 that included the development information, the items, and factor loadings for a survey instrument to assess strategicness of an organization's communication (Weathers et al., 2011).

Second, ethics is not an external standard for evaluating one party's conduct during that relationship. Because the molecule is about a relationship, and ethics is an intrinsic part of relationships, ethics is also an intrinsic part of all strategic communication. As Chapter 4 discusses later, SC is neither inherently good nor inherently bad, neither inherently ethical nor inherently unethical, but the question of ethics is inherently present in every molecule of an SC relationship.

A molecular analysis of communication is not a new idea (cf. Bradac, Mulac and Thompson, 1995) and a cocreational molecule is somewhat similar to Weick's (1979) interacts, with Weick's double interacts something like a molecule and a half.

A cocreational view of communication is also not really a new idea because, for example, cocreation of meaning is very similar to what Kent and Taylor (1998; 2002), Heath (1992), Waymer (2012), and many others have addressed when writing about dialog as part of a rhetorical approach to the PR subfield. Finally, the idea that good SC campaigns have to be built on good research has been advocated in almost every large communication firm, professional association and basic textbook since about the late 1980s. For example, when I began teaching from a marketing communication text in 1984 the idea that research was necessary for successful marketing campaigns was already well established. What is new here are the realizations that (a) these and other components act together to better explain how SC works than do older models, (b) publics are the main force in SC because theirs is the decision-making role, and (c) the essence of strategy in SC is planning based on knowledge of the "lie of the land," other forces in the environment and how these factors interact with each other and the resources, capabilities and history of the planner.

Components of Cocreational Molecule

A molecule of cocreationality is comprised of the components in Figure 9, with boxes indicating the roles of the organization/practitioner and the circles the roles of publics, so the upright rectangle outlines the actual campaign and the domain of practitioner and client ethics (see Chapter 4). Ethics is a broad topic and the entire molecule has ethical dimensions, including the behaviors of publics. But since clients and practitioners usually initiate communicative exchanges, and also command the

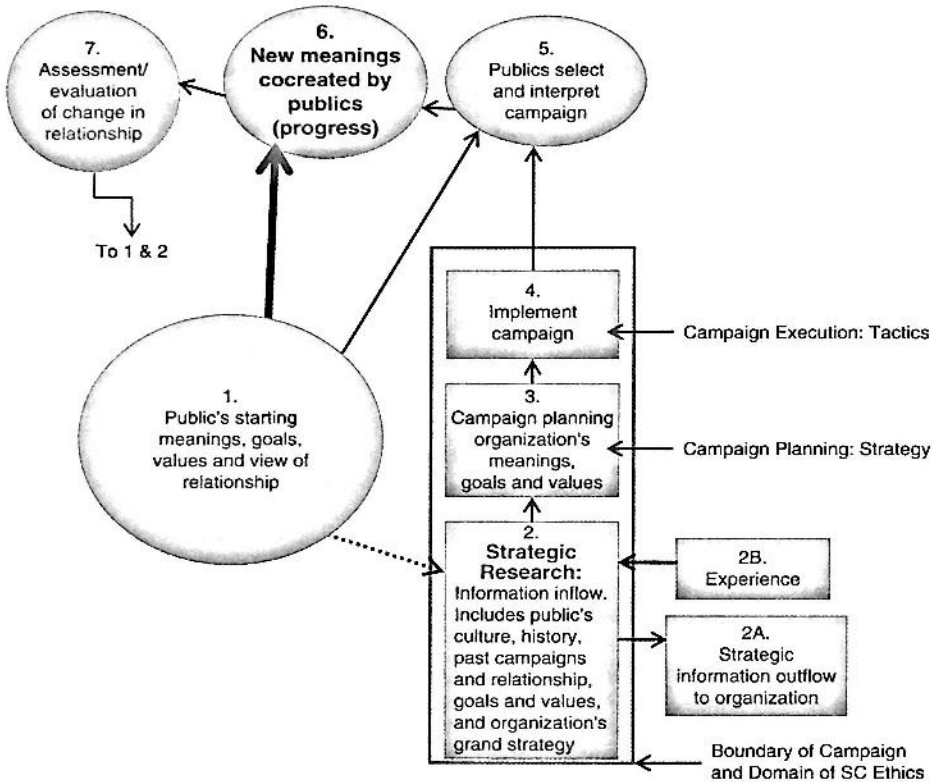


Figure 9 Cocreational molecule

preponderance of communication resources, the primary focus of ethics in SC is on how clients and practitioners treat publics rather than each other and the media.

The components in the model in Figure 9 include the following.

Circle 1: Publics starting point Campaigns address publics that already have their own meanings: meanings include goals, beliefs, value and views relevant to an existing relationship with the organization (and see Chapter 3).

Some publics are highly homogeneous, meaning they are very similar in their meanings, while others are more heterogeneous so their meanings differ substantially. Of course, researching heterogeneous publics is much more challenging and often more expensive than researching more homogeneous publics, but the starting point of any strategic campaign is understanding a public and how they see their situation, the accuracy of which varies, as indicated by the dotted arrow from Circle 1 to Box 2. Such research does not always have to involve random sampling or random assignment; in fact, it can sometimes be based on just evaluating the records of past campaigns, but it does have to provide information about particular publics in particular situations.

The view publics have of their relationship with the campaign sponsor before the campaign starts is typically the single largest determinant of what the result of the campaign will be, regardless of how skilled the practitioner is or how much media coverage is garnered. For example, if an organization is distrusted by its public before the campaign, all the instrumental skill, social scientific persuasion theories, or advertising creativity in the world is unlikely to help much, and can even make matters worse, unless the issue of trustworthiness is first addressed.

The arrow out of Circle 1 into Circle 5 indicates that the starting meanings, goals and values of publics directly influence how a public will interpret campaign content. This influence is typically more direct and much stronger than the influence of the campaign's content. Message-centered and sender-centered views of SC are incomplete in part because they do not account well for this most important determinant of how publics will understand, and later process, campaign content. Note that this arrow exists outside the rectangle representing the campaign.

The arrow out of Circle 1 and into Circle 6 also exists outside the campaign and its thickness indicates the strong direct influence a public's starting meanings, such as goals, values and view of the relationship, have on the new meanings those publics cocreate. A well-planned and well-executed campaign can influence what publics think and do but *the primary determinant of what a public will think and do after a campaign is what they thought and did before the campaign*, and the less a practitioner knows about where publics started, the smaller the chance of influencing where publics will end up.

This does not suggest in any way that the experience and insights of seasoned SC practitioners (Box 2B) are unimportant. Rather, the greater the practitioner's level of experience the better the chance they can usefully understand a public's starting views and be able to gauge how a campaign will interact with a public's views. Understanding how one or more publics are likely to interact with a particular campaign is part of the art of SC that comes from experience and often goes beyond what can be measured or even written about in a book.

Box 2: Strategic research and information inflow Strategic research is an attempt to understand publics, as indicated by the dotted line between Circle 1 and Box 2. The most important role of Box 2 is to provide campaign planners with an understanding of the frames publics will draw on in their decision-making. The inflow of strategic information focuses on the meanings of publics before a campaign, including their goals, values and views. The other important role of Box 2 is to provide planners with an understanding of objective conditions (e.g., competitive environment, epidemiological data, etc.) and how the organization's goals fit into this landscape. In the simplest terms, the goal of Box 2 is to provide campaign planners with the most accurate reflection of Circle 1 possible.

Box 2A: Strategic information outflows This box represents the sharing of strategic information gathered in the SC process with other elements of the organization, including the leadership responsible for overall organizational policymaking. Because SC is uniquely concerned with the meanings, goals, values and views of publics, and the perceptions they hold about the organization, the knowledge collected through SC research can often be of strategic value elsewhere in the organization. Because control of information and budgets largely determines span-of-control and thus power in organizations, SC practitioners have to be very careful to adhere to organizational policies regarding the collection and dissemination of information. Sharing with senior leadership is important because they are solely authorized to change organizational policy and grand strategies, as well as to coordinate information use across the whole organization. SC practitioners need to be very sensitive to the fact that *information is power in organizations.*

Box 2B: Experience Because of its critical importance throughout SC, this chapter has already discussed experience at length so it is not rehashed here. We know, for example, that experience can function as both a kind of research and a contributor to theory (see Figure 7 and earlier discussion). This means experience operates in the cocreational molecule at multiple points, so rather than repetitively discussing the role of experience the molecule depicts it at the earliest stage at which it regularly functions, as a contributor to research in Box 2.

The artificial distinction some make between research and experience leads them to value one over the other. This is not logical since one kind of research is to think through our individual experiences and organize them in ways that contribute to new small theories about what to do in a given situation. Additionally, theories crystalize human experience so that one individual can command the knowledge contained in many more experiences than they could ever live through themselves.

Box 3: Campaign planning Planning a campaign involves determining the logic of a campaign; *what* is to be said, *how* it will be said, in what *order*, to *whom*, and *when* are primarily strategic issues, although each can have tactical dimensions. Deciding what channel(s) to use to carry the plan to publics is primarily a tactical issue but can have strategic aspects. Planning a campaign is the essence of strategy.

Think of a campaign plan as a kind of hypothesis (or mini-theory) where a practitioner predicts that saying X to public Y in a particular order or at a certain time will provide the greatest chance of success as defined by the sponsoring organization. Campaign strategy is where practitioners try to bring together what is known about publics and what is known about an organization's goals. In most cases, the guidance of an appropriate theory (see Chapter 6) can help in this process, but the key is to know as much as possible about the meanings publics come to the relationship with and how publics construct new meanings.

This is where practitioners in the instrumental school, particularly those adopting the hired gun model, often begin a campaign. Because of being message centered, they have little use for strategic research. Sometimes even highly informed modern campaigns, such as many health communication, marketing, nation-building, public diplomacy, charitable and religious campaigns, also start in Box 3, or even Box 4 if they are in the grip of the old "we have to get a statement out" thinking.

Box 4: Campaign implementation Box 4 represents the outflow of information from the organization to publics in the form of a campaign. Box 4 is essentially the tactical phase of a campaign and there are many, many well-written books, articles and manuals on this phase. Since this book focuses on the strategic aspects of communication campaigns, most of the content of Box 4 is left to those books, although Chapter 1 does discuss the role of tactics and other chapters also discuss specifics, of which some are tactical.

This is an opportune point for one comment on the internet and social media (see also Chapter 8). Significant parts of strategic research (Box 2) are carried out through the internet and social media today and publics may use both in their interpretation (Circle 5) and meaning-making process (Circle 6). So the internet and social media can be an important part of SC. But the internet and social media are essentially communication channels and they are also very commonly used in non-strategic campaigns, not to make the campaign's content better but merely to take it to publics more quickly, and possibly more cheaply, than using other channels. Of course, this also means any negative results of the campaign will also be felt more quickly. So, ironically, strategic research becomes even a little more important in internet campaigns than in traditional media campaigns.

Circle 5: Acceptance and interpretation of campaign messages Circle 5 is the stage that publics go through before they generate new meanings. Members of publics, and sometimes whole publics, first decide which campaigns and messages to attend to. In effect, they decide whether the contents of a campaign will gain admission to their cocreational process. If one or more publics do not accept all or part of the campaign for interpretation, it becomes the SC equivalent of what used to be called waste coverage when discussing mass media messages.

Interpretation here merely means understanding actual campaign content. It is the height of organizational centricity to think of publics as "wrong" if they do not interpret the campaign as the sender hoped. If there is a "wrong," it would fall on the sender for not understanding the publics well enough to meet their communication needs.

Interpretation does not include attribution of intent or values, which are part of Circle 6, but a shared language is important in Circle 5, although internet resources such as Google Translate are helping break down this barrier. Much more important to accurate interpretation of messages is a degree of shared culture.

Circle 6: New meaning cocreation This is the heart of the cocreational view. The term cocreation means that this is where publics add the campaign's content to the meanings they started with and arrive at new meanings which can be different from, or even opposed to, the meanings the sender or practitioner hoped for. Thus they cocreate new meanings using their old ones and new input from a campaign. Chapter 3 discusses the processes that go on inside Circle 6 at some length.

Circle 7: Assessment and progress The new meanings and understandings generated in Circle 6 affect, and often determine, the ongoing relationship between an organization and its publics. This defines progress in the cocreational sense. In Circle 7 change in a public's meanings cycle back to become new starting meanings in Circle 1 and Box 2 in the next interaction between the organization and that public. In the cocreational view, progress in a relationship is not defined solely from the perspective of the organization. Progress often means that the organization and publics draw closer together in some way, but the newly cocreated meanings can be diametrically opposed to what the organization hoped for and still represent progress in the cocreational sense. For example, the newly cocreated meanings can contribute to publics developing a new understanding of a relationship, such as when a politician's position on an issue costs the politician existing support rather than gaining new support. In this case, the publics have become better informed and more able to judge how well that politician's views represent them, and the politician comes to better understand the voter public. This is an example of progress just as surely as increased sales or altered health behaviors can be progress in an SC campaign.

Understanding progress in a relationship becomes particularly difficult if there is no systematic campaign assessment, or if the assessment is one-dimensional, limited to whether the campaign achieved its *immediate* instrumental goals. The real goal of a strategic campaign is usually not short-term success, as in the instrumental view, and sometimes even the modern view, but rather contributing to a long-term strategic relationship or policy. Thus assessment in the cocreational model means qualitative and quantitative evaluation of changes in the relationship such as buyer–seller, government–taxpayers or terrorism–victims. Assessment in this sense is much broader than just a single sale or health behavior because SC is about relationships, and the meanings publics cocreate largely define those relationships. In fact, the meanings publics cocreate are half or more of any relationship so the best starting point for campaign evaluation is to assume that the meanings publics cocreate should comprise at least 51 percent of any campaign evaluation.

An evaluation that focuses only on media placements, website hits, or column inches of print coverage is not a cocreational assessment, although these measurements *can* be part of a cocreational assessment.

Levels of Evaluation

Circle 7 also provides an opportunity to comment briefly on ranking different kinds of evaluation, although this small section is not strictly within the molecule. Evaluation efforts can be loosely ranked into three categories by referencing Figures 8 and 9.

Category 1 Here the term evaluation is used very loosely because an organization evaluates just its own outputs in Box 4 of Figure 9. These outputs might be in the form of amount of publicity produced, amount sent out, content of a homepage, readability, and similar message-centered issues. Such evaluations can include the number of probable receivers resulting from exposure related to the mass media, such as circulation, reach, coverage, gross rating points, column inches or minutes of coverage, number of page views or click-throughs, and the like.

Because this kind of evaluation ignores publics' thoughts and meanings, it barely reaches to the left side of Figure 8. It is somewhat analogous to trying to measure sales by counting how many products the organization produces, but can still be called *instrumental evaluation.* The question this kind of evaluation seeks to answer is, "how much did *we* do?"

Category 2 In this category, evaluations start to involve publics by treating them just as receivers and interpreters of what the organization says. Largely related to Box 4 and Circle 5 in Figure 9, these evaluations extend from about the middle of the instrumental range in Figure 8 to the left side of the modern/social scientific range. They are primarily instrumental although they extend beyond assessing just the production of the organization to assess how publics attend to, retain, can recall or understand the organization's messages. The question they seek to answer is, "how well did the publics understand what we said?"

Also in this category of evaluations, but on the right side of the modern/social science section of Figure 8, are evaluations of how much publics have changed their attitudes or behaviors to conform to the wishes of the sender as a result of the campaign. Still instrumental in intent, these evaluations begin looking at a few meanings the publics create, so they start the shift of focus onto publics. Measures of attitudes and attitude change become common here, with terms like compliance, adherence or conversion sometimes used, particularly in altruistic campaigns (see Chapter 3) such as health or religious campaigns. Thus this kind of evaluation moves toward Circle 6 in Figure 9 and the right side of Figure 8, but because it seeks only to find out how far publics have moved toward what the client wants, rather than seeking to find out about new meanings publics cocreate, it is still based on an instrumental bias. The question this kind of evaluation seeks to answer is, "how far have we moved publics toward doing what we want?"

Category 3 Here, evaluations essentially ask the question, "what new meanings did publics cocreate using our campaign and how does this impact us?" As a result, Category 3 evaluations focus almost entirely on publics and what they think, feel or value. Such an evaluation can use some elements of Category 1 and 2 evaluations but does so to inform and better understand the meanings publics cocreate in interaction with an organization's campaign.

Category 3 evaluations provide the most insight when they compare the meanings publics held in Circle 1 of Figure 9 with the new meanings they cocreate in Circle 6 (i.e., a $Time^1$–$Time^2$ format) *and*

when they can also compare how the content of Box 2 changes in the next cycle of the relationship, as well as how the content of Boxes 3 and 4 should change then.

Limitations of the Cocreational View in Evaluation

One obvious criticism of the cocreational view of evaluation is that it does not specifically focus on the reason for most communication campaigns—to achieve some limited short-term goal that is assigned by some authority, such as a client or supervisor. This criticism is in part fair, although evaluation in SC can include evaluating whether one of the new meanings publics cocreated was that a particular product was worth buying or a particular candidate was worth voting for. Botan (1993c) discussed the fact that the subfield of PR is a motivated practice, which means that campaigns are funded and conducted for a reason. This idea applies to all SC campaigns. Someone, usually an organization, invests resources in SC campaigns because it hopes to get some benefit from the campaign, usually more than it cost to conduct the campaign. Thus there is always a strong pull toward instrumental evaluation. Organizations do not long reward strategic communicators who cannot show such returns. On the other hand, focusing too much on short-term goals is both nearsighted and non-strategic, as the marketing subfield began to show as far back as the late 1970s and early 1980s.

Thus, one limitation of the preceding section is that the category system of evaluations it discussed might carry an unwanted implication. That subsection is *not meant to imply that Category 3 evaluation is always preferable*, as the numbers might imply. Clearly, there are circumstances (e.g., *some* emergency and public health communication) in which a Category 2 evaluation is appropriate. Category 1 evaluations, however, do not address any strategic aspect of communication and are seldom of any value beyond assessing employee effort.

Another major criticism of the cocreational view discussed in this book results from the fact it is a metatheory, a worldview about the relationship between publics and those sponsoring SC campaigns. Metatheories are not directly testable, so there are no data of direct tests of the cocreational metatheory presented in this book. Direct testing of aspects of the cocreational metatheory will require that scholars first derive specific theoretic statements, and then derive one or more testable hypotheses. For example, the idea that Circle 1 influences the meanings publics cocreate more heavily than Boxes 3 and 4 in Figure 9, or that campaigns focused on Circle 6 are more productive, better received, or more ethical than those focused on Boxes 3 and 4, might lead to testable hypotheses such as:

1) Campaigns focusing on Circle 6 are more ethical in the eyes of publics than those focusing on Box 4.
2) Circle 1 views will be more highly correlated with Circle 6 views than will Box 3 strategies or Box 4 implementation.
3) Positive perceptions of the desirability of a long-term relationship between the organization and its publics are more effectively built through a cocreational approach than any other approach.

3

Stakeholders, Publics, Customers, Markets and Audiences

Summary

Labels are important not just because they tell us what we think something is but also because they can imply what relationships we have, or can have, with it. Thus calling groups of people a market, audience or vote block not only describes the group but can also imply the sender's view of the primary relationship with it. The fact terms like customer, audience, market, voters, citizens, or brand have been used across subfields is important, but what is much more important are the relationships and underlying assumptions implied by these terms. A term can help clarify the underlying unity of subfields by showing how one subfield's term can be useful in another, but the same term used differently in different subfields can also make it more difficult to see the unity of SC. Finally, a term might also serve to obscure some of the great diversity of the groups SC practitioners seek to communicate with, and the many relationships involved.

Because there is little agreement on these terms across SC subfields, seeing how the lessons of one subfield might be used in another subfield is made more difficult than it should be. Thus there is no more important task for a book seeking to help unify SC than to try to bring some clarity to discussions about those we hope to communicate with.

In the final section, this chapter separates understandings about how publics function internally into two schools of thought reflected in the left and right sides of Figure 8 in Chapter 2. The instrumental (also known as functional, technician, hired gun, behaviorist) view of publics sees the client's desires as what drives SC while publics basically wait around for practitioners to find the instrument, strategy or "magic bullet," that will get a public to do what the client wants—to *instrumentalize* them (Botan, 1993b; 1996; 1997). The opposing humanist view is represented by the cocreational metatheory in this book. The intermediate modern school, which is largely focused on using a scientific research model and achieving a high degree of predictability, is somewhat more humanizing than the instrumental school because it is concerned with individual thought processes or group dynamics, but its primary goal remains the same as in the instrumental school.

The first part of this chapter covers the groups SC practitioners seek to communicate with, how they are thought about and labeled, and how this facilitates or impedes understanding of what unifies the subfields of SC. It concludes that *publics* is the most inclusive and strategically useful of the commonly used terms. Then this chapter highlights the terms and ideas most frequently used in segmenting publics to make campaign planning more manageable. Again, the final section discusses the internal processes that allow publics to cocreate their own meanings—the cocreational view of publics.

Strategic Communication Theory and Practice: The Cocreational Model, First Edition. Carl H. Botan.

Introduction

The first two chapters of this book have discussed basic concepts of the field and of theory; now this chapter is about the most important component in SC—those we seek to communicate with. Different subfields use different terms for these groups, but different terms can also be used within subfields. For example, the term customer is very common in marketing, audience is commonly used in advertising, publics is often used in PR and voters in political SC; but audience is sometimes used in marketing, public health and even public diplomacy.

Labels and Subfields Are Important

Labels are important in everyday living just as they are in academic or legal circles. Think, for example, of the emphasis on using, or avoiding, particular labels when discussing religion, race, gender and other matters. Or look at the whole body of scholarly literature on labels in semiotics (e.g., Saussure, 1959; Peirce, 1960), the work of the general semanticists (e.g., Korzybski, 1994) or symbolism (e.g., Langer, 1948). Just as labels can confuse or clarify concepts and relationships, they can also magnify or minimize differences between SC subfields. Thus, while subfield-specific labels can be beneficial by helping maintain a subfield's history and self-identity, they can also be used to magnify unimportant differences and thereby contribute to the balkanization of SC. This means subfield-specific terms can help develop SC into a more recognized and unified field that has pride in its many strong subfields, or can emphasize and strengthen artificial barriers between subfields. Among other things, such barriers often impede job searches and obscure the unifying role of communication strategy in organizations and government bodies, thus exerting downward pressure on both the pay and organizational rank of communication specialists.

I will continue, for example, to see myself as part of the public relations subfield where I have made my living for almost 40 years, even while understanding that PR is part of a much bigger field called SC. Much of what I learned in practicing PR I later found to be applicable in other core and secondary fields, albeit sometimes only after learning to label switch between subfields. Broad concepts such as the relationship between grand strategy, strategy and tactics discussed in Chapter 1 are fairly easily applicable across all SC subfields with little or no label switching, as are the cocreational process and the centrality of publics discussed in Chapter 2. Some other labels are not so easily switched between subfields. Just as two branches on a real tree are essentially the same, no two are identical, and important differences between subfields should be acknowledged and valued, sometimes with different terms. Finally, difficulties can arise if we focus just on labels and forget to examine their meanings. It is possible that the same label may be used in more than one subfield and that it can make sense in those different subfields—just not the *same* sense.

For example, when a product or service is offered in a competitive environment in which customers can exercise freedom of choice, the terms market and customer are appropriate. But when terms like customer are used where publics have no freedom of choice, or there is no competition, that term may be justifiably seen by those publics as awkward, misleading, or even cynical and manipulative. On the other hand, stretching terms from PR or health communication into what publics perceive as marketing matters can be an equally inappropriate choice. In such cases, continuing to use a particular term may please the sponsor, and demonstrate practitioner creativity in message design, but does not demonstrate an equal commitment to the cocreational rights of a public.

In addition, the labels put on individuals and groups often can carry implicit social power relationships with them. For example, a study by psychologists Langer and Abelson (1974) found that a videotaped interviewee was judged by one group of clinicians to be "significantly more disturbed when [he] was labeled as a job applicant than when that interviewee was described as a patient" (p. 4). Laying aside the obvious issues for clinical practices, what if practitioners use labels that obscure the relationships in, or reduce the effectiveness of, public health, anti-terrorism or emergency response campaigns? There is a whole body of literature, much of it generated by colleagues working in the critical and feminist traditions, that informs this issue far better than I could.

Practitioner or professional, scholar or academic Finally, what was just said about labels applies also to those used in this book. For example, the labels practitioner and professional are treated almost synonymously and are not intended to suggest higher and lower levels of work, as they sometimes do elsewhere. In this book, both strategists and tacticians are referred to as practitioners, because they both practice SC, except, for example, when discussing how the organizations using different grand strategies also use these terms differently. The terms scholars and academics refer to those whose primary focus is study and teaching, respectively, and are also not intended to denote any kind of ranking.

Organization of the Chapter

Botan and Soto (1998) wrote:

> Scholarship about publics should ideally be able to answer several increasingly complex questions. Included would be what publics are (definition), how we can differentiate meaningfully between publics (segmentation), what roles different publics play in society (function), and how publics come to exist and respond as they do (process). Existing literature seems to provide at least partial answers to these questions, but with decreasing numbers of entries as the questions confronted become more complex. (p. 8)

These four questions of definition, segmentation, function and process remain major challenges in understanding publics as well as how the cocreational paradigm guides that understanding. This chapter groups these four issues into three sections, with segmentation and function discussed together. Thus the first section of this chapter will address different ways subfields define and think about the groups of people they communicate with, using the terms stakeholders, publics, customers, markets and audiences, as well as what these terms imply about these groups and about the relationships practitioners can build with them. On the face of it, this sounds like a simple task but it is not because there is often no agreement even within subfields about what terms mean.

The second part of the chapter covers segmenting, subdividing a large public with many dissimilarities within it into smaller units that are more similar internally. Because different segments of a public may cocreate quite different meanings in the same communicative relationship, they can also function very differently, so the functioning of publics will also be discussed in this section.

The final part of the chapter, function and process, argues a cocreational perspective on publics by confronting the biggest misconception about publics: that they just sit around waiting to react to what clients or practitioners do. This section also revisits how the instrumental and humanist schools of thought view the function and process of publics and discusses how publics come into existence and their internal processes—a key notion within the cocreational paradigm. Much of this last section is based on some of my work since the middle 1980s and particularly work with Soto in 1998.

Different Ways Subfields of SC Think about the Groups We Communicate With

Stakeholders, customers, markets, audiences, and publics appear to be the most commonly used terms. Of the names discussed, this book adopts the term publics as a compromise for several reasons. It has a long history, implies fewer assumptions about those we communicate with than some other terms, and it is the broadest and most inclusive of the commonly used terms in SC. Finally, the term publics also fits best with the cocreational perspective. On the downside, the term publics is already widely used in the author's own subfield of public relations so its adoption in this book might appear to favor that subfield over others. That is not the intention, but if it is a concern the term stakeholders is a good substitute for publics.

Stakeholders

Because the term *stakeholder* is quite inclusive, and is already used across some subfields, it can often be substituted for the term publics. Organizational members and others developed this term to acknowledge that publics have a legitimate interest—a stake—in how an organization behaves. So, in some ways, development of the term stakeholders represents one of the first real breaks from the instrumental view of publics.

The best-known proponent of the term (Freeman, 1984) defines stakeholders as "any group or individual who can affect or is affected by the achievement of an organization's objectives" (p. 46). Clearly then, stakeholder is a broad enough term to include all of an organization's publics *but only as they relate to an organization's objectives.* Note also that Freeman and others discuss stakeholder as applying only in the context of corporations, although there is no reason the term should be limited to such narrow use. Thus the term stakeholder does not comport quite as well with the cocreational perspective as the term publics. Nevertheless, practitioners in specific organizations or contexts may find the term stakeholder more useful than the term publics. The term stakeholder is often used in marketing so the discussion of markets below involves also discussing stakeholders.

Public

Scholars have conducted research on publics in many fields and for many years. For example, Vasquez (1995) provided a list of published works about publics up to about the middle of the 1900s in his dissertation, which was also one of the first works directly addressing the cocreation of issues. Vasquez said, "there is no more powerful, enduring, and ambiguous concept [than] 'the public' in western democracy and society" (p. 1). He cited authors from various fields who have studied publics, including Allport (1924; 1937), Bentham (1962), Bonoma and Shapiro (1983), Bryce (1888), Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet (1948), Lippmann (1922; 1925), McDougall (1920), Rousseau (1979), and Tarde (1903).

Much of the historical scholarship on publics has included attempts to understand what a public is, possibly because achieving organizational goals and working with publics require such understanding. Thus, defining publics is taken up here and provides the foundation for a discussion of segmentation in SC, in the next major subsection of this chapter.

Clearly the most influential definition of a public was Dewey's from 1927. Dewey defined a public as "a group of people who see themselves as having a common interest with respect to an organization" and that "endeavor[s] to act through suitable structures and thus to organize itself for oversight

and regulation" (p. 29). Dewey's view of publics is where many public relations texts and researchers started their analysis in the latter part of the last century (e.g., Crable and Vibbert, 1986).

Dewey specifically ascribed to publics the ability to "endeavor" to do things, which implies both intent and some ability to plan. Dewey also might be read as implying that publics have the ability to build, or participate in building, structures they can use for oversight and to regulate or control the behaviors of actors in the SC arena. Both of these abilities are well inside the cocreational paradigm, although Dewey did not directly address *how* all this happens. Additionally, many scholars who start with Dewey's definition cite it only superficially and do not explore its cocreational implications. Thus public relations, advertising, and the whole field of SC tend to have difficulty explaining what goes on inside publics and why. This discussion of the internal functioning of publics fits best in the last section (process) of this chapter so it will be taken up there along with two of the very few major attempts to expand our understanding of what publics are and how they work, Vazquez's homo narrans approach and Grunig's situational theory of publics.

In 1998, Francisco Soto and I started with Dewey but expanded our view of publics in ways that may be fruitful for SC. In what turned out to be a cocreational definition, we said a public is a group developing a shared interpretation of your organization, its actions or policies (Botan and Soto, 1998). This chapter subsection draws heavily from that article but my terminology has changed over almost 20 years, so this 1998 statement about shared interpretations was actually a reference to what happens not just in Circle 5 but also in Circle 6 of Figure 9.

In keeping with the cocreational paradigm then, a public is not just a group of people; it is a group that constructs shared meanings toward another group or organization, or its behaviors. Thus a *latent* or *potential* public would be a group that has not yet developed a shared meaning about an organization but that has a reasonable basis for doing so in the future. These might be called *objective* publics in the sense that they have an objective interest in the behavior of an organization but have not yet developed shared meanings about it. This idea of objective publics has not been widely used but it is not unknown. Martínez and Monserrat (2010) used the term with respect to optical and optometry franchise websites. A German language book published in Berlin in 1887 used the term objective public and there have been a few others but, with the exception of one or two uses in marketing, SC and other subfields have not embraced the idea of objective publics.

With this brief discussion of some of the history of publics in mind, it follows that thinking about publics from a cocreational perspective means a change of attitude from that adopted by practitioners and scholars of the instrumentalist school of thought, as well as those who have just picked up terms for publics, customers, markets or audiences without thinking out what these labels may mean. In the cocreational paradigm, publics don't just cocreate unique meanings; they cocreate the most important meanings in the relationship because these may or may not support the intentions of a message sender or campaign planner and, thus, determine the fate of sending organizations and campaign planners alike. In SC both organizations and practitioners are subordinate to publics, who are the most independent (or sovereign) bodies in SC relationships. So some of the labels instrumentalists have used for publics, such as "target" public, are distinctly non-cocreational and reflect assumptions and goals that can limit relationship development between organizations and their publics. Thus while several of these terms are discussed later in the chapter, Figure 10 shows a simple cocreational definition of publics.

Figure 10 Cocreational definition of a public

A public is an interpretive community engaged in an ongoing process of developing a shared understanding of its relationship with a group or organization that can differ substantially from that of the organization.

This definition has several dimensions. First, a public is an interpretive community (Botan, 1993a; Boulding, 1973). An interpretive community means a community of people who interpret words or actions in similar ways. This usually means groups of individuals like voters or consumers. But a group of organizations can be a public, as can a group of nations, or the media, or a social movement. For example, Amnesty International, Greenpeace and the Red Cross could all sponsor campaigns in which the key public is all the governments of the world. The Christian Coalition of America, National Right to Life and National Organization for Women could all sponsor campaigns in which the target public is all the state governments in the United States. We seldom speak of individuals as publics, although some that are institutions, such as a country's president, a mayor or a religious leader, might be treated as publics in some strategic communication plans. Those who can have an impact on, or can be impacted by, a particular organization have a relationship with that organization, so these are publics of that organization.

Second, Dewey (1927) was right, publics do have intentions or a will of their own which leads them to develop shared meanings. Individuals, groups and even groups of organizations can develop the shared understandings characteristic of an interpretive community, and express their will through language use (Botan, 1993b). Put simply, publics have a vote in all SC plans that they can exercise both during campaign planning and after the campaign.

If a practitioner reduces a public's ability to cocreate new meanings, and to take action in its own best interest, the practitioner is denying a big part of that public's humanness and right to self-determination. Even if practitioners could find a magic bullet (cf. OpenLearn, 2014) that could make publics react like Pavlov's dog, those practitioners would be denying part of the humanness of their publics. They also would be demonstrating a non-cocreational and non-strategic view of SC.

Third, it is often best to think of publics as an ongoing process (Botan and Soto, 1998) of meaning making. If a public is thought of as just a group of people, there can be a temptation to think of it as fixed in time, space or attitude. In reality, however, publics are not static; they are dynamic, sharing and modifying the meanings they attach to a client's business decisions and other social acts. It may help to think of a public almost as a kind of meeting. From the cocreational point of view, a meeting is an exercise in small group communication the purpose of which is to understand or plan events by sharing meanings or cocreating new meanings. Thinking of publics this way helps focus on the cocreative process. A public, then, is a group that changes, sometimes from one moment to the next, as its members develop and change shared meanings. Thus, a public can be thought of as both the group of people involved *and* an ongoing process of developing and sharing meanings. If publics are an ongoing process of agreeing on meanings, SC plans have to match this process nature of publics by constantly changing and adapting to the changes in the meanings publics cocreate. Such an understanding of publics greatly increases the importance of longitudinal research. For example, traditional message-testing research might need to be refocused from what is often essentially cross-sectional research on what some individuals and groups think about a message at one point in time to also address how publics are using a message to develop new meanings over time that may substantively differ from their initial response to a message.

The members of a public do not have to meet face-to-face, or even talk, to achieve a shared meaning because social media and news stories might be sufficient to reach a shared understanding in some cases. Additionally, members of a public may subdivide themselves into smaller publics based on the sometimes slightly different meanings they cocreate. Thus the idea of segmentation discussed below can be useful in a strategic plan.

For example, the stockholders of a company are one of the important publics of that company because they have a relationship of partial ownership. They can interpret that as meaning they have something in common with other stockholders even if they do not meet or speak to the other stockholders. Within this public, however, some see themselves as part of a subpublic that supports the current management team, while others may see themselves as opposed to the current management team. Working with these two subpublics in various stockholder campaigns is a rapidly developing and exciting specialization of SC (cf. Bhattacharya, 1997.) This is a matter of cocreating different meanings about the same management behaviors. Members of the pro-management public are in it because they understand management actions or policies as in their best interest. Members of the anti-management public are in it because they understand the same management actions in another way. These two publics, like others, are not static but are constantly changing, and this explains why even the best cross-sectional research is limited in its value to SC. Practitioners need to increase the use of longitudinal research partially because the snapshot or flashes of time-frozen insight that cross-sectional research gives us often cannot capture the dynamic essence of publics. Cross-sectional research on publics is a little like a dance floor with flashing strobe lights. We catch glimpses of temporarily frozen figures with cross-sectional studies and sometimes this is all we need, but at other times our observational method may not allow us to see the bigger pattern of the dance when we need to.

These two publics also demonstrate how publics may not only attach different meanings but may also be in conflict with one another because of how different the meanings they attach to the same behavior can be. Extreme examples of such *conflicting publics* are seen when demonstrators and counterdemonstrators get into physical confrontation.

Fourth, and possibly most important, a public's understanding of an action can be even more sophisticated and accurate than that of a practitioner or client. Clients may think they understand a situation because they have done some market research, have experience, or see themselves as skilled. All of this may be true but it ignores the equally valid fact that publics have independent understandings that usually differ from the client's, may come from broader experience, and may even be more objective. For example, clients with poor corporate policies may simply not understand the meanings publics attach to their actions. British Petroleum's performance in the Gulf of Mexico oil spill illustrates this. Once BP had made statements that publics found untrustworthy, all BP's future statements faced the extra burden of not being trusted even before the content was considered. This was an example of a secondary crisis to be discussed in Chapter 5 and it simply meant that publics had a more sophisticated understanding of the situation, their role in it, and of BP's statements about it, than did BP.

Customer

A customer is someone who buys or may buy goods or services. This is why some sources simply cross-reference customers to buyers (e.g., Scott, 2010). Customers are valued primarily for how much they advance an organization's interests and they are often commodified, such as when mass media charge for advertising on the basis of how large a group of potential customer eyes or ears they can deliver to those buying advertising. Thus, the idea of customer is tied to that of markets, with a customer being an individual but market meaning the totality of actual and potential customers. Customer is a subset of market except in the sense that a market can also be a building, a physical space where customers shop, a use of the term not relevant to this discussion. There is, for example, a market for luxury cars and another market for designer jeans as well as one for work clothes. Each is made up of the actual and potential customers for a particular product or service.

Markets and Marketing Communication

Marketing communication has been defined in several ways, ranging from the almost tautological, "marketing communications is a subset of the overall subject area known as marketing ... [it] is 'promotion' from the marketing mix" (Friesner, 2014a; see also Friesner, 2014b), to "loosely defined, MarCom can be described as all the messages and media you deploy to communicate with the market" (MaRS, 2013).

Some argue for a fairly tight definition of marketing, while others such as Kotler (1972) say marketing now should "include the transactions between an organization and all of its publics ... to achieve a desired response" (p. 46). Both camps tend to a somewhat instrumental view, however, as evidenced by Kotler's phrase to "achieve a desired response."

The field of marketing, and the closely related subfield of advertising, have in many ways been the most progressive in SC when it comes to understanding the complexity and power of those we communicate with. The foreword to Bhala (2010) said, "In today's networked world, power has irrevocably shifted to the consumer ... This has significantly altered the nature of interactions between companies and consumers ... Traditional methods of fueling growth ... are increasingly being replaced by a collaborative, co-created view of value" (p. vii).

Today's scholarship in marketing often reflects a progressive view of customers as cocreators of value. Value is one kind of meaning that publics construct so this research tradition in marketing reflects a cocreational approach. For example, according to Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2004a),

> The traditional system of company-centric value creation (that has served us so well over the past 100 years) is becoming obsolete. Leaders now need a new frame of reference for value creation. In the emergent economy, competition will center on personalized co-creation experiences, resulting in value that is truly unique to each individual. (abstract)

The same authors went on to say,

> In the conventional value creation process, companies and consumers had distinct roles of production and consumption. Products and services contained value, and markets exchanged this value, from the producer to the consumer. Value creation occurred outside the markets. But as we move toward co-creation, this distinction disappears. Increasingly, consumers engage in the processes of both defining and creating value. The co-creation experience of the consumer becomes the basis of value. (p. 5)

Such a cocreational view of value would be the foundation for a definition of market, and thus of marketing communication, that is quite different from traditional definitions (see Figure 11).

Marketing communication advocates have been especially active in seeking to apply the tenets of marketing in other subfields of SC, particularly with the ideas of social marketing and integrated marketing communication. Those who seek to apply the lessons learned in marketing more broadly than just promoting goods or services also sometimes stretch marketing well beyond its historical

A market is the public comprised of all actual and potential customers that decide whether a provider's goods or services should have value attached to them.

Figure 11 Cocreational definition of a market

roots and primary role (e.g., Matchette, 2006). For example, the term social marketing has become popular in some SC subfields for social issue campaigns, as Weinreich (2010) explains:

> Social marketing was "born" as a discipline in the 1970s, when Philip Kotler and Gerald Zaltman realized that the same marketing principles that were being used to sell products to consumers could be used to "sell" ideas, attitudes and behaviors ... This technique has been used extensively in international health programs, especially for contraceptives and oral rehydration therapy (ORT), and is being used with more frequency in the United States for such diverse topics as drug abuse, heart disease and organ donation.

The genesis of social marketing actually goes back even further to when Wiebe (1951) first asked the famous question: why can't we sell brotherhood like we sell soap?

Some authors have warned that these efforts are illusory because "marketers' self image may be pleasurably inflated by claiming that political campaigns are just another part of marketing, but what progress is gained by such reasoning?" (Luck, 1969, p. 53). From a wider SC perspective, this practice also tends to conjure images of marketing imperialism in other subfields and thus drive SC apart rather than uniting it. All SC subfields have practices and theories that could be applied to other subfields, but that is only because we are from the trunk of the same tree.

Marketing has also given birth to the idea of integrated marketing communication widely called IMC. In this approach, all aspects of marketing and communication are coordinated into a single effort to sell goods or services and build relationships with publics. IMC has become widely accepted in the last 20 years and it "can help in creating coordinated and consistent messages across various channels of communication. Furthermore, the concept is especially valuable in that it places great emphasis on the importance of all stakeholder groups and, in particular, on customer loyalty, which can only be created through strategic relationship building" (Kitchen and Burgmann, 2010). Because of its focus on stakeholders/publics, integrated marketing communication is at least a transitional theory between old instrumental models of marketing that sought to find the magic bullet and a cocreational approach on Figure 8. But there are some limitations to the IMC approach and some SC subfields, including PR, have been somewhat resistant to adopting it. Kitchen et al. (2004) said, "At the very beginning ... public relations educators ... tended to be vehemently opposed ... Later on, some academics questioned the newness of the IMC concept [and whether IMC] merely reinvents and renames existing concepts ... whether IMC is a 'management fashion' ... [or] doubted IMC's theoretical robustness" (p. 24). Some have also questioned how effectively IMC can be measured and some see it as an attempt by marketing to subordinate other SC subfields, particularly advertising. None of these criticisms is broadly accepted and, on the whole, IMC adherents have successfully defended them so that today IMC is an accepted model in some SC subfields.

Advertising is a subfield of SC used primarily for marketing communication because it usually involves buying time or space in the mass media to communicate non-personal messages about proffered goods or services. The colleagues in the advertising subfield have for many years been among our leaders in researching publics. In particular, advertising colleagues were among the earliest strategic communicators to widely adopt sophisticated statistical analytic tools, including multivariate analysis. For example, Kirsch and Banks (1962) used factor analysis procedures to define program types more than half a century ago. Advertising has become so ubiquitous that today there are spam blockers and even academic studies about the skepticism of consumers toward advertising, and "skepticism toward advertising, defined as the general tendency toward disbelief of advertising claims, was hypothesized to be a basic marketplace belief" (Obermiller and Spangenberg, 1998, p. 159).

Marketing communication is all the communication activities that publics use as input in constructing their own meanings, including attaching their own values, to goods, services and their providers.

Figure 12 Cocreational definition of marketing communication

From a cocreational perspective the marketing communication subfield has done a good job of focusing on the meanings cocreated by publics, maybe the best performance of all of SC subfields. Thus marketing communication can be defined from a cocreational perspective (Figure 12). Note that this definition includes *all* the communication activities publics use and not just those activities sponsored or supported by the organization. In traditional marketing, this included both organizationally sponsored messages, such as advertising, and uncontrolled or earned media coverage. In a message and mass media centered instrumental view of SC, this was acceptable because the authority to cocreate meanings was shared only with the mass media. In the view of marketing communication, however, publics are seen to draw on whatever information *they* wish in cocreating meanings. The role publics give to sources other than organizationally sponsored messages is becoming greater and greater as advertising skepticism increases along with the role of the social media. Thus, from a cocreational view, *all* the communication activities publics choose to use are part of marketing communication from the perspective of those publics, although much of it is uncontrolled by the organization just as news stories and editorial comments always have been or should have been.

Audiences

The idea of audiences is ancient, predating even the sixth century BCE when the Greek cult of Dionysus put on festival plays before audiences of up to 14,000, and it was an important concept in many of the works of Aristotle (384–322 BCE), while mass communication has been studying audiences for at least two-thirds of a century (Lazarsfeld, Berelson, and Gaudet, 1948; Matthews, 1947).

Many fields such as entertainment, mass media, sports and publishing, as well as some SC subfields, use the term audience, although with little agreement on meaning except that it usually refers to those who see, read, witness or in some way perceive a message. Thus, the term particularly appeals to those adopting an instrumental view because it features the role of a sender, while the audience is cast as anything but an equal participant.

Some just use the term audience loosely to refer to those who watch or listen to a given television or radio channel regardless of waste coverage, when it might be more accurate to refer only to potential audience. For example, the famous Arbitron ratings include "network and national radio audience measurement ... providing mobile audience measurements and analytics ... developing software used for analyzing media audiences" (Arbitron, 2012).

Publics versus audiences The term audience has been used in many ways, not all of which are distinct from the ways in which the term public was first used in the academic literature by Dewey in 1927 and others after that. Notwithstanding the existence of these overlapping definitions in the literature, audiences and publics can be differentiated primarily by the duration and complexity of the relationship being addressed. As Botan and Soto (1998) observed, those seeking to address a public often envision a more enduring and complex relationship than do those seeking to address an audience:

> A single communication such as a speech, movie, or television program may have an audience while an organization, social body or individual has a longer term and more complex

> relationship with a public than that one event. Because a relationship with a public is more ongoing, and usually has more dimensions than with an audience, it is a potentially strategic undertaking. (p. 6)

For example, a company marketing a product through a television ad pays to purchase access to a specific audience and only for a specific time, often 30–60 seconds. In this sense, as many media scholars have argued, an audience is a sort of commodity that the television network packages and sells to advertisers. In this view, an audience is acquired by investing the cost of making and broadcasting entertainment or news and then sold for more than it cost to acquire it. But the audience that views a single 30-second ad can also have a much more lasting and complex relationship with the manufacturer so they can also be part of a public. Conversely, an individual can be a part of one of the manufacturer's publics without being in the audience for that ad, or any ad.

Where the parties expect a relationship to continue or where that relationship has more than just one dimension, the need to take the future into account and thus to have some kind of a plan makes communicating with both audiences and publics a potentially strategic endeavor. While it is certainly possible to have a strategic aspect to a short-term performer–audience meeting, the relationship during a campaign speech is not strategic in the same sense as planning for an ongoing relationship would be.

It gets a little more complicated when publics and audiences mix or when individuals can be members of both. For example, at a campaign speech there may be some who are only audience members while others at the same speech are also members of publics, such as potential voters, donors or volunteers. All those attending the speech can be thought of as a *single* audience but may also represent multiple publics. Thus, being one thing does not preclude also being the other, and this can lead to confusion in actual practice where the terms public and audience are often incorrectly used interchangeably, and which term is used may depend on which subfield or even which firm one works in.

Attributes of audiences For the Greeks and for many people today, an audience is essentially the group of people assembled to witness a public performance or event of some kind, such as a sporting event, concert or movie. In this sense, an audience is made up of individuals who voluntarily choose to witness the event. Thus an audience is no longer an audience when the event it gathers for ends. Audiences do not have to, but often do, exist in a public space, which may be an electronic space. Audiences do not have to, but often do, participate in or respond to the performance in some way such as cheering, booing or the wave. Audiences do not have to, but often do, pay for or otherwise support a performance.

Audiences are often conceptualized as playing an essentially passive role in a communication relationship. For example, Newsom, Turk and Kruckeberg (1996) say that an audience is a passive group of people who just receive a message, while a public is basically an active audience, engaged in some exchange with an organization. Dervin (1989) says,

> Audiences are conceptualized as people to whom these [campaign] truths must be transmitted—audiences, like messages, are treated as commodities ... Every effort is made to communicate artfully and well. While communication is conceptualized as a one-way flow, efforts are directed at targeting messages for different audience segments ... In this scenario, the populace is audienced—they are objectified by the campaign planners who define the relationship as follows: me, source; you, audience. (p. 69)

Segmentation and Functions of Publics

Many practitioners and authorities have developed taxonomic systems for grouping publics, often using Dewey's (1927) and, to a lesser extent, Blumer's (1946) organization-centered views to differentiate between kinds of publics (e.g., Dozier and Ehling, 1992). This involves subdividing (segmenting) larger publics into smaller ones based on their functions. Such segmentation has a long history in SC but much of that history is distinctly non-cocreational in its assumptions and uses. This section discusses segmentation as it has traditionally been used in SC, which reflects an instrumental bias and does not lend itself easily to a cocreational perspective on publics. Then customized segmentation, which fits much better with a cocreational view, is discussed. A cocreational definition of segmentation is shown in Figure 13.

The traditional approach uses labels describing how important publics are from the perspective of the organization—for example, target, crucial, or primary public. Other labels like active, passive or latent are also used to describe what functions publics are expected to fulfill for an organization, although these also lean somewhat toward an instrumental bias.

Those using segmentation often seek to avoid costly waste coverage in advertising, or they may be more strategic and use segmentation in a plan to avoid antagonizing one segment of a large public by appealing to another segment. For example, a major political campaign may not have just a single advertisement to explain its position on import restrictions, but rather one ad trumpeting its support, to be aired in industrial regions, and a second explaining how careful it will be when addressing such a complex issue, to be aired in regions with a lot of international commerce and large immigrant communities.

History of Segmentation

The term segmentation is heavily used in marketing (cf. Michman, 1983), which has used labels to distinguish between *standardized* marketing efforts and *customized* efforts for well over 20 years (Baalbaki and Malhotra, 1993; Sands, 1979; Szymanski, Bharadwaj and Varadarajan, 1993). As explained by Baalbaki and Malhotra (1993), "By standardizing the marketing effort over similar worldwide segments and differentiating it across dissimilar worldwide segments, the international marketing manager is able to reap the advantages of both standardization and customization. The choice of the variables by which to segment the global market is crucial" (p. 19).

An early definition of segmentation comes from W. R. Smith (1956): "Market segmentation involves viewing a heterogeneous market ... as a number of smaller homogeneous markets in response to differing product preferences among important market segments" (pp. 64–65; see also Wedel and Kamakura, 2000, p. 3). Thus it is no surprise that segmentation is often used in the most sophisticated ways in the marketing subfield, addressing everything from bio-mimetics (Aurifeille, 1998) to postmodern analysis (Firat and Schultz, 1997), its use in online marketing (Hymas, 2001) and, of course, social marketing, which as explained earlier is a term often used for strategic communication related to public health or the social policies of organizations. The website of the US

Segmentation is subdividing bigger publics into smaller ones based on increasingly finer grained distinctions between the meanings they cocreate, usually so the problems inherent in addressing large and more heterogeneous publics can be overcome with more specific messages for smaller more homogeneous publics.

Figure 13 Cocreational definition of segmentation

Centers for Disease Control covers literally hundreds of such campaigns, many but not all of which discuss or use segmentation.

Early efforts at marketing segmentation were often characterized by fairly rudimentary attempts to divide publics into categories, using demographics to target already decided upon messages. In other words, they often used segmentation more instrumentally than as a tool for understanding the meanings publics create on their own.

There are two basic approaches to segmentation. The first relies on using preexisting categories and it might be called standardized or a priori segmentation. A priori segmentation is more instrumental in both assumptions and outlook than campaign-specific segmentation. The second form, campaign-specific segmentation, uses categories specific to the unique publics each campaign faces so it opens the door to a cocreational approach to segmentation.

Standardized or A Priori Terms

A priori or standardized labels for segments of publics can help a practitioner to think about publics using familiar terms and this can help with the transfer of knowledge about previous publics to new situations. A priori segments can also help to orient new practitioners about what to look for when planning a campaign, particularly when there is little or no real research on the publics involved. These segment lists for publics suffer from the limitation of assuming that publics exist and have importance primarily or even solely as a response to an organization. A priori labels tend to put the focus on organizations, making them the center of public relations while reducing publics almost to instruments of the organization.

Years ago this approach relied heavily on physical or economic demographic categories rather than on the actual meanings of publics, so there was always a bit of a disconnect between why segmentation was used and what it achieved. All of us practicing in the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s tried to overcome that disconnect by engaging in the often subjective practice of guessing how a particular public might feel about a candidate's message, or a product, by mixing our own experience in with that public's average age, gender makeup, ethnicity, geographic location or other demographic factors.

Later, and with marketing still in the lead, segmentation expanded from an emphasis on demographics to what came to be called psychographics. Piirto's *Beyond Mind Games: The Marketing Power of Psychographics* (1991) was claimed by the publisher to be "the first book that tells you what psychographics is all about." In the public relations subfield, Scott and O'Hair (1989) had already written "Expanding psychographic concepts in public relations: The composite audience profile." In this same era, the ideas of lifestyle marketing and the VALS (*va*lues and *l*ife *s*tyles) profile began to become quite popular, with boosts from authors like Zikmund and d'Amico (1986) and Richardson (1987).

So many practitioner leaders and scholars have generated lists of segments over the years that some readers have joked that there are roughly as many lists of kinds of publics as there are authors writing about publics, and this leads to another problem with the use of a priori labels. Each practitioner may be clear on what they mean when they use a priori terms, but as a result of how many practitioners and authors feel the same way about their different uses of these same terms, there is virtually no hope of finding consistent use.

From a cocreational perspective, a priori segment labels are largely tactical-level tools. Nevertheless, they are widely used in SC so the most common ones are briefly discussed here. They are discussed because *after* a cocreational analysis of publics and development of a strategic plan, a prior segment labels are often handy shorthand for tactical discussion and implementation. The next two subsections group similar, and often overlapping, a priori terms into two categories.

Most important publics: target, critical, primary and crucial The public an SC campaign seeks to reach is often called a target public. Target public is probably also the least cocreational term in all of SC. A critical public is a public that a campaign cannot succeed without, while a primary public is the first or most important public (note the overlap). Crucial public is a somewhat less commonly used term that includes critical publics as well as other important publics. These terms are not quite synonymous because, for example, in the subfield of PR, Bivins (2009) says, "Although public relations messages are ultimately targeted to a specific public, they must generally go through the media to reach that audience. Thus, the primary audience for most PR messages is generally the media itself. That's why these messages are crafted in the style of the medium for which they are intended" (pp. 135–136).

Thus, sometimes a target public is communicated with for the purpose of reaching a critical public rather than because it is critical in and of itself, or because, in a particular campaign, another public may also be crucial in the sense that the campaign cannot succeed without that public's support, or at least its acquiescence. One example of this is the millions of dollars spent annually on public diplomacy, where the critical or decision public is the government of another country but the target public to whom a campaign is addressed is the voters, business community or general citizenry of that country, which it is hoped can influence the policies of the critical public.

Other a priori publics: active, passive, latent, secondary and potential Active publics are those that take an active role in an issue so they may also be target, critical, primary or crucial. People often self-select into an active public, choosing, for example, to take part in political or environmental campaigns, so this kind of segmentation may help a little in understanding meanings cocreated by some publics. Because active publics are recognized as often self-actuating, this label implies a somewhat cocreational view of publics. Passive publics typically do not engage in cocreating many meanings about an issue in spite of being aware of it. This may be because they do not see the issue in question as directly affecting them, because other more pressing issues consume their time and attention, or for other reasons.

Latent publics typically are not aware of an issue (Toth, 2006). Think of latent publics as potential publics that can become interested, even active, on a given issue but are currently not. In actual use, the terms passive, latent and potential overlap a lot, with different practitioners sometimes meaning the same thing but using different terms. Secondary publics are those that are somewhat important to success or failure and often have to be taken into account for a campaign to be successful. They usually do not dictate the strategies needed in the campaign as primary publics do, however. For example, for a politician running for office, the most critical public may be the voters in their own district, while campaign volunteers, donors and the media are also crucial publics for them. Secondary publics may include non-voters in the district.

Campaign-Specific or Customized Segmentation

Customized segments help to emphasize the unique meaning-making role of publics in a particular relationship. Customized segmentation usually fits better with a cocreational view but is not always better than a priori segments.

Campaign-specific segments for publics help SC practitioners think about a public in ways unique to that particular public and situation, while leaving the door open to a more cocreational approach to publics in which they can be segmented, not on the basis of ideas practitioners bring to their relationship with publics, but rather on the basis of new meanings that publics cocreate during that relationship. Because segments are not identified or labeled until information is collected about both

the publics and any current relationship the organization has with them, there is no ready-made list of terms to be discussed in this subsection.

Actual practitioner use of segmentation is seldom, if ever, purely a priori, particularly when experienced practitioners are involved. It is equally unlikely that any practitioner, again particularly experienced practitioners, could or would practice purely customized segmentation. Practitioners may even use some of the same terms discussed in the a priori section above *after* they have collected and analyzed information about the meanings publics cocreate. The big difference is between segmentation that takes place before, or often separate from, the information collected for Circle 1 and Box 2 of Figure 9, and segmentation that uses that information to better understand specific publics. Segment labels assigned separately from the research process are clearly not based on the meanings publics cocreate, and are therefore not cocreational.

How publics are segmented is not as important as how publics actually *work*. Before addressing how and why publics function as they do and what processes they engage in, a special kind of SC campaign, called altruistic, is discussed.

Altruistic Campaigns and Benefited Publics

Altruistic campaigns are different from marketing, political, public diplomacy and many PR campaigns because they are conducted solely for the purpose of benefiting publics, rather than benefiting the sponsors of campaigns (Figure 14). Here the term "solely" is not intended to mean that practitioners and clients get nothing out of conducting the campaign, just that these campaigns do not benefit the sponsoring organization materially.

Public health campaigns are probably the most common example of altruistic SC campaigns. For example, the US Department of Health sponsors hundreds of such campaigns every year through the Centers for Disease Control, the Office on Women's Health, or similar branches. State and local governments, as well as some charities and even some activist groups, also sponsor altruistic campaigns. Many, although certainly not all, national security, environmental, blood donation, neighborhood watch and similar campaigns fall into this category in which the sponsor does not benefit financially, politically or otherwise from any decisions by publics that ensue.

The fact that a campaign is altruistic does not make it automatically good. Even altruistic campaigns can be conducted in ways that are disrespectful to publics, undercut a public's right to cocreate its own meaning, or are confusing. For example, if a government body or health authority uses naked scare tactics in a campaign, the motive for the campaign may still be good but the execution seeks to manipulate emotions and thereby, possibly, to short-circuit a public's right to cocreate their own meanings.

Altruistic campaigns, which are often tax supported, are not to be confused with those of the shills who offer to make one's love life better with magic pills. Additionally, those offering to protect you and your family by educating you about some vast governmental or religious conspiracy, or those who will save not only your family but all of civilization if you just join them in hating a particular racial, ethnic or religious group, are not altruistic because publics must actually benefit from a campaign for it to be altruistic. These are often easy to see through. For example, those who promote

Figure 14 Altruistic campaigns defined

> Altruistic SC campaigns are those in which the campaign sponsor does not benefit financially, politically or otherwise from the decisions made by publics.

get-rich-quick schemes for flipping homes are really salespeople selling their "program." Things might get awkward for them if their publics were to stop and ask why, if their secret formula for making vast sums of money buying distressed properties with no downpayments is so easy, the seller has to resort to selling their secrets for three easy payments of $149.95 when they could be making much larger sums by just putting the same amount of time into flipping houses as easily as they advise others to.

Process in Publics

Because of the assumptive nature of our metatheories, which was discussed in Chapter 2, strategic communicators sometimes unthinkingly adopt a sender-centered or message-centered perspective. When a practitioner starts by focusing on the sender or message it becomes even more difficult to understand or work within the context of the internal functioning of publics. This internal functioning is what results in the cocreation of meaning upon which publics act, evaluate the communication efforts of SC practitioners, and plan for the future, so it is the most important characteristic of publics from a cocreational perspective.

Botan and Soto (1998) suggested that because most scholarship on publics does not address the processes that go on inside them, "SC campaign scholarship often use[s] an understanding of how publics function that has remained essentially static since Dewey's (1927) seminal contribution. As a result public relations, advertising, and the whole field of SC often have difficulty explaining what goes on inside publics, and why" (p. 7). Thus, the major challenge in coming to terms with publics as self-directing forces with their own meanings, agendas and judgments is understanding the processes that go on inside them and that enable them to function as they do. For example, as discussed more fully in the ethics chapters, attempts by SC practitioners to be ethical in relationships with publics are very much dependent on the ability to understand the rights, internal values and equivalent of free will that publics bring to any relationship with an organization.

Botan and Soto (1998) went on to say,

> We acknowledge that individuals bring to publics certain attributes (e.g., demographic characteristics, life values, attitudes, political affiliations). That these do not fully explain the behavior of publics is readily apparent from the inconsistent results achieved by marketing, pollsters and political campaigners. Existing research might explain, for example, how a particular public is likely to respond to a corporate disclaimer of responsibility for a toxic spill. This research might have a very hard time, however, explaining what internal processes are at work to make that response come about, or explaining why two seemingly similar publics respond as dissimilarly as they often do. This suggests that other factors, including internal processes, may be important to a fuller understanding of publics. (p. 7)

The cocreational school of thought differs essentially from the instrumental school and any others by focusing attention on the internal functioning of publics that involves both the use of language and choices made by publics. Thus the subsections of this discussion draw fairly heavily on Botan and Soto (1998) and are (1) a brief summary of how the instrumental view of publics addresses their internal processes, and (2) a somewhat more in-depth review of the humanistic view of publics and its focus on language use (employing a semiotic lens) and free choice.

Instrumental School View of Publics

As discussed in Chapter 2 and earlier in this chapter, the instrumental view of SC is based on an implicit behavioral or reactive understanding of publics. It has contributed immensely to the field because it developed into a systematic attempt to explain why publics act as they do, as well as providing an early framework for applying some of the social scientific approach that evolved out of World War II and the postwar period, much of which embraced a similarly instrumental view of publics. This model is still dominant in some subfields, countries and cultures as well as in some industries and organizations. It was a major step forward in its day but now often serves more as an impediment to developing new theoretic and practical tools to help SC advance beyond the first quarter of the twenty-first century. Therefore practitioners and academics need to be familiar with the instrumental view of publics but still not allow the view of publics as trainable to seduce them into thinking of publics merely as instruments to satisfy clients' needs.

The instrumental view of publics has been dominant since at least the post-World War II era. In the last few decades, rhetorical, critical and relational approaches and now the cocreational model have become more popular and have begun to challenge this dominance.

The instrumental school does not account well for the fact that publics are made up of humans who are capable of deciding for their own reasons whether they want to accept, believe, ignore, reject, or retaliate against something done by one of our clients or by one of us. The assumption that publics react to outside rather than to their own internally generated meanings feeds into the instrumental view and is deeply ingrained in popular and academic thinking. For example, Grunig and Repper (1992) recognized that publics have their own perceptions but not their own motives or internal needs, saying, "problems arise from the involvement of people in situations and their perceptions of situations and not from hidden internal needs" (p. 135).

One attraction of this very reactive view of publics is that groups and organizations that sponsor campaigns naturally want to be able to accurately predict that if they do X the publics will respond with Y—that if a politician promises tax breaks the voting public will vote for them, for example. The instrumental model seems to promise this capability and campaign sponsors are not to be blamed for wanting such predictability, but it is a chimera, something that does not exist but is still earnestly sought.

Those who seek the mythical silver bullet of communication strategies are guided by just such an instrumental view of publics. But the success rates of even well-executed campaigns usually provide, as Noar's (2006) 10-year retrospective study of health mass media campaigns suggested, small to moderate effects on health knowledge, beliefs, and attitudes. Sammut (2008) concluded, "public health education campaigns have not been as universally successful as it was hoped they would be." He went on to give evidence of this conclusion, saying, "nearly 40 years of health promotion has coincided with ascending rates of lifestyle disease."

An instrumental view of publics sees publics somewhat as the famous Russian scientist Pavlov viewed his dog. As the reader probably knows, Ivan Pavlov won the Nobel Prize in Physiology in 1904. His most famous work was *Conditioned Reflexes* (1927). Pavlov's experiments were foundational for what later became known as the behaviorist school of psychology. He trained a dog by providing the natural, or unconditioned, stimulus of food in conjunction with a conditioned stimulus, such as a bell or a light. After enough experiences with the conditioned stimulus linked with the food, the dog would react to it as if to food, having gastric secretions and salivating, even when only the conditioned stimulus was present. In other words, Pavlov could elicit the desired response from

the dog with only a bell much as some SC clients and practitioners dream of instrumentalizing publics by being able to elicit a desired response with the right stimulus/magic bullet.

Botan and Soto (1998) said:

> We do not object to the notion that publics exist, in part, in response to organizations—that they react to organizations, to linkages with organizations, or to the consequences of organizational behaviors. We accept this as a partial answer. It is not a sufficient answer, however, because it implicitly denies that publics have a role in their own existence or in how, when, and why they act as they do. This is a much more fundamental issue than it may at first appear ... [It] reflects the fundamental philosophical disagreement between behaviorists and humanists in interesting ways.
>
> The belief that publics exist and act only in response to environmental factors suggests that publics share their most important attributes with Pavlov's famous dog. Just as that dog salivated directly in response to an external stimulus, the traditional and systems-symmetric wings of public relations are arguing that publics behave exclusively in response to external stimuli. On the other hand, a humanistic view of the role of publics in SC campaigns has to answer the challenge of articulating how publics manifest one or more important humanistic attributes. Among these could be internal dynamics that allow publics to be self-directing, to have goals and purposes that are, at least in part, internally generated. (pp. 11–12)

Humanistic View of Publics

SC subfields and other fields have discussed the role of humanism in modern research and practice and have done so both directly and indirectly. For example, the subfield of public relations has been attempting to embrace both the science and the art aspects of PR, as emphasized in the Institute for Public Relations's trademarked theme: "The Institute for Public Relations is dedicated to the science beneath the art of public relations"" (2017). On another front, the evolution of psychological thinking reflects the interplay of behavioral orientations and more humanistic orientations very well. In addition, psychology, and particularly social psychology, has contributed significantly to the models developed and used in several subfields of SC in the post-World War II era. Thus, this section starts with a brief definition of humanism, for which there are several contradictory and charged definitions, and then discusses the humanistic view of publics in more detail.

Humanism in communication in SC The term humanism has both a religious and a philosophic, that is non-religious, history and it is used in the latter sense in this book. In its religious context, humanism came out of the Renaissance period in the West and meant *as opposed to the religious* or *without dependence on a deity*. In secular use—as used in this book—the "philosophy of humanism assigns preeminent value to human beings, their experiences, their interests, and their rights" (Steelwater, 2001, p. 59), so it helps SC focus on such things as language use, free choice and the ability of publics to cocreate new meanings.

Language use One way to think of humanism is that it focuses on the capabilities that differentiate humans from other species. Thus the humanistic ethic contributes to the cocreational school of thought by focusing not on how publics can be caused to react to a magic bullet but rather on the characteristically human capability, alone or in groups, to use language and the meanings it represents to create new meanings and understand something from the perspective of their own interests.

Reduced to less cumbersome wording, the *instrumental view of SC asks how practitioners can use language to get what they want from publics while the cocreational view asks how publics use language to decide whether practitioners will get what they want.* One way to understand publics, then, is through such a characteristically human capability as language use.

Botan and Soto (1998) said a language-based view of publics would be useful because the publics–clients relationship is based on message exchange. Written and spoken language is even more central to this process in SC than in most other fields so it is quite surprising that the subfields of SC have dedicated relatively little time to the role of language. We said,

> We realize questions of how and why publics process information as they do will never be completely answered. Nevertheless, specifically integrating notions of language might provide insights that have been missing from the inquiry so far. A semiotic approach to public relations and other SC, we feel, is one way to do this because it can address both how and why groups of people use language to produce enough common meaning to become, and then to function as, publics.

We went on to say,

> Semiotics offers a means of better understanding the sharing of meaning because of its specialized focus on the role of signs in arriving at such shared meanings. Accordingly, the next section provides a quick review of how the two major approaches to semiotics have been, or could be, used to understand SC campaigns, including publics, better. We adopt the one with a tradition that includes both a behaviorist component—allowing for publics to be responsive to external stimuli—and enough of a humanistic component to explain how and why publics may participate in internal symbolic interactions independent of external stimuli. The latter allows publics to function as self-directing, and therefore, potentially equal entities. (pp. 14–15)

Semiotics and publics Semiotics is a whole school of thought (Google lists over 4 million hits and Google Scholar lists 181,000 academic entries) and it is not the purpose of this book to summarize such a large literature, most of which is not directly applicable to understanding SC. The two major schools of thought in semiotics were founded by C. S. Peirce (1839–1914) and Ferdinand de Saussure (1857–1913) (see Peirce, 1960; Saussure, 1959). The latter was called a structuralist and his work would appear to influence SC only in broad terms because of its focus on the role of signs. The American semiotician Peirce, on the other hand, focused more on process than on structure, leading Botan and Soto (1998) to adopt his model. They argued the utility of Pierce's approach for SC, saying, "Saussure's emphasis was on the linguistic unit. In contrast, Peirce's model reflected what happens when there is interpretation" (p. 19). Thus Peircean semiotics helps inform the cocreational process in SC and can help build and maintain not only relationships between organizations and publics but also strong focus on a humanistic understanding of publics.

Some SC subfields such as advertising have attracted quite a bit of attention from semiotic scholars, while others, such as public relations, have generated only about three scholarly articles (each is reviewed in Botan and Soto, 1998). This is in part due to the fact that advertising focuses on an identifiable product that lends itself to analysis in the structural Saussurean tradition, which analyzes signs without particular concern for the context in which they occur. Cocreation of meaning by publics in SC always involves context as well as the strategies guiding a campaign (Box 3 in Figure 9), the signs and symbols contained in a campaign (Box 4), the starting meanings, values and goals of publics and the existing relationship with the sponsoring organization, as depicted by Circle 1 and Box 2.

Thus Saussurean semiotics is not as useful in explaining the internal functioning of publics in SC as the Peircean view of semiotics is. Ultimately it is the choices publics make that determine the outcome of SC campaigns.

Humans make choices Sometimes publics actively weigh matters and make a fully conscious, even rational, choice and sometimes they choose without much thought. The point is that publics make choices and decisions, alone or in groups. Because this book adopts a humanistic stance, it accepts that publics act as conscious groups making choices—some rational, some not so rational, but choices nevertheless. Sometimes individuals and groups make a decision differently than in the past for logical reasons and sometimes just because they feel like a change. Imagine the havoc this kind of behavior causes for those using an instrumental model. One notable attempt to explain how publics function internally is Vasquez's adaptation of Fisher's (1984; 1985) homo narrans, or human communication as storytelling, approach.

Vasquez (1993; 1995) argued for a homo narrans paradigm by focusing on the internal symbolic behaviors of publics while also drawing on Bormann's (1985) symbolic convergence theory. Vasquez said publics come into existence because they share their interpretations, or meanings, of things and events through language and this results in common assessments. He used Bormann's original term "chaining out" to explain this process.

Botan and Soto (1998) said,

> The Homo Narrans approach, in particular, does a good job of explaining how publics function internally to generate their own understandings. Discussing when publics seek symbolic information, or how it is processed, is a far cry from discussing whether the reasons for doing so go beyond simple reactions to outside organizations, however ... Vazquez still thought, "publics are individuals that develop a group consciousness [in] a common problematic situation." (p. 11)

Thus, homo narrans was not a fully cocreational model, although it was a big step forward in its time and helped lay the foundation for other humanist work on publics to follow.

4

Strategic Communication Ethics

Summary

Strategic communication and its subfields often suffer from the not always inaccurate perception that they are deceptive or manipulative. Such perceptions are so worrisome to some subfields, primarily in the government, charitable and health arenas, that they avoid using such terms as persuasive, strategic, advertising or public relations in an attempt to distance themselves from these perceptions. To be fair, agencies of the US federal government are not allowed to freely use the term public relations under a more than 100-year-old Act of Congress, but avoiding the other terms is voluntary. Of course, these semantically cautious subfields are typically trying to be just as persuasive in their SC campaigns as any other subfield. For example, is the expense of a government's "informative" campaign about smoking or wearing seat belts paid for any reason other than persuading people to change their behaviors? Additionally, if publics perceive that a campaign is presented under false pretenses they may see it as more deceptive and manipulative than the same campaign presented more forthrightly. Perhaps this is part of why the Edelman (2016) trust survey found that trust in business worldwide is at 53 percent on their scale, while trust in government is at 42 percent, an 11 percent gap. In the United States, the business–government trust gap is 12 percent and government in China and the United Arab Emirates is slightly more than twice as trusted. Of course, these trust gaps have myriad causes so what SC is called, and even how it is practiced, probably explains only a small part of the picture.

This chapter addresses several major issues in SC ethics. The introduction defines ethics, codes of ethics, morality and law from a primarily cocreational view as the terms are used in this book. This first section also describes the challenge facing SC ethics and the parable of the pig perfumer. The second section discusses the current status of ethical thought in SC by first analyzing some common SC ethical codes and then some common practitioner and textbook concepts related to ethics, including the hired gun model mentioned earlier. The third section on a cocreational approach to ethics proposes and explains a human nature perspective on ethics as a replacement for these older and scattered approaches and standards of ethics. It explains how the cocreational school of thought is consistent with the human nature approach to ethics and leads into the final section that provides examples of the kinds of specific ethical applications that a cocreational view facilitates, including in the area of corporate social responsibility.

Although a publics-centered view of ethics is based in humanism, and thus is applicable across many international and intercultural boundaries, it is not easily applicable so a few particulars will be briefly discussed in Chapter 9.

Strategic Communication Theory and Practice: The Cocreational Model, First Edition. Carl H. Botan.

The focus of this chapter is on the idea that a strategic communicator's first ethical responsibility is to publics. Practitioners have ethical responsibilities to employers and clients but publics come first. This means that the old "I was just following orders" excuse is *never* an acceptable ethical justification in SC. Following orders may avoid some kinds of official trouble, but it does not make that person an ethical practitioner. Each strategic communicator is responsible for drawing their own ethical line in the sand. Thus each practitioner should study their subfield's code of ethics, but they remain responsible for developing their *own* publics-focused standard.

Introduction

There are many important schools of ethical thought that apply to SC, including those based on Plato, Aristotle and Kant. For example, Marsh's (2001) article "PR ethics: Contrasting models of Plato, Aristotle, and Isocrates," or Bowen's (2004) article, also in the subfield of PR, "Expansion of ethics as the tenth generic principle of public relations excellence: A Kantian theory and model for managing ethical issues." Indeed, an Aristotelian approach partially underpins the humanistic philosophy this book reflects, in, for example, the sense that persuasion, language use and meaning cocreation are inextricably linked. Indeed, many academics and practitioners have used these and other foundations for addressing ethics in their own SC subfield. The challenge in this book, however, is to develop a single perspective on ethics based on cocreationality. This view has to be broad enough to meet the practice and academic needs of at least all the major subfields of SC and, hopefully, all the subfields of SC. So what follows is not intended to be a substitute or competitor for the large philosophically grounded schools of ethical thought, but rather a slightly more practical attempt to develop an ethical approach to SC that can help meet the needs of what is essentially an applied field.

Cocreationality and Ethics

A cocreational perspective on ethics requires first accepting that the ability to construct mental images and meanings is a fundamental part of the human experience. Second, it requires accepting the cocreational role of publics in determining what is or is not ethical in how practitioners and clients treat them. Thus, cocreational ethical standards cannot be based solely on what practitioners, their clients or their organizations think. This cocreational view of ethics is based in humanism so communication practices that facilitate the process of mental image construction inside publics are more ethical than those that inhibit it, because "humans are uniquely equipped to use symbols and that it is this ability which helps set humans apart from other creatures" (Botan, 1993b, p. 5), a view based on Burke (1966), Wieman and Walters (1957) and many other authors.

This chapter addresses what Johannesen, Valde and Whedbee (2008) say ethics should be concerned with: "degrees of rightness and wrongness, virtue and vice, and obligation in human behavior," because ethical issues arise when "behavior could have significant impact on other persons [or] involves conscious choices of means and ends" (p. 1). The whole practice of SC is about trying to have significant impacts on other persons so the field carries a very large and unavoidable ethical burden. A burden that most publics, and even most practitioners, are likely to say the field has not always lived up to very well. As SC continues to become more refined and new information technologies and social media give the practice greater reach and speed, that burden will only become greater. SC, then, is obligated to do more to establish and live up to high ethical standards in the future than it has in the past. In the past, professional associations have largely sought to meet their ethical obligations through formal codes of ethics so that is the final subsection of this introduction.

Ethics is about right and wrong, not about expediency or profit. But before discussing ethics, morality and law and how these relate to each other, a short allegorical story will help illustrate how some of the ethical issues discussed in this chapter also have practical, and even personal, ramifications for practitioners.

Parable of the Pig Perfumer

Once there was a farmer who raised pigs. These pigs smelled like any other pigs, so the competitive marketplace kept down the price the farmer could get for her pigs. One day the farmer decided to hire a professional pig perfumer to make the pigs smell better by covering up their bad smell with cheap perfume, hoping to give them an advantage in the marketplace.

The perfumer did his job well and the farmer sold all the pigs and got a good price. She thanked the perfumer and hired him again for the next day. When her pigs smelled even better the next day she was very happy indeed, but noticed that a little bit of the smell from the pig sty had stuck to the perfumer. In addition, a few customers began to complain that they had been tricked when, by the time they got the pigs to their new home, the pigs were again smelling as pigs just naturally do. After several days of furious perfuming, the farmer's pigs smelled great but the poor perfumer was beginning to smell worse than the pigs and an increasing number of customers were catching on to the trick. The farmer, being concerned about her own welfare and not that of the perfumer, knew that continuing to expose her valuable pigs to the perfumer might make them smell as bad as the perfumer smelled, both literally and figuratively. So she fired the perfumer, banked her profits and announced to her unhappy customers that she had responded to their complaints by firing the person responsible for misleading the customers.

The pig perfumer became like strategic communicators who help clients obscure the truth by making their current practices appear to smell better than they actually are. These practitioners often end up making themselves smell bad while also making themselves into handy scapegoats, because *employers willing to trick and exploit customers are often willing to do the same things to employees.* This particular perfumer could no longer find work doing anything but perfuming pigs because of how bad he smelled. In addition, since the kind of employers who want to make pigs smell better than they naturally do are likely to want to avoid paying competitive wages to someone with limited employment opportunities, the perfumer eventually had to lower his rates to stay in business.

Ethics, Morality and Law

Ethics The term ethics is used, and misused, more than it seems to be practiced. There have probably been enough people trying to define ethics to populate a small town. Fischer (2004) says the major thread in the ethics literature is what is "right or wrong or good and bad" (p. 2). Fitzpatrick and Bronstein (2006) say, "philosophers and scholars have defined ethics as the study of what is right and wrong, fair and unfair, just or unjust. Others have argued that ethics is, in essence, morality" (p. 136). Although there is no agreement on any one definition of ethics, the most common thread among the various attempts is that ethics are the standards of right and wrong that groups, such as publics, and individuals adopt.

Two other attributes of ethics are important to consider, although they are not matters of definition. First, ethics is best understood as a very applied field. Kraut (2008), explaining Aristotle's view of ethics, said, "Therefore practical wisdom, as he conceives it, cannot be acquired solely by learning general rules. We must also acquire, through practice, those deliberative, emotional, and social skills that enable us to put our general understanding of well-being into practice in ways that are suitable

to each occasion." Kraut sees Aristotle's view of ethic as a practical matter not best learned by studying general rules but rather by actual practice.

Because ethics is about what we consider good or bad, or right or wrong, there has to be *something there to be judged*, such as an action or a campaign. A second dimension to the applied nature of ethics is that the behaviors we make ethical judgments about are deeply embedded in a mix of situation, context, effects, history and other matters. This does not necessarily mean that ethical judgments are or have to be situational, merely that ethical judgments are applied to specific acts that occur in a specific context. For example, telling a lie is generally considered unethical, but failing to tell a lie necessary to secure the release of a kidnapped child would be considered unethical by many, although not necessarily all, because it would mean putting one's personal need to feel ethical ahead of the survival of the child. Thus, ethical values are basically socially constructed, so they are both cocreated and disagreed on. This means our ethical values are actually products of the process of communication, at least in the sense that we learn our ethical values through communication and we often assert them the same way.

As SC's reach and ability to influence masses of people increase, SC ethics will become even more important in the eyes of publics, clients and society. As social media make it easier to massively publicize poorly thought-out or false statements, while also making retraction of them less and less effective, the importance of being ethical in the first place will become even greater (see Figure 15).

A code of ethics can serve at every level of society, from the whole world (cf. United Nations Secretariat, 2007), to Aboriginal peoples (cf. Castellano, 2004; University of Manitoba, 2006), to every form of professional association, and even to individuals. But all codes of ethics face two overarching challenges.

Strategic communication ethics are the standards of right and wrong or good and bad used to judge strategic communication practices by *both publics and practitioners*.

Figure 15 Strategic communication ethics defined

Two challenges to current codes The first major challenge faced by almost all codes of ethics, whether in communication or other fields, is enforceability because, unless there are overlapping laws, the power to license, or some other external authority, codes of ethics are hard to enforce. Even when enforcement mechanisms are present, enforcement is often not rigorous because it is left up to other members of the particular field to enforce the code. Part of the rationale for leaving members of a field or profession in charge of enforcing its own ethical standards is that they are the ones who are expert in the practice so they are best qualified to understand and evaluate professional practices. While true, this rationale often amounts to leaving the fox to guard the hen house. This is particularly problematic when membership in a professional organization is voluntary, which is typically the case when licensure is not involved, and even sometimes when it is. For example, voluntary organizations are typically powerless to do anything but kick a member out for ethical violations. Thus, many codes of ethics are thought, even by their own members, to be toothless. This reality may be at the heart of the minimum codes versus maximum codes debate discussed later in the chapter.

The term code of ethics is used in this book to describe an agreed-to set of ethical standards that is the product of reasoned effort about what is right and wrong in one's practice and is systematically applicable and explainable to others. The term reasoned effort, when applied to a code, means that effort is expended not only in reasoning about what is right or wrong and good or bad, but also in applying that judgment to a specific act in deciding whether it is ethical or unethical. Thus, *the mere*

statement that an organization will obey the law is not a statement about its ethics. A code as used in this context must also be explainable to others if it is to fulfill its role as an agreed-to set of guidelines.

The second major challenge facing codes of ethics today is the assumption that it is appropriate for each organization to create its own code of ethics. This view puts parts of ethics outside of the range of a cocreational approach because it essentially excludes publics—the people most affected by ethical violations—from having a voice in the creation, interpretation or enforcement of ethical codes. Given the voluntary nature of codes of ethics, this is not unreasonable, but it is another case of asking the fox to guard the hen house. Societies have evolved ways for publics to be heard on ethical issues. Unfortunately these often involve some legal or quasi-legal procedures, although some SC subfields, notably PR, have a strong historical aversion to anything that suggests restrictions on freedom of speech or the press. Business organizations also often have an aversion to any kind of increased regulation.

Finally, morality, law and ethics are not the same thing and should not be treated the same, as discussed next.

Morality Morality is a difficult subject to pin down in the context of ethics. Some see morality as a subset of ethics, while others see the terms as interchangeable. Trevino (1986) seems to reflect both of these views in one statement by saying, "the model combines individual variables (moral development, etc.) with situational variables to explain and predict the ethical decision making behavior of individuals and corporations" (p. 601). Of course, either of these views makes concerns over whether individual practitioners call their standards of right and wrong morals or ethics pretty superfluous.

On the other hand, Anthony (1998) said,

> The terms "morals" and "ethics" are often taken to be interchangeable but the distinction is made clear by Ninian Smart who defines ethics as "theory or philosophy which systematizes moral values" (1996: xvi). In *Postmodern Ethics*, Bauman (1993) accounts for this systematization by the individuation of modernity which heralded the separating out of morality as a special concern. (p. 274)

He then cites Bauman as saying, "modern legislators and modern thinkers alike felt that morality ... is something that needs to be designed and injected into human conduct" (Bauman, 1993, p. 6).

This kind of distinction, although acceptable, may be unnecessarily confusing for those who speak of individual ethics or corporate morality or social responsibility. It is not necessary to settle what might turn out to be primarily a semantic quibble here since attempting to do so could lead to more confusion than clarity. For the purpose of this book, the term ethics includes individual and organizational values and practices, as well as a subject area of study and philosophy.

Law The relation of law and ethics is complex and the issues raised by it have also spawned a range of opinions. Here, however, there appears to be, if not consensus, at least one underlying agreement. Simply put, *law ≠ ethics*, that is, law does not equal ethics, although many accept being legal as a necessary but not sufficient precondition for being ethical. They point to the fact that most of a society's laws reflect some consensus on those things which it is wrong to do and, thus, represent a society's evaluations of what is right and wrong or good and bad. Others just see laws as the expression of which political force is in power at a particular point in time, and ethics as both more enduring and not necessarily based in the political process. Indeed, for these folks ethics are used to pass judgment on political acts and processes. For example, they might say what was right and wrong did not change

from the day before Hitler took power in Germany to the day after he took power, but the law certainly did, particularly if you were Jewish, Slavic, Roma, physically or mentally handicapped, or just not of the preferred race. They would also say that slavery in America or apartheid in South Africa did not suddenly become wrong the day after the Emancipation Proclamation or Nelson Mandela's election victory, that both had once been legal *and* had always been wrong ethically.

I have taught about the relationship between law and ethics for many years, in part by drawing on the ideas of minimum and maximum codes in ethics. A minimum code would be a code made up of all, or mostly, minimum items, while a maximum code would be a code made up of all, or mostly, maximum items (see Johannesen, Valde and Whedbee, 2008). A minimum code item is one that states the minimum behavior that can be tolerated. Laws are a kind of minimum code because they specify the minimum standards needed to avoid some punishment. Negative wording, think "thou shalt not," and the threat of negative sanctions usually characterize minimum codes. Nevertheless, minimum code items hold strong appeal for the writers of ethical codes because they specify what action, or lack of action, is wrong and in so doing they appear to hold out the promise of being enforceable.

Maximum codes on the other hand are made up entirely, or mostly, of items with maximum wording. These articles specify the highest standard, or ideal, that subscribers to the code should strive for, often using the character depiction function (Johannesen, Valde and Whedbee, 2008) that sets out what a practitioner of good character would do ethically. Maximum codes are usually characterized by positive wording, think "a good practitioner would," without mentioning sanctions because the purpose is to illustrate and educate about high ethical standards. Because these items advocate an ideal standard, it is often apparent to even casual observers that it is unlikely anyone can live up to them in every situation so they do not appear to hold out the promise of being enforceable.

The goal of a minimum code can sometimes be beaten by the simple expedient of semantic quibbles designed to show that the precise wording of the item does not apply in a particular case. For example, attorneys have been known to exploit this weakness. On the other hand, almost anyone who wants to ignore maximum code items can do so by simply indicating that "we are all a little guilty" so the speaker is just missing the mark by a little more than whoever is criticizing him or her. This is why many codes today mix minimum and maximum items, but it is also why, as SC grows in importance in the information and social media age, there may be increasing public and economic pressure for some new enforcement mechanisms against the most extreme examples of unethical SC.

The code of ethics of the Public Relations Society of America, which will be discussed later in this chapter, made the change from depending on several negatively worded (minimum) code items with a focus on enforcement to a largely positively worded (maximum) code with a focus on education in 2000. It has been noted that enforcement is usually a toothless idea in voluntary membership organizations where unethical practitioners can simply resign. This realization may be behind what appears to be an increase in maximum items and codes because of their educational value. The best ethical codes, however, are usually those that combine minimum and maximum items, although probably with more of the latter.

One final thought about law and ethics. Those engaged in unethical acts will on occasion attempt to defend themselves by saying that nothing they did was illegal or no laws were broken. Some publics quite reasonably hear this statement as saying "what we did was dirty and we do not care whether you like it or not, because we can get away with doing it again anytime we wish." Recall that laws represent minimum standards so ethics are often more demanding of good conduct than are laws, which usually only proscribe some kinds of bad conduct. Thus, while it is true that law and ethics are not the same thing, it is also often true that law covers less than ethics when it comes to right and wrong. But who should sponsor an ethical code and what should it cover?

Need for an SC-Specific Ethical Code

There are reasons why an SC field-specific code of ethics needs to be developed by SC specialists and sponsored by one or more SC organizations. First, a substantial percentage of SC practitioners work for organizations where the central (i.e., *line*) function is not SC. Ethical codes written by such organizations in road construction, pharmacology, banking or child care are likely to, rightly, focus on the core function of that organization. The large numbers of SC practitioners working for non-SC organizations are likely to receive little ethical guidance in the practice of SC from the codes of such organizations. Second, non-SC experts often lack the contacts and professional experience needed to draw from across the history and breadth of SC in developing a code of ethics for SC practitioners, so the likelihood is that they would have to rely on non-specific generalities, which, again, would provide little real guidance for practitioners.

Third, because the subfields of SC have much in common there can be some benefit in sharing codes but each subfield-specific code still addresses the history and challenges specific to that subfield. Finally, this chapter is concerned with ethics for all of SC based in the cocreational metatheory. Some of the existing subfield codes reviewed might provide some good raw material for developing a cocreation-based ethical code for SC. On the other hand, the current jumble of codes specific to SC subfields and organizations not only do not agree on much, they also often are not general enough to apply across all SC practices.

The existing ethical codes in SC subfields will be examined in this chapter, as well as a possible approach to an SC-specific ethical code. But ethics will likely become a larger and larger issue for SC practitioners and scholars in the coming years because of the huge growth we are experiencing in what might be called the golden age of SC, which the next subsection turns to.

Golden age of strategic communication? Strategic communication has been important throughout history but in the new millennium, in which digital communication and social media are expanding their already large footprint at a fantastic rate, we may be witnessing the start of a golden age not just of these media but of SC as well. The idea of a golden age refers to ancient Greece, although the idea, rather than the term, of an idyllic age when humans were relatively free from want and violence and lived in peace and happiness without excessive turmoil is also found in several major religions. The term golden age morphed over time into common usage and came to mean the period when a particular art or practice flowered or achieved its peak.

As discussed further in Chapter 8, the advent of new information technologies may well be giving birth to a golden age of SC in which the field reaches new heights, addressing more issues and influencing the lives of more people in more ways than SC practitioners of the past would ever have imagined.

As the impact of SC grows so do the ethical responsibilities of its practitioners and clients. Unfortunately, with the exception of subfield-specific codes such as those that will be discussed, the development of ethical thought in SC has lagged behind actual practice. Without an ethical guideline applicable across subfields, SC has little hope of redeeming this past lack of performance in ethics, let alone of keeping up with the myriad new ethical challenges facing SC in the digital and social media age. Thus, *the alternative to a golden age of SC may be the darkest age of SC, if ethical thinking continues to lag behind practice.*

Ethical issues facing strategic communication There are no simple answers to the ethical questions facing SC. Even such a simple and widely accepted ethical standard as "do not lie" is unlikely to find universal acceptance. For example, who would accept that a chemical company responsible for a spill of toxins into the ground water of a community could be ethical by simply staying silent, and thereby not lying?

The real-life challenge that faces strategic communicators is not the search for a simple one-size-fits-all value, or easy-to-chant ethical mantra. Decisions such as choosing between ethical responsibilities to a client or a community, or deciding how much to adapt to a given audience rather than asserting one's own views, are difficult. Some guidance for this kind of decision can come from agreement on fundamental ethical values, but then the responsibility falls to the practitioner or organization to be honest with themselves and others about whether they choose to subordinate the interests of publics to their own interests by instrumentalizing those publics for their own benefit. For example, in cases like the toxin spill, one of the challenges in strategic risk communication is that those who know the science and technology often want to be precise and accurate so they speak to mass audiences in "technicalese," which Bly (1998) says is "when authors seem to be writing to impress rather than to express."

Sometimes such technical wording is designed to protect the organization from potential future litigation. Sometimes it is to establish a power relationship in favor of the organization by implying that publics are only entitled to answers about their concerns if they can word those concerns, and understand answers, in ways that satisfy technical experts, even if their safety and health may be involved. Most often, however, the organization is just honestly trying to tell the truth. Unfortunately, when publics cannot tell which motive is operating they may attribute the wrong motives to a client.

Because SC intentionally affects large numbers of people across many cultural, legal, religious and economic boundaries, SC ethical decisions also cannot be based solely in any one culture, but must be answerable to all of them. To meet this broad ethical challenge requires an ethical code with the scope to cover much of the breadth of the human experience and still specific enough to give concrete guidance for strategic communicators who are called on to make real-life ethical decisions in their day-to-day practice. Such a view could be based primarily on a humanistic ethic, and in part on the cocreational metatheory.

Many formal ethical codes, as well as our personal ethical standards, are based on fundamental belief systems we share with others. For example, followers of Judaism, Christianity, Islam and other religions may draw on their religious backgrounds as part of deciding what is ethical in SC and what is not. The more devout among them may make greater use of their religious beliefs in deciding ethical matters, while those who do not actively practice a religion may not even be aware that religious views picked up through socialization and acculturation are to some extent influencing their ethical decisions. Similarly, those from democratic cultures may not be sensitive to their own assumptions about the "right" way to run a government. Even the fact that a practice has existed for a long time is often used as the basis for judgments about what is right or wrong, permissible or impermissible.

Current Ethical Thought in SC and Its Subfields

Current Formal Codes of Ethics in SC Subfields

This section illustrates the kinds of ethical issues SC practitioners are concerned with by very briefly discussing a few well-known codes of ethics in SC subfields. Included in this short review will be an assessment of how consistent each of these codes is with a cocreation perspective on publics as the central component in a code of ethics. Curiously, some subfields such as marketing and public relations have generated several ethical codes, while others, such as health communication, have generated fewer. However, most, if not all, subfields have generated large numbers of academic and practitioner articles addressing ethics.

The case of the health communication subfield is illustrative. Just a handful of researchers have been responsible for many books and dozens, if not hundreds, of articles, book chapters and academic

papers that explicitly or implicitly address ethics in health communication campaigns. Guttman (2000) has written a book basically addressing ethics in health communication campaigns as well as handbook and encyclopedia articles. Kreps (2010) has edited a five-volume set of books in health communication, and Parrott (2009) and Thompson, Parrott and Nussbaum (2011) have written and edited many books and scholarly articles addressing the topic.

Part of the variation between subfields in generating codes of ethics may be attributable to the context in which a subfield practices. Health communication, for example, is most often practiced in government agencies, medical organizations and social agencies that often have extensive ethical and legal codes already in place. Marketing communication, on the other hand, is most often practiced in for-profit organizations where SC ethical codes may have to be individually developed.

Not all of business communication falls within the purview of SC but enough does to warrant its inclusion in this discussion. Possibly the best-known organization in business communication is the International Association of Business Communicators, abbreviated IABC. The IABC Code of Ethics for Professional Communicators (IABC, 2017b) is comprised of a preface and 11 articles and a practice section. This code requires IABC members to be honest (Article 1) and accurate (Article 2), to be sensitive to the cultural values and beliefs of others (Article 6) and to obey laws and public policies (Article 3). Thus, the IABC code is reasonably progressive, leaning a bit toward a cocreational view but only a bit because there are also several mentions of legality in this code but no mention of publics, audiences, markets or customers, although respecting cultural values and beliefs is specifically mentioned. All 11 articles start with "I" so this code is highly practitioner centered. IABC deals with the issue of enforcement by saying "the association reserves the right to terminate membership for any member found guilty of violating the code, laws and public policies" (practice section).

In 2014, the Business Marketing Association's homepage connected to its 11-point Code of Ethics that called on practitioners to "present a company or organization, its activities and, where applicable, its financial condition, fairly and consistently to all stakeholders, including customers, employees, investors and analysts" (Article 1) and thoughtfully said that "potentially intrusive marketing programs, including e-mail promotions and telemarketing, shall be targeted rather than indiscriminant" (Article 4). This code referred to stakeholders, telling only the truth, and referred several times to the right of people to freely decline both communications and purchasing. Thus, it recognized publics but primarily as the targets of communication efforts. The emphasis was mostly on messages rather than on senders or receivers. In mid-2017, however, the link to the BMA ethics section no longer appears to work and the author could find no reference to ethics on the BMA website.

The American Marketing Association's Statement of Ethics (2017) says in its preamble, "we not only serve our organization but also act as stewards of society" and speaks of "our responsibility toward multiple stakeholders (e.g., customers, employees, investors, peers, channel members, regulators and the host community)." This code goes on to say, under Responsibility, "we will strive to serve the needs of customers, avoid coercion with all stakeholders, acknowledge the social obligations to stakeholders ... recognize our special commitments to vulnerable market segments." The Fairness article says association members should "balance justly the needs of the buyer with the interests of the seller," while the Respect and Transparency articles say members should "value individual differences and avoid stereotyping ... listen to the needs of customers and make all reasonable efforts to monitor and improve their satisfaction ... accept constructive criticism from customers and stakeholders." Thus this code appears fairly open to a cocreational perspective on the centrality of publics and appears to be among the most balanced of business and marketing codes when it comes to the treatment of publics.

The Code of Ethics of Sales and Marketing Executives International is a pledge members take, saying, "My concept of selling includes as its basic principle the sovereignty of all consumers in the

marketplace and the necessity for mutual benefit to both buyer and seller ... to protect, support, and promote the principles of consumer choice" (SMEI, 2017, Articles 2 and 4). Thus, this code also appears somewhat open to a cocreational perspective on the centrality of publics, although maybe not quite as open as the code of the American Marketing Association.

The Public Relations Society of America's Code of Ethics (PRSA, 2000) consists of a preamble, six professional values, and six sections, each with subsections on intent, guidelines and examples. Between 1950 and the adoption of the new code format in 2000 the PRSA code had been a list of several specific items, the number of which varied over the years. The old PRSA code included an emphasis on enforcement and at times included clauses that, among other things, obligated members to testify if another member was brought up on ethics charges under the code. The older versions of this code used more negative/minimum wording than positive/maximum wording, while the 2000 code switched format by dropping the idea of enforcement and adopting more of an educational stance, using examples and the character depiction function. The member statement of professional values in the PRSA code asserts that "we serve the public interest" and "adhere to the highest standards of accuracy and truth ... in communicating with the public." It says they will deal fairly with the general public but specifically enumerates ethical obligations only to clients, employers, competitors, peers, vendors and the media, suggesting more of a focus on the sender side of the cocreational molecule than on publics. This code does specify that PRSA members should help advance "informed decision making in a democratic society," but the code still focuses largely on competition and relations with clients. It is concerned with truthfulness and the right to informed decision-making by publics, but it never addresses responsibilities to publics with anything like the specificity with which it talks about responsibility to clients and even competitors, so it appears to be somewhat open to a cocreational emphasis on publics but does not yet feature the role of publics.

The current version of the International Public Relations Association's Code of Conduct adopted in 2011 consolidated the earlier 1961 Code of Venice, the 1965 Code of Athens and the 2007 Code of Brussels, each one named after the city in which the convention adopting it was held. This is an interesting code and is available on the group's website in 30 languages including Urdu and Arabic (IPRA, 2017). As a code specifically intended to reach across nations and cultures, the IPRA code has always used the Charter of the United Nations as well as the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights as its foundation. The new version acknowledges this foundation along with "recalling" five other foundational values, including two that include digital media and one about fostering the free flow of information because this "contributes to the interests of all stakeholders." Article 1 obligates members to observe the principles of the UN Charter and Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Article 3 says practitioners shall "seek to establish the moral, cultural and intellectual conditions for dialogue, and recognize the rights of all parties involved to state their case and express their views." While not specifically mentioning the role of publics beyond these points, this code nevertheless implies a strong commitment to the meaning-creating role of publics and is the most open to cocreational thinking of the codes discussed in this section.

Disagreements in codes of ethics Codes of ethics of various SC organizations range from those seeking to influence how practitioners treat their employers and competitors, thus leaning toward the middle of the continuum in Figure 8, to those that focus much more on publics, thus leaning more toward the cocreational end of that continuum. They do not agree on whether a code should focus on practitioner behaviors or the content of actual communications. They also do not agree on whether the emphasis should be on maximum or minimum statements.

Agreements in codes of ethics The codes studied tend to agree on four things. First, whether in the role of customers, stakeholders, audience or any other capacity, publics are usually mentioned in codes of ethics but usually are not the focal point of codes, with the possible exception of the IPRA code. In this sense, existing codes for SC generally are not cocreational in their outlook. However, second, codes do tend to agree on the need to be honest and fully disclose relevant information—and particularly not to lie. Third, at least among business organizations, much attention is focused on the legality of communication as an ethical issue. This does not necessarily reflect confusion about the relationship of ethics and law. Finally, either implicitly or explicitly, organizations sponsoring codes are aware of their limited ability to enforce them. This may partially explain the emphasis on legality in some business and marketing codes.

The following goes on to discuss common ethical positions in SC that are not contained in formal codes of ethics. Once again, there are no doubt more justifications for how particular SC practices are ethical than there is room to discuss them in this whole chapter, or maybe the whole book. Accordingly, this treatment will be kept brief and will discuss just some of the most common ethical themes I ran across while working in the political communication and public relations subfields of SC. Note that both of the first two positions discussed are concerned only with the welfare of the employer, with no concern at all for the welfare of publics. Thus, they are not cocreational in the least.

Hired Gun or Mercenary

By far the most objectionable position on ethics is when a practitioner simply claims to have no ethical responsibilities by virtue of following the orders of whoever pays them. The similarity between this stance and the hired gun stereotype in the old American west, or of modern mercenaries, is obvious. In these cases, the practitioner simply shirks all ethical responsibility for their actions. This frees the practitioner in their own mind to engage in the most deceitful and unethical kinds of practice and maybe still sleep well. It is sometimes surprising how readily practitioners who would never engage in unethical practices for direct personal gain choose to interpret their responsibility to their client or employer as meaning that it magically becomes all right to say or do almost anything when following orders. Sullivan's (1965) partisan values may be seen as a somewhat less extreme position that accepts some of the same arguments.

A point I have made in virtually every SC or public relations class is that you cannot meaningfully discuss ethics with someone who has none—and is proud of it. Those who hold this mercenary position have turned their back on responsibility for their own behavior so, even if they are behaving well on a given day, they fall outside my definition of SC professionals every day.

Attorney in the Court of Public Opinion

Closely related to the hired gun mentality is the attorney in the court of public opinion, also known as the adversarial model, which is discussed at some length by Fitzpatrick and Gauthier (2001). This model seeks to justify even extreme practices by just likening an SC practitioner to a lawyer in a court of public opinion. Thus, with obligations solely to the client, the practitioner's obligation is to make sure their client gets the best defense possible and then *the "system" can be relied upon to make the correct decision*. This model implies that a practitioner failing to represent their client completely and forcefully may actually be weakening the "system" that relies on a strong but one-sided representation of both sides of an issue, as in a courtroom. The fact that social, economic and public policy issues often have more than two sides may completely escape them because of their solely client-focused view. Because this model ignores the role of publics, and their rights, it would be located on the extreme left side of Figure 8.

Courts, and indeed the whole legal system, are part of an adversarial model for determining guilt or innocence. Thus the court of public opinion metaphor implies both an adversarial model *and* that there is probably cause to believe that *someone* in the relationship is in the wrong. Because organizations are not known to hire folks to publicly prove they are in the wrong, the logical question comes up as to just who the organization thinks is in the wrong. Their publics, for not buying? The media?

This position also falls down because its similarity to a courtroom or proper adversarial model, such as the two-party model of the US Congress, is so very shallow. Since publics seldom have professional advocates of their own, the adversarial model breaks down at the outset. It relies on the existence of some hypothesized "opponent." This means either that publics do not fit into this model anywhere or that publics are the opponents who need to be beaten. In either case, you cannot get much farther away from a cocreational view.

Furthermore, virtually none of the safeguards built into the legal system are present in the attorney in the court of public opinion position in SC. First, one party, often a corporation or government body, typically has vastly more power and advocacy resources than do publics, and publics do not have the tax paid right to a court-appointed legal advocate of even nominal equivalence. In addition, there is no trained judge to assure at least procedural fairness and make sure certain kinds of misleading evidence are kept out, there is no jury of peers, and if there were, they would not get formal instructions and advice on what the rules are before meeting in private to make their decision. And so on.

Other Ethical Models and Ongoing Questions

Each subfield in SC has numerous ethical standards, models, codes and authors in addition to those mentioned above, as well as authors who address ethical public communication overall as rhetorical scholars have been doing for decades. Johannesen, Valde and Whedbee (2008) are an example of the latter, while Danner (2006) provides a summary of more recent ethical models in the PR subfield, including enlightened self-interest discussed by Scheffler (1992) and Fitzpatrick and Gauthier (2001); the pyramid model (Tilley, 2005); the TARES Test (Baker, Martinson and Baird, 2001); and the professional responsibility model (Fitzpatrick and Gauthier, 2001). On the business communication side of SC, extensive discussions often address international (Enderle, 1999), intercultural (Limaye and Victor, 1991) or general business campaigns such as Botan (1997) and Morsing and Schultz (2006), both of which essentially argue for a dialogic model. On the public health side of SC, Guttman's *Public Health Communication Interventions: Values and Ethical Dilemmas* (2000) is a fairly comprehensive book and in advertising not only have practitioners and academics addressed ethics in advertising (e.g., Drumwright and Murphy, 2004), but the Vatican has also weighed in (Pontifical Council, 1997). Ditchey (2011) has addressed ethics in military public affairs, Seib (2006) ethics in public diplomacy, and so on.

Adapting to publics There are literally hundreds of articles about ethics in SC subfields. Merely summarizing these would serve no purpose but taken together they may suggest some ongoing issues that the cocreational view might help to inform. The broadest and possibly the most urgent of these is the general question of how much SC practitioners should adapt to audiences, which takes two more specific forms. The first form is how much to adapt ethical standards for international and intercultural campaigns, called ethical relativism. The second more general question is how much SC practitioners should adapt their practices to publics in general.

Because the first form of this question is by far the more commonly discussed in the practitioner community, has often been discussed in the context of international and intercultural campaigns,

and is central to that area of SC, it will be touched on again in Chapter 9. The basic answer from a cocreational perspective is simply that adaptation to publics should serve the purpose of ensuring that those publics have the information they need to cocreate their own new meanings. Although it may seem that the cocreational view of SC would call for practitioners to always adapt to publics, that is not the case. Adaptation to publics can be an important step toward cocreationality because it helps publics understand a campaign and demonstrates concern for how publics think, feel and act. But too much adaptation to publics can be manipulative, as in the case of politicians who adapt so completely to different audiences that they end up hiding their real views and therefore cannot be held accountable for them.

Thus, failing to adapt to publics represents a focus on the organization and its messages rather than on publics, and this undercuts the right of publics to make their own decisions. But what might be called overadaptation can be just as bad because it can undercut cocreation of meaning by publics if it misrepresents the real view or values of the organization.

A second ongoing issue that has moved up on the SC agenda in recent years is what approach to take for developing high ethical standards in SC. Should the focus be on enforcement, such as through laws or licensing, or should it be on education and persuasion? In the terms used for generating a code of ethics for an organization or even a whole field, this discussion takes the form of minimum versus maximum codes, which were discussed earlier.

The chapter now turns to outlining one of many possible approaches to cocreational ethics based on a humanistic model.

Cocreational Approach to Ethics

A cocreational view of SC ethics can be stated briefly, although it takes a bit more space to explain the reasoning behind it. First, this is a deontological ethical standard because it focuses on what is right or wrong and whether campaign practices live up to the duty (in Greek *deon* means duty; Alexander and Moore, 2015) not to impede, but rather facilitate, the meaning making of publics. This idea of right and wrong and duty toward others is the core of deontological thought. Because *the cocreational view of ethics focuses on publics and the meanings they cocreate,* campaign practices are evaluated as right or wrong on the basis of their orientation toward publics (see Figure 16).

This means that the ethicality of any SC practice or campaign is determined primarily by how much it enhances rather than inhibits the ability of publics to exercise fully informed choice and free will. It also means that if a client's interests are not commensurate with those of its publics in a particular instance, the first ethical duty of any practitioner or sponsoring organization is to respect the rights of their publics to make free and informed decisions of their own. This might also be called the *socially responsible view* of SC ethics.

The second ethical obligation of any SC practitioner is to their client and/or employer, in that order. Remembering this in good times is relatively easy so the primary difference between hired guns/mercenaries, on the one hand, and professional SC practitioners, on the other, lies in not making creative excuses for reversing this order as the stakes get higher. The social responsibilities of a practitioner and organizations are tested in times of stress much more than when things are easy.

Figure 16 Cocreational approach to ethics

A cocreational ethical standard addresses what is right or wrong in how practitioners treat their publics' right to create their own independent meanings, and is systematically applicable and explainable to others.

Of course, saying this and actually being able to see the right path in a specific situation can be very different things. This is one of many reasons why there is no substitute for experience in SC and, as valuable as personal experience is, it in turn is no substitute for proper training and education, which are based on the experiences of many, many other practitioners.

Those who have practiced seeing small warning signs during campaigns full of deadlines and limited budgets become better at spotting them than those with less experience. However, as with almost everything else, experience in SC is a two-edged sword because those with a lot of experience of placing the interests of the organization ahead of the interests of their publics sometimes have a hard time seeing practical ways to improve their ethical conduct; thus external training and guidance from professional practitioner organizations and formal education may be needed to break the cycle. A second factor complicating such ethical decision-making, as discussed, is that many SC practitioners work in or for organizations in which SC is not a primary function. This is another reason professional practitioners should maintain a somewhat active role in their respective practitioner organizations since that is where SC practitioners discuss this kind of thing. The smaller the SC work group, and the more isolated the practitioner, the more important this kind of professional support network becomes.

This section now divides into three parts: (1) the human nature view of ethics, (2) socially responsible SC, and (3) cocreational code of ethics.

Human Nature View of Ethics

For about two-thirds of a century, authors have held that humans are uniquely equipped to use symbols and that it is largely this ability that sets humans apart from other creatures (Burke, 1966; Langer, 1948; Richards, 1965). I suggested in 1993 that these writers agreed that humans use symbols to interpret our social and physical environment and that this is a process that contributes to our humanity, so SC practices that contribute to the rational use of symbols also contribute to the humanity of our publics. It may be that we might share this trait with some other species, such as chimpanzees or porpoises, but that symbol use helps make us more human because it enables free choice based on the connection between symbol use and a rational mental life which Langer (1948) described as "characteristically human and above the level of sheer animality" (pp. 34–35). According to Johannesen (1990), Aristotle's work also suggested that:

> A truly human act ... stems from a rational person who is conscious of what he or she does and freely chooses to do it. The ethics of communication are judged by the interrelated criteria of (1) communicator intent, (2) nature of the means employed, and (3) accompanying circumstances, as these three factors combine to enhance or undermine human rationality and choice-making ability. (p. 42)

Garrett (1961), referring to the subfield of advertising and condemning emotion-based advertising because it reduces the role of rationality and makes us less human, also argued that, as people become more conscious and reflective, they become more fully human.

Thus, using false, manipulative or very one-sided use of arguments, however rational it may be in the opinion of the practitioner or client, is unethical if it reduces a public opportunity to make free and informed choices. This means SC practitioners have an obligation not only to be rational ourselves, but to make it possible for others to be rational, which in turn means that practitioners are obligated to provide others with accurate information. Many authors (cf. Campbell, 1972) have argued that the use of language is most likely to be ethical, and the right of publics to free and rational choice most

likely to be protected, if we make our arguments clear, fully disclose any pressures or interests we may have, and explain our reasoning as we go along.

Note that rational decision-making is mentioned elsewhere in this book as one characteristic that makes us human, and it is. However, it is also important to acknowledge that free choice does not have to be a rational process to contribute meaningfully to our humanity. Rational choice is characteristically human but it is no means all that makes us human. So, from a cocreational perspective, seeking to limit publics to *only* rational choices, as sometimes happens in public health campaigns, for example, can be dehumanizing if it denies or denigrates the important role of emotion in our lives and in truly free decision-making.

One tool for illustrating a human nature perspective on ethics, and to make clearer the implications of the cocreational school of thought, is the role images play in SC.

Image in strategic communication Image has two diametrically opposed meanings in SC. The first, and probably still the most common, is as a characteristic of an organization, product, candidate or thing that can be influenced, controlled or used by a practitioner. In this sense, an image is treated as a property of the organization and, therefore, open to manipulation by the organization, so it can potentially be dissociated from reality, a process sometimes summarized by the pejorative term whitewashing. For example, some PR practitioners have been known to pitch themselves as able to manage the image a client has in the eyes of publics, a distinctly non-creational approach. Some even call themselves things like "image doctors" to emphasize how instrumental their view of image is. Although the concept of brand is much broader and more nuanced when used properly, that term is sometimes misused as a synonym for image in this instrumental sense. This view of image would be found on the left side of Figure 8.

The second, more humanistic, view of image is the "subjective knowledge structures" individuals construct (Boulding, 1973, p. 11), so for the "individual organism or organization, there is no such thing as 'facts'" (p. 14) because we operate through our images. This is clearly a more humanistic view of image and is very different from the idea of image doctoring, which implies an attempt to control other people's subjective knowledge structures, and it also suggests that socially shared images are cocreated meanings.

I-images and h-images As a result of these contradictory views of image, some SC practitioners, particularly in the PR subfield, tend to avoid using the term image in order to avoid confusion. Because of this I used the terms i-images and h-images (Botan, 1993b; 1993c) to distinguish between the first more instrumental use of image and the more humanistic and cocreational second view, although it was not called cocreational at the time. This subsection draws heavily from these two publications.

I-images get their name from the instrumental school of thought as reflected in Figure 8. I-images (a) focus solely on the organization's goals, (b) seek to use image to turn publics into instruments for achieving organizational ends, and (c) can be manipulative.

H-images (a) focus on the unique personal understandings of a thing, process or even a whole nation (Boulding, 1973; Kunczik, 1990) cocreated by individuals and publics, and (b) are used by those publics to make choices in their own interest. This kind of image is part of what makes us human so they can be called h-images and they sit much further to the right on the continuum in Figure 8.

I-images have a long history in SC. For example, Raucher (1968) recounted the famous battle of the currents. In an attempt to control the lucrative market for the rapidly approaching electrification of the United States during the late 1800s, two industrial behemoths, the Edison Electric Company and

Westinghouse Electric, sought to have two different standards adopted by government, beginning in New York City. Edison championed direct current (DC) electrification, while Westinghouse championed the alternating current (AC) system. Both were aware that whichever system was adopted in New York would likely be the template for the rest of the country. Edison's group set out to give Westinghouse's AC system the image of being unsafe, particularly for home use. They made a major step in this direction when the company got the state of New York to adopt AC as a means of execution by using the electric chair. Edison's group sought to instrumentalize publics by popularizing its own image of the competition's technology to serve its own financial interests.

H-images, on the other hand, are our subjective knowledge structures that can be individually held or socially shared, which is where publics and the cocreational process come in, opening the door for the cocreational approach to international and intercultural SC discussed in Chapter 9. When a group or public reaches consensus on a shared image, that image can serve both as a kind of shorthand interpretation that facilitates common decisions and a binding agent that allows large groups of people to become what Boulding (1973) and Fish (1980), among others, have called interpretive communities. Fish, for example, discussed "the power of an interpretive community to constitute the objects upon which its members can then agree" (p. 338).

Interpretive communities in strategic communication Strategic communication addresses communication to such interpretive communities that we call publics, customers, markets, stakeholders, audiences, voters, citizens and other terms. An interpretive community is a cocreational concept because the term interpretive is used broadly to refer not just to decoding messages (as in Circle 5 of Figure 9) but to the whole process of creating subjective knowledge structures (cf. Botan, 1993a; 1993b; Boulding, 1973), the core of the cocreational process discussed in this book.

It is the meanings these publics cocreate that first provide them with a sense of community and then allow them to share orientations toward organizations quite independently of the intentions of the organization. By sharing interpretations, an interpretive community actually goes far beyond interpreting to cocreate new meanings and understandings and to use these to cocreate new relationships with the organization whose campaign communications become one part of that cocreational process. It is important for both organizations and practitioners to remember that the i-image they may have sought to construct is still part of the relationship, but it may now mean something very different than what they intended because it has become input into the cocreational process of a public. As discussed in Chapter 9, this helps explain why international SC is always also intercultural SC and why its practice often requires more emphasis on introspection than on expression.

Monologic and dialogic campaigns Somewhat related to the ideas of i-images and h-images are monologic SC campaigns that take a primarily instrumental view and often use i-images, and dialogic campaigns that adopt a more shared view of the relationship between an organization and its publics. Botan (1997), Pearson (1989a; 1989b), Grunig (1989), Grunig et al. (1992), Habermas (1984), Kent and Taylor (1998; 2002) and many others have talked about this or closely related ideas.

The monologic view is characterized by what Habermas (1984) calls the realistic worldview, of which he says, "on this model rational actions basically have the character of goal-directed, feedback-oriented interventions in the world of existing states of affairs" (pp. 11–12). In this approach, a practitioner strives for what Habermas calls instrumental mastery of a situation and it was from this that I developed the term i-images. In this approach, a practitioner tries to get the audience "to behave in a desired way by manipulatively employing linguistic means" and thereby instrumentalizes them "for his own success" (Habermas, 1984, p. 288).

According to Johannesen (1996), in monologic communication,

> Choices are narrowed and consequences are obscured. Focus is on the communicator's message, not on the audience's real needs. The core values, goals, and policies espoused by the communicator are impervious to influence exerted by receivers. Audience feedback is used only to further the communicator's purpose. An honest response from a receiver is not wanted or is precluded. Monological communicators persistently strive to impose their truth or program on others; they have the superior attitude that they must coerce people to yield to what they believe others ought to know. Monologue lacks a spirit of mutual trust, and it displays a defensive attitude of self-justification. (p. 69)

On the other hand, "dialogue manifests itself more as a stance, orientation, or bearing in communication rather than as a specific method, technique, or format" (Botan, 1997, p. 192). Scholars have referred to dialogue as "dialectic," "discourse," and a "process" with little consistency in its usage (Kent and Taylor, 2002, p. 21). Several writers have also discussed dialogic practice (e.g., Botan, 1993b; 1996; Pfau and Wan, 2005).

Understanding the human nature view of ethics, and its relationship to cocreationality, provides a foundation for socially responsible strategic communication.

Socially Responsible Strategic Communication (SRSC)

In Botan, Ferguson and Sintay (1996), we discussed social responsibility in the subfield of corporate communication, a discussion drawn on here but expanded to include all of SC. Socially responsible strategic communication is that which, following the Roman rhetorician Quintilian's logic, could be defined as "a good organization speaking well" (Heath, 1995, p. 7), and "striving to be good (moral) and to communicate to meet the societal needs and interests of key publics, in their efforts to form personal and public policies, make personal and sociopolitical decisions, and form strong and mutually beneficial relationships" (pp. 7–8). Heath also said of social responsibility in the subfield of public relations that, practiced responsibly, it "adds value to society because of the dialogue by which interested parties (corporate, nonprofit, activist, and governmental) forge standards of business practices and public policy that can create mutually beneficial relationships that add social capital to the communities where they occur" (Heath, 2001, p. 81). Strategic communication that is socially responsible would reflect two primary characteristics: (1) it is moral or ethical, and (2) it meets a social need. It would not have to be aimed solely at meeting a social need, however. So both a charity and a for-profit corporation can practice socially responsible SC but they cannot, for example, damage the environment while doing so.

To be socially responsible a practice must choose "actions and instituting policies that are morally right for that reason alone, without an ulterior self-interested motive" (Fitzpatrick and Gauthier, 2001, p. 200). Thus, socially responsible SC would be based on values "such as honesty, respect, fairness, the avoidance of harm, and justice in the distribution of the benefits and burdens of living together in a democratic society" (p. 200). A general responsibility to society is specifically extended to "persons and interests who will be impacted by one's actions" (p. 200).

Free and informed choice among publics is a central element of SRSC, and practices that meet these criteria ensure that the public's ability to freely choose their own actions is given top priority by making available all the information necessary to meaningfully exercise this right.

Agency in socially responsible strategic communication Kline (1996), in a related but somewhat unique approach to SRSC, discussed two opposing forms of public discourse, agency-promoting and

agency-robbing. Agency is a term used frequently in rhetorical scholarship. For example, a focus on cocreation of meaning in SC is basically a focus on the *agency*. In this case, agency is the ability of publics to make their own decisions and to influence or enact meanings and relationships. From a critical-cultural perspective, focusing on the cocreation of meaning in SC moves our understanding of publics along the continuum from treating publics as powerless (i.e., a lack of agency) to powerful by being the primary decision-makers in SC.

Agency-robbing discourse occurs when adequate and accurate information is not provided so that the range of choices becomes limited. Conversely, agency-promoting discourse occurs when those with access to important information see that the information is shared so that individuals and publics can reach their own informed conclusions. Such information might be called socially necessary information and it facilitates the cocreational process.

Socially necessary information Socially necessary information is that which publics need to engage in the social process of meaning cocreation and make free and informed choice, so SC should provide adequate and accurate information. As individuals gain agency through the possession of socially necessary information, they are better able to function as free agents. Manipulating, withholding and falsifying information to influence the decisions of publics limits individual agency, the ability to engage in free choice, so these acts are unethical. Responsible SC organizations must be willing not only to openly provide publics with socially necessary information but also to engage them in the decision-making process. Conversely, when an organization or politician decides to withhold part of the facts from their publics they may be deciding against social responsibility and are consciously denying their publics agency. This is most blatant when the decision to withhold is based on the claim that such withholding is for the public's own good, because publics are thought not to be calm, skilled or knowledgeable enough to be trusted with the information. *These excuses for withholding socially necessary information tend to reduce publics to a dependent status through information control.* For example, research has often not supported the claim that publics tend to panic when told the truth in emergency situations. The Canadian Province of Alberta's Emergency Management Agency published a table of myths about information emergencies, identifying what they called the myth that "warnings should be held until you are absolutely sure; otherwise you will panic people," and answering with the reality that "people generally will not panic. Information should be disseminated" (Alberta Emergency Management Agency, 2013, p. 24). Withholding information on the paternalistic grounds that doing so is for a public's own good is seldom, if ever, socially responsible.

When an organization uses SC to facilitate its publics' actual involvement in organizational decision-making, it is usually acting in a socially responsible manner. As a result, SC can have the effect of binding individuals to groups, groups to institutions, and institutions to society, while also enabling groups to work together in weaving new parts of the social fabric. Withholding information your publics feel they need in an emergency situation can damage that social fabric so it should be done only when there is a clear need particular to a specific situation.

Social responsibility in practice A sense of social responsibility may be part of the reason Edward Bernays, commonly known as the "father" of the public relations subfield, turned down many notable clients, including Hitler, Franco, and Somoza (Wilcox, Ault and Agee, 1995). The impact of these examples of socially responsible decisions by the leading figure in the history of the largest subfield in SC might help explain several similar instances of social responsibility. For example, the *Public Relations Strategist* featured a point–counterpoint article about whether a practitioner should represent the Bosnian Serbs (PRSA, 1995a, pp. 30–37). *Public Relations Tactics* reported that, at that time, only 34 percent of public relations firms would accept tobacco companies as clients (PRSA,

1995b, p. 1). In another example, I was once the last of three public relations scholars to speak to a group of colleagues some years ago, with no idea of what the other two had said. During the question and answer period, the first question was, "Are *all* you PR people preoccupied with ethics?" The answer, increasingly, was yes, and this seemed to be the case elsewhere in SC as well (e.g., Gandy, 1992; Rakow, 1989).

SC practice has also been changed, sometimes for the better, by another effect of the information age, the *de*massification of messages (Williams, Rice and Rogers, 1988). Demassification essentially involves the customization or tailoring of messages for increasingly smaller audiences (i.e., segments) and is facilitated by several new information technologies such as homepages, search technologies and social media, as discussed in Chapter 8. These make it possible to deliver socially necessary information almost instantaneously worldwide with little waste coverage. Thus, the technologies of the information age have the potential to facilitate dialogue but also to facilitate deception and misrepresentation. A monologic or dialogic attitude remains the primary determinant of whether dialogue actually takes place.

SC practitioners write, speak, and create visual images, "building identification through narratives that define the interests and relationships of individual and collective members of society," and which contribute to open social debate about public policies at local, state, and federal levels (Heath, 2001, p. 85).

What specific information is socially necessary may change as the economic, political, and information environment changes (Ryan and Martinson, 1984), so the particular information that SC practitioners should provide changes. However, the key tenet of SRSC remains providing socially necessary information guided by a humanistic ethic. The following offers one possible approach to a cocreational code of ethics based on the human nature perspective on ethics and social responsibility in SC centered on the idea of socially necessary information.

Cocreational Code of Ethics for Strategic Communicators

One important characteristic of SC subfields is that they may not have the same background everywhere. In fact, a subfield may have very different histories, primary clients, legal-political contexts and levels of national development (Botan, 1992a; see also Chapter 9). For example, a community development campaign in a poor country may mean something very different from a community development campaign in Beverly Hills. Likewise, the historical opposition of many in the PR subfield to licensure might result in part from PR's strong association with journalism and freedom of the press issues in the US, while such concerns are not as important in some countries in which public relations grew out of government practice rather than journalism.

Differences between fields, and even within fields between countries and cultures are relevant to a cocreational SC code of ethics because such a code would have to be general enough to cover all or most of these contexts while still being specific about the relationship of publics to practitioners and their employers.

Grand strategic, strategic and tactical implications for ethics The relationships between practitioners and their clients or employers are important. As the summary earlier in this chapter found, existing codes of ethics in SC focus more specifically on the duties individual practitioners have toward clients and messages than toward publics per se. This is problematic in light of the fact that many practitioners, particularly employee-practitioners, may see only their common interests with their employer. Thus, these practitioners may see little basis for disagreeing with employers at the strategic or tactical levels, or on ethical matters, let alone at the grand strategy level. Additionally, in cases

where the client or employer hires only tactical-level skills, the practitioners in question may simply not have the foundation needed to think independently at the strategic level or on ethical matters.

When clients and employers control all the important ethical decision-making, even the most ethical of practitioners have little or no ethical influence. So, although the old adage that SC will never be more ethical than its individual practitioners is true, it does not work the other way around. Ethical practitioners, alone, typically cannot end unethical practices or force ethical conduct on organizations with unethical grand strategies, or even grand strategies that ignore ethical responsibilities. That is, ethical conduct can sometimes flow upwards from the tactical level—just not very far or very often. Ethicality is primarily a strategic and grand strategic matter so clients/employers and their practitioners have to work together to improve SC ethics. The cocreational ethical code suggested later in the chapter is divided into two sample pledges, the first for individual practitioners and the second for employers and clients.

Application of Cocreational Ethics

Cocreational Ethical Codes Disrupt Old Views of Ethics in SC

A code of ethics based on the cocreational view requires standing much, but not all, old ethical thinking in SC subfields on its head, because it requires recognizing that the ethical center of gravity is publics, not obligations to clients and employers. It is fair to say that, on the whole, the codes of ethics discussed earlier are much better at addressing their obligations to publics than in past generations and I have pointed out some of these instances. But much of the detail and specific language in these codes is not about ethical obligations to publics; rather, obligations to clients are often addressed more specifically, even those seeking to instrumentalize publics.

The change in metatheory discussed in this book might be almost as disruptive for some practitioners and clients as the realization that the center of gravity in our solar system was the sun rather than the Earth, and nowhere more so than in ethics. I can imagine some practitioners, and many clients, saying a more stringent code of ethics based on the primary role of publics is unrealistic, too time-consuming and expensive, abstract, or just an example of "intellectual navel gazing." Perhaps there will be some elements of truth in these statements. But there is more likely some truth in the claim that the current state of ethical thinking in SC subfields often reflects a desire to avoid ethical discussions that might bring into question the instrumental metatheory that underpins what many practitioners and scholars, including those who treat the PR subfield as only a subset of journalism or the MarCom subfield as only a subset of marketing, assume about the value of publics and what they think.

To become more professional, SC practitioners have to address ethical questions in a more substantive way than in the past. A professional is characterized by Barber (1963) as having "a high degree of generalized and systematic knowledge; primary orientation to the community interest rather than to individual self-interest; a high degree of self-control of behavior through codes of ethics" (p. 669). Based on Barber's view, SC is probably not a full profession, although we might speak of SC as an emerging or even a quasi-profession. The generalized and systematic knowledge Barber refers to often means a body of knowledge so extensive that formal study in a university or college *and* some years of supervised practice are needed to master it. This level of knowledge is still emerging in SC, largely through its subfields, but we will also have to address the level of the commonalities the subfields of SC share.

The most important challenge to doing this, as well as potentially the most cocreational, may be meeting the criteria of being *primarily* oriented to the community interest. This book, and its

cocreational approach, is in large part an attempt to change the primary orientation in SC from individual/client interests to the interests of the community of publics. Thus, the ethics pledges suggested below are intended as tools for SC practitioners and employers to use for evaluating how they treat their publics. Practitioners might use these resolutions to argue for high ethical standards to clients or employers, and clients and employers might use them to evaluate the ethical conduct of practitioners. Employers and clients have the leading roles because of their control of grand strategy and some strategy, but practitioners also have an important role because of our work at the strategic and tactical levels.

From a cocreational perspective, a code of ethics need not be long or contain very many specific points, but it does have to keep the focus on publics and the meanings they cocreate in the interaction with practitioners and their organizations. Until such time as some enforcement mechanism for SC ethics comes into existence, ethics will continue to be a voluntary matter for employers, practitioners and professional associations alike so the code is presented in the format of separate pledges for practitioners and their employers or clients. This is consistent with the approach of Sales and Marketing Executives International.

Cocreational View of Ethics Applied to Pledges

The format adopted here is quite different from the more common bullet points or prose approaches to codes of ethics because it is written not just to list some desirable points but also to respond to the very different challenges faced in different kinds of SC campaigns. This approach, to which I was introduced by Johannesen's work (1990, and later editions), is consistent with the PR subfield's movement to a more individual judgment model of ethics in the 2000 revision to its code of ethics (PRSA, 2000), by calling on SC practitioners, as well as employers and clients, to analyze and evaluate the ethics of their conduct on the basis of the impact on the particular publics involved.

One challenge faced by subfield-specific codes of ethics, including the ones discussed above, is that they have to be specific enough to support the underlying assumption that they are different enough from all the other subfields of SC to require their own ethical codes. In substance, however, they are largely repetitive. Indeed, from the cocreational perspective, these subfield codes of ethics appear as not much more than a slight rewording of the underlying instrumental model most share. Ethical pledges based on the cocreational view would differ from older forms by emphasizing the right of publics to cocreate their own meanings. Two examples of such pledges, one for individual practitioners and one for organizations involved in SC, follow.

Sample Ethics Pledges for Communicators and Organizations

Ethics Pledge for Strategic Communicators

Understanding that as a strategic communicator my **first obligation** is to my publics, my **second obligation** is to my clients, and that my own interests come **third**, and

Understanding that because my first responsibility is to my publics **no client or employer has the ethical or moral authority** to ask me to disadvantage or harm my publics, and

Understanding that I have a **fiduciary-like trustee responsibility toward my clients and employers** second only to my responsibilities to my publics, and

Understanding that as a professional strategic communicator I am ethically responsible for all the **reasonably foreseeable** effects of the campaigns I participate in, and

Understanding that as a strategic communicator I share responsibility for both the **inflows and outflows** of strategic information in an organization, including making my employer or client aware of the feelings and views of publics, and

Understanding that elevating my own or my employer's view of what it is **good for my publics to know** above the right of my publics to decide this for themselves is paternalistic, and

Understanding that I **cannot excuse myself** from these personal responsibilities by following orders because doing so would put concern for my own welfare above my responsibility to both my publics and my clients,

I Therefore Swear That

I will take **personal and individual ethical responsibility** for the things I say and do as a strategic communication professional regardless of who may ask me to say them, and

I will put the **welfare of both my publics and my clients** above my own interests, even if doing otherwise would personally advantage me financially or in other ways.

I will **not withhold from publics** the information they need to make fully informed and free decisions, particularly in areas related to the public health and safety. I will use as one guideline for this asking myself how I would feel if such information was withheld from my family or myself under the same circumstance.

Sworn this ____ day of _____ in the year _____ by _____

Ethics Pledge for Strategic Communication Employers and Clients

Understanding that as strategic communicators being socially responsible means accepting that our **first obligation** is to our publics that do **not** benefit from our decision and actions, our **second obligation** is to those publics that may benefit, and our own organization's goals come **third**, and

Understanding that we have no right to undermine the interest of our publics in pursuit of any goal, we have an **obligation to provide the information necessary for our publics** to make their own decisions about issues, our organization and its conduct, and

Understanding that we have ethical responsibility for the **reasonably foreseeable** effects of the strategic communication campaigns we conduct, and

Understanding that strategic communication includes the **inflow of information from our publics** into our organization as well as expressing our opinions to our publics, and

Understanding that **withholding information from our publics** based on the claim that we know what is best for them, and without clear and convincing evidence supporting such a decision, constitutes prima facie evidence of both paternalism and of putting our own interests above those of our publics,

We Therefore Swear That

We will not put our own financial or other interests above the interests of our publics, and

We acknowledge that we have no moral or ethical authority to order, entice or request that any practitioner violate their ethical responsibilities to their publics, and

We, collectively and each one of us individually, takes responsibility for the reasonably foreseeable outcomes of our strategic communication campaigns; except that we take total responsibility for both the foreseeable **and unforeseeable** effects of our campaigns when information has been intentionally withheld from our publics.

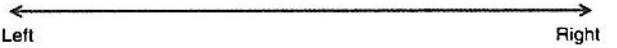
Adopted this ____ day of _____ in the year _____ By order of _____

There are, of course, many other possible applications of the cocreational view to ethical evaluations. As an example, however, the final subsection of this chapter suggests one way the cocreational view of ethics might be applied in the subfield of political communication. Similar applications would be possible in many other fields.

Application: Cocreational View of Ethics Applied to Political Discourse

There are more ways that a cocreational view of SC ethics differs from sender- and message-centered views than there is room to discuss. One simple example from the subfield of political communication can help illustrate the point, however.

The subfield of political communication covers everything from traditional internal partisan and non-partisan election campaigns to the extreme of terrorist and counterterrorist SC campaigns. Thus, it is no surprise that developing a single ethical analysis to serve across all the different kinds of political communication is a bit of a challenge, although using the cocreational perspective makes it somewhat easier. For example, think of the traditional if overly simplistic left–right distinction in politics on a continuum like this.



This looks simple enough, but the implication that left and right views are not only fundamentally different from each other, but that they are also more and more different as you move toward the extremes of the scale is misrepresentative and it gives no ethical guidance, which this little model is not intended to do. But ethics is an important matter even in the left–right distinction because strategic communication efforts of both can be and sometimes are taken to the extremes of deceit, threat, coercion, or even terrorism. In the example of terrorism, which is a form of SC as explained in Chapter 10, the perpetrators and their supports claim that their instrumental goals are so much more right than any others that they justify murdering, or coercing, randomly chosen victims. Note, however, that within the definitions discussed in Chapter 2 this is a sender-centered and message-centered view of communication and is on the extreme instrumental end of Figure 8. But what about the victim publics? Do the victims of terrorism care all that much about which end of the political spectrum those who kill or rape their family members, or blow up their homes, schools and places of worship, come from? Or how the ideological beliefs of terrorists may differ from one another?

To make this simple left–right representation of political views a more publics-centered and cocreational model of political SC, and add an ethical dimension at the same time, think of a cocreational–instrumental continuum bisecting the left–right continuum. Then think of the extremes of right and left practices bending around and meeting at either the cocreational or instrumental poles to reflect how they impact on the ability of publics to use political SC to cocreate their own meanings, as in Figure 17.

At both the high and low poles, left and right SC practitioners behave in largely the same way with respect to the cocreational process. Highly cocreational SC practitioners protect and facilitate the right of publics to cocreate their own meanings, while highly instrumental ones will go to extremes

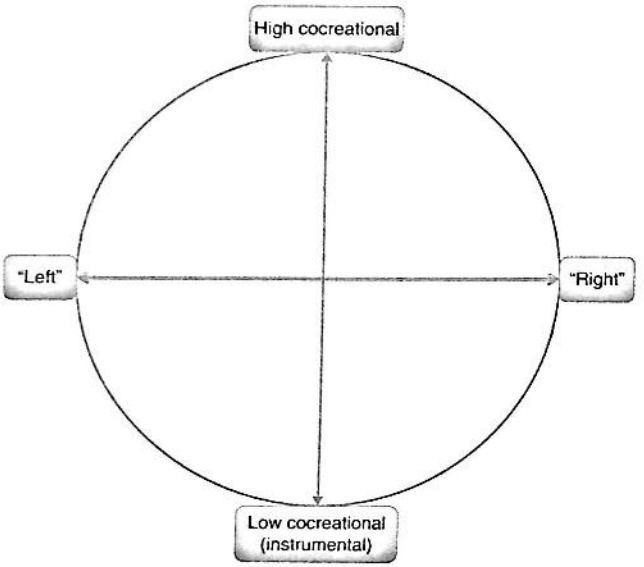


Figure 17 Political communication ethic

to try to make publics do what they want because they assume that publics should be used to meet their political needs. Thus, whether political SC originates on the right or left is of little or no consequence from the cocreational perspective, because it affects publics in largely the same way. While terrorism as SC clearly resides at the bottom pole in Figure 17, it is important for counterterror SC to position itself as near to the top pole as possible.

Part II

Strategies

5

Issues, Issues Management and Crises

Summary

Issues management is the term historically used to discuss efforts to influence public policy such as laws and regulations, usually by corporations and trade groups but sometimes by activist groups. Others have spoken of issues management as a much more general practice, almost as a substitute term for the SC subfields of public relations, government relations, and lobbying.

The cocreational perspective suggests that, since publics define issues, those issues can only be resolved when publics say they are resolved. Therefore, the concept of IM is not correctly understood if it is taken to mean that the organization manages what publics think about issues, although that is the traditional way this term has been used. Issues can be more appropriately managed, however, through the relationship publics and the organization share. Thus, issues management is really co-management when talked about from a cocreational stance. Even such a co-management view of issues requires first understanding what an issue is and then the stages it goes through. Issues at different stages of development have different characteristics requiring different strategies and tactics to address. Since the grand strategy of an organization largely determines what strategies are acceptable in that organization, the strategies available to practitioners at any given time may not fit the needs of a particular situation or the demands of a public. Since it is publics that determine how far an issue develops, poor grand strategy can doom any effort to manage an issue no matter how creative the practitioner.

In the two early stages of issue development, embryonic and open (see below), publics are often deciding how much importance to attach to an issue so there remains a good chance the issue may not develop past one of these stages (that is, there will be issue attrition). Thus, at the embryonic stage, watchful waiting is a common, and sometimes reasonable, strategy. At the open stage, an issue usually has to be addressed but watchful waiting may still be an effective strategy. At the mature stage, significant publics have settled the question of the importance of an issue so the time for watchful waiting is past. Here, important publics are demanding resolution so any delay or stalling makes the issue worse—often much worse. Once publics define an issue as a mature one demanding resolution, the issue has the potential to develop into a crisis, and mishandling of it may lead to a meta-crisis. When resolved in some way, which does not mean permanently fixed or gone, the issue moves into an inactive status in which it is temporarily resolved but is lurking in the background of publics' thinking and can return to an active stage quickly. A lurking issue may also influence how publics treat other issues involving that organization.

Strategic Communication Theory and Practice: The Cocreational Model, First Edition. Carl H. Botan.

Introduction and History

During the last century, a whole specialty in issues management (IM) developed, particularly after Howard Chase and his team developed the first Issue Management Process Model in 1977 (Issue Management Council, 2017) and after Jones and Chase's seminal 1979 article. IM has been primarily discussed as the planning and implementation of strategic communication campaigns to manage public policy (laws and regulations) to the benefit of corporations and industrial associations. Although it is true that social movements like civil rights and environmentalism practice IM, corporations have been the primary sponsors of IM campaigns. Heath (1997) said, "the key concern of issues management is [public] policy" (p. 19), and, citing R. A. Buckholz, concluded that, "public policy is a specific course of action taken collectively by society or by a legitimate representative of society" (p. 53).

Issues management This subfield of SC is practiced under various names. One of the principal tools used in IM is lobbying, which is any effort to influence politicians or government officials on an issue, and data are available on lobbying. Lobbying in the US is controlled at the federal level by the Lobbying Disclosure Act of 1995 (Public Law 104-65), which, among other things, amended the Foreign Agents Registration Act (FARA) of 1938 and was itself amended in 2007 by Public Law 110-81. According to the Act, "the term 'lobbying contact' means any oral or written communication (including an electronic communication) to a covered executive branch official or a covered legislative branch official that is made on behalf of a client" with regard to prospective federal legislation, regulations, contracts or appointments subject to Senate confirmation (section 3 (8A)). The US Senate compiles and publishes a Lobbying Disclosure Act Database, which can be searched online. The reader can also visit the website of the Center for Responsive Politics (OpenSecrets.org, 2014; 2016), which summarizes the data from the Senate Office of Public Records. This website reports that total annual expenditures for federal lobbying remained relatively stable at between $3.1 and $3.52 billion per year between 2008 and 2016, with between 11,143 and 14,153 registered federal lobbyists. This site also lists the 20 largest lobbying clients of which, interestingly, only four are identifiably defense contractors and none are labor unions.

Some have argued that IM is just a specialized kind of PR or business communication, but it might best be thought of as another subfield, almost a core subfield. IM is a kind of SC and all SC subfields share the same metaphoric trunk and root system as the other branches of SC, so they have many overlapping characteristics (see tree metaphor in Chapter 1) and this naturally leads to a lack of clarity about boundaries. Arguments about where one subfield ends and another begins or the best term for a practice may be important at the organizational level, but this book focuses on the commonalities between subfields rather than on how they differ.

IM is included in this book primarily because its authors have made important contributions to understanding the central role of publics in IM and, therefore, in SC more broadly. Thus this chapter does not focus on the practice of IM as much as it does on what can be learned from IM about the cocreational role of publics in creating, defining and resolving issues in general. This chapter is in many ways an extension of the discussion of publics in Chapter 3 rather than an attempt to provide another exhaustive discussion of IM such as has been done by Heath (1997).

Managing versus Cocreating Issues

Explaining IM, Heath (1997) said that some people believe it is "the manipulation of issues to the advantage of large private sector organizations" (p. 4). Although Heath's skepticism is well founded, it is based on the traditional definition of IM. A rather more progressive definition of IM is offered by the Issue Management Council (2017): "Think of an issue as a gap between your actions and stakeholder expectations. Issue management is the process used to close that gap." However, IM is usually

spoken of very instrumentally by both corporations and social movements as something practitioners do to an issue for their clients. In this view of issues, publics are instrumentalized and thus "managed" right along with the content of the issue, and the search for the elusive magic bullet is back on.

A more cocreational view of IM reflects a broader perspective that includes social movements such as civil rights, alcohol or other prohibitions, insurgent political movements or unionism, as well as consumer activism, along with advocating for the economic interests of corporations under IM. This cocreational view of IM, while still including clients and practitioners as participants, focuses on the power of publics to cocreate and determine the outcomes of those issues through their own internal functioning. Indeed, publics often use their own meanings, issues, agendas and views of right and wrong to initiate important IM campaigns, but publics typically do not call what they do IM so these campaigns are sometimes left out of discussions of IM that are based on the traditional definition.

Thus, there are two quite different understandings of what managing issues means, reflecting the difference between the instrumental and cocreational worldviews discussed in Chapter 2. These different worldviews lead to different understandings of who has the ability to actually manage issues, with the rest of this chapter arguing that it is publics that cocreate issues, the life cycles of issues, and the outcomes of issues. Note, however, that because this is a cocreational process, publics are not alone in creating issues, their life cycles or their outcomes but they do play the leading role.

The best-known article in IM history is probably the 1979 Jones and Chase piece already cited and it was instrumental in its outlook. On the other hand, Crable and Vibbert (1985) provided a publics-centered communication approach that substantially influenced my understanding of cocreationality. This chapter takes a much broader approach to IM than did either Jones and Chase or Crable and Vibbert but it owes a substantial intellectual debt to Crable and Vibbert for their pioneering work on the role of publics in the developmental stages of an issue.

In spite of the short interval between the Jones and Chase (1979) article and Crable and Vibbert's 1985 article, the more recent publication introduced what amounted to the next generation of scholarship on issues management. Heath also contributed a series of three books in the PR subfield to this second generation of IM scholarship (Heath and Nelson, 1986; Heath, 1997; Heath and Palenchar, 2008). In the business management subfield during this period, Mahon and Waddock (1992) wrote about the evolution of practices in business, and Camillus and Datta (1991) about managing issues in turbulent environments. Also in this period several substantial case studies and other articles began to appear, including Arrington and Sawaya (1984), who discussed Atlantic Richfield's IM practices, and Wartick and Cochran (1985), who discussed social and corporate social performance (now usually called corporate social responsibility). There was also a German language book called *Issues Management: Theoretische Konzepte und praktische Umsetzung. Eine Bestandsaufnahme* (Röttger, 2001).

The remainder of this chapter (1) identifies what issues are, distinguishes them from problems and explains their relationship to publics, (2) explains the life cycle of issues and the concept of going up the time stream, and (3) discusses the stages in an issue's life cycle in more detail and where crises, meta-crises and lurking issues fit into that life cycle.

Issues and Problems

Issues

Two things help most in identifying an issue. First, according to Jones and Chase (1979), "an issue is an unsettled matter which is ready for decision" (p. 11). Second, Crable and Vibbert (1985) moved the discussion one large step toward cocreationality by focusing on the role of publics, saying, "an issue is created when one or more human agents attaches significance to a situation or perceived

An issue is any matter a public decides is of concern to them.

Figure 18 Cocreational definition of issue

'problem'" (p. 5). Thus, an issue exists when individuals and publics decide that something is important enough for them to want a decision made about it. Publics decide when an issue exists and what it is about (Figure 18). IM practitioners clearly cannot manage them on their own, and neither can clients. Only publics decide if something will be an issue. This is a humanistic view of issues focusing on the judgment and meaning making of publics so it is a cocreational view of issues.

Issues are not static; they change characteristics and develop throughout a life cycle, a little like a person who changes physically, psychologically and socially in the aging process. The various stages in the life cycle of an issue emphasize that, while an issue may be addressed at different points in its life cycle, *how* it has to be addressed differs greatly as a result of what might be thought of as an issues evolution. Additionally, a matter that is an issue for a public at one point in time may not be for that same public at another point.

Other Cocreators

For example, the manufacturing of tobacco products went along for well over a hundred years without becoming much of a public issue. In the late 1900s, however, making and selling cigarettes became a big public issue, particularly when the targeted customers were youth. Many consumer advocates, state attorneys general and public health advocates ran SC campaigns to try to persuade significant publics to make selling tobacco into an issue. These groups functioned as cocreators of the issue as, in a negative sense, did the tobacco companies through their advertising, product qualities and intransigence. The question is whether, when they cocreated the issue, these groups met the definition of publics from Figure 10 in Chapter 3. Recall that "A public is an interpretive community engaged in an ongoing process of developing a shared understanding of its relationship with a group or organization, which can differ substantially from that of the organization."

Some might think of consumer advocates, state attorneys general and public health advocates as organizational actors with their own agendas and, thus, not as publics. Some would see them simply as other publics of the tobacco industry and their work in this matter as another example of publics defining issues. In both cases, these groups were cocreators of the issue.

The same analysis could be applied to car safety where anti-lock brakes and air bags were not major issues until large numbers of potential buyers decided they would be, again with other publics of the car companies cocreating the issue. Drivers have been driving drunk and causing accidents almost as long as there have been cars, but it has been within the lifetime of many readers that drunk driving has not been handled with a wink and a nod. Issues are ready for resolution when publics say they are, which is typically at some point in the mature stage, and this implies some negotiation and bargaining space between organizations and their publics. But issues are sometimes confused with problems. Although this may sound like a semantic difference, recall that labels are important because they both cue us how to think about something and predict how we are likely to treat it in the future.

Problems versus Issues

In the SC context a problem is any negative effect an issue has on the client organization. *Because a public has an issue with an organization, that organization has a problem.* The organization may have the problem of not enough sales, a politician a problem because they said something wrong or

a charity a problem of declining contributions. Just understanding the problem is of little or no use for the SC practitioner because it is the cause of the problem—the issue that leads publics to decide something is important enough to become a problem for the client—that is of strategic importance. Thus, although a problem may motivate an organization to conduct an SC campaign, there is little strategic about the problem. It is issues, which publics basically control, that are strategically important, and how important they are is determined largely by the life cycle through which they process an issue.

Life Cycle of an Issue

The decision whether a matter will be an issue is not an all-or-nothing proposition. Fortunately, issues are not absent one moment and then spring into life full-blown the next moment. Rather they go through a fairly predictable cycle of development. The existence of a life cycle for issues is crucial to the idea of strategic campaigns because, if issues were random in their development, it would often be impossible to approach them strategically. If, on the other hand, issues do have a life cycle made up of various stages, it is possible to plan to employ different strategies to address them at different points either before or after they become widely embraced. Finally, that there is a normal set of developmental stages does not mean that every issue goes through all of them. Sometimes an issue is resolved or fades while going through the stages. This is called issue attrition.

Since publics decide whether something will become an issue, SC practitioners obviously cannot unilaterally "manage" issues. The goal of strategic issues management, then, becomes sharing in determining issues by negotiating their creation, interpretation, importance, and resolution with publics. This reemphasizes the important question of stage and the ability to move up the time stream.

Up the Time Stream

Every IM practitioner I have known preaches that the best overall strategy in IM is to identify and address issues as early as possible. Because publics go through several stages in processing an issue over time, it is often possible to move *up the time stream* by addressing the decisions those publics are making about the issue earlier in their thinking. Thus, the sine qua non of strategic IM would be to move up that time stream as far as possible. Of course, this strategic option is all but foreclosed to those with an intransigent and even highly resistant grand strategy because of their view of the role of publics in issues.

When an issue is identified early enough in its development that it has not yet received media exposure, or positions about it have not yet hardened for important publics, the sides may not have their stances figuratively set in concrete. As a result more strategic options are likely to be available for working out a mutually acceptable outcome. The inverse is that the further down the time stream an issue gets, the fewer the strategic options available, notwithstanding that sometimes an issue has to develop to a certain stage before some options become available. This is where the idea of strategic versatility (discussed below), starts. For example, if a consumer group is challenging the cleanliness and health of a meat processing plant the company might feel that it has a lot more freedom to make important concessions before the issue has gone public in the media. The inverse is that the further down the time stream an issue gets, which the intransigent and resistant grand strategies facilitate, the fewer the strategic options available. But keep in mind that sometimes an

issue has to develop to a certain stage before it can be resolved. The more intransigent or resistant an organization's grand strategy is, the more likely that organization will face issues that have matured, even to the point of crisis.

It would not be possible to approach issues strategically if they could pop into existence fully developed, or bounce around the developmental stages randomly. Since issues do have a life cycle made up of stages, it is possible to plan to address them at various points. In other words, the existence of issue stages is what makes IM a potentially strategic endeavor. There are some parallels between issues, which are cocreated socially by publics, and the life cycles of biological organisms, although there are more important differences.

The line between stages in a life cycle is sometimes very apparent, while other times it is so gradual that saying when one begins and the other ends is very hard. This is particularly true in the age of the internet and social media, when publics can sometimes decide the stage of an issue without depending on the mass media or the organization in question at all. Publics can also use these communication channels to compress the time for each cycle, making it hard to catch an issue in a particular stage long enough to address it. The other side of the coin is that the more quickly an issue moves through its stages, the more important becomes the steadying hand of an experienced practitioner. Sometimes the critical calls of *when* and *how* to address an issue depend at least as much on the art of IM as on the science, and then experience becomes even more important than usual.

Thus, because issues develop over time, the earlier and further up—an arbitrary direction, "down" works equally well—the stream an issue can be identified, the more strategic practitioners can be. But the natural brake on this is the risk of investing effort and resources into an early stage issue that was not going to develop far enough to create a problem that would warrant such an investment. This can result from the process of issue attrition.

Attrition of Issues

Attrition is the natural tendency for most issues that get to any stage of development not to go any further. As just mentioned, one danger of not understanding attrition is wasting resources. Another is the confusion attrition can cause, particularly in organizations with intransigent or highly resistant grand strategies, because it can appear that intransigent or resistant grand strategies have been successful in managing an issue when the issue has simply not attracted enough support to move to its next stage. In this way, intransigent and resistant grand strategies can be a little like the proverbial elephant charm. If a New York City businesswoman wears an elephant charm for protection from angry elephants, and no angry elephant attacks her that day, that could either be proof that the elephant charm worked or that there was already a pretty low chance of running into an angry elephant in downtown New York.

Although there are no real data I know of, natural issue attrition rates are very high. For example, if there are 5,000 pre-issues in an organization's environment, only 400–500 of them might make it to the embryonic stage, and of these maybe only 40–50 might make it to the open stage, and of these only 3–4 might make it to the mature stage. Maybe one of them would become a crisis. Recall that from a cocreational perspective, issues are what publics say they are, not what an organization wishes they were.

Attrition of issues occurs for many reasons. One, of course, is that when an issue is successfully resolved at one stage it does not move on to the next stage. Another is that some issues just are not important enough to enough publics to attract sufficient support to move forward, no matter how important they are to a few people. This kind of attrition can be partially explained with the idea of early adopters from diffusion theory (cf. Rogers, 1995). Early adopters of many innovations,

including those who adopt an issue as important, typically do not have the same characteristics as later, majority adopters (Value Based Management, 2014). Sometimes broader publics just do not agree with the early adopters that an issue is important. Other times a more important issue may suck the oxygen out of the public interest agenda, such as during US presidential campaigns. Some older practitioners (including the author) still refer to this cause of issue attrition as "being blown off the front page." It has happened to me more than once, including when a US nuclear submarine surfaced into a Japanese fishing boat off Hawaii (La Ganga and Essoyan, 2001), bumping my interview segment off the *Good Morning America* show. Not all issues will advance through all the stages of the life cycle.

Stages of an Issue

Crable and Vibbert (1985) identified five stages of corporate public policy issues: potential, imminent, current, critical, and dormant. Their groundbreaking contribution was in explaining that *when and how an issue develops is determined by what publics think* and feel about it. Their view was quite consistent with the cocreational view, which is not surprising since both were rhetorical scholars and thus fundamentally humanist in their orientation. The rest of this chapter builds on Crable and Vibbert's seminal contribution of the idea of stages, although I see very different stages, apply the idea of stages more broadly than they did and account for both crises and meta-crises in my model.

Returning for a moment to a point made earlier, thinking of stages as having clear lines of demarcation is unrealistic. Stages usefully represent areas on a kind of continuum, like those in Chapter 2, rather than categories with distinct boundaries. Issues do not suddenly leap from one stage fully into the next, and publics do not all agree what stage an issue is in at any one time.

The labels I use for the stages of an issue have changed over time (e.g., Botan and Taylor, 2004; Botan, 2006) into the stages that are being used for the first time here (Figure 19).

Pre-Issues and Environmental Scanning

Crable and Vibbert (1985) saw disturbances in the environment as indicators of possibly developing issues. They suggested, much as Jones and Chase had, watching for trends that are "detectable changes which precede issues" (p. 11). From the cocreational view, such detectable changes can highlight the situation a public is cocreating meanings about and might choose to make into an issue. Publics use several things as raw materials for cocreating new meanings, including the meanings and experiences they start the process with, the actions and statements of relevant organization, events in the environment, and their new reasoned effort. But until publics use raw materials in the cocreation process, events in the environment are not an issue. The core idea in the cocreational school of

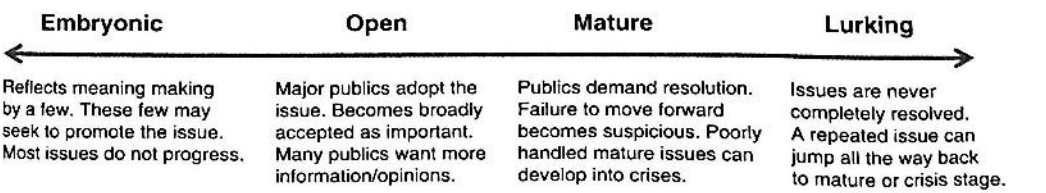


Figure 19 Stages of an issue life cycle

thought is that *publics cocreate issues*. Although organizations also cocreate meanings, it is the meanings cocreated by publics that determine when issues exist and what form they take, as suggested in Botan and Soto (1998).

There can be thousands of large and small events going on at any one time in the environment publics and organizations share, far too many to even track let alone respond to. Nonetheless, environmental scanning is important to IM. Environmental scanning is the well-known practice of watching for changes in an organizational or personal environment. In the context of IM, this usually means watching for signs of potential issues that might lead to problems for the organization.

Environmental scanning is likely to be less valued by organizations with more intransigent grand strategies than by those with other grand strategies, for several reasons. First, such organizations often do not have the communication links with their environment needed for early assessments (e.g., advisory councils, community involvement programs, social audits). Second, organizations holding intransigent or resistant views sometimes resist environmental scanning because of the perceived criticism of those in authority implicit in getting negative feedback from the environment. Third, engaging in environmental scanning may be perceived as implied openness to change, which such organizations may also see as indicating a lack of loyalty or failure to be a team player. Fourth, intransigent organizations in particular may assume that publics are not competent to understand the organization and its actions, and that if publics "only knew what I knew [they would] make the same decision" (Gaudino, Fritsch and Haynes, 1989). Thus, in the eyes of the very intransigent, the most environment scanning can achieve is to help to identify which unqualified people hold which unqualified views of the organization. With good environmental scanning efforts, the development of issues is much less likely to be a surprise than if such scanning is missing.

Stage One: Embryonic Issues

This stage shares several attributes with both of Crable and Vibbert's (1985) first two stages, potential and imminent. In keeping with the cocreational approach, an embryonic issue (1) focuses on meaning-making activities by one or a group of individuals in the environment, and (2) changes form and stages only when publics begin to attach enough significance to it to create new meanings related to it.

An embryonic issue is one that has not developed enough to take on a clear identity of its own in the minds of members of a public and may be unknown to many, if not most, people. Somewhat like the early development after which they are named, embryonic issues span the range from partially formed and inchoate meanings in the minds of a few members of a public to those that one or more groups intentionally seek to popularize, precisely because the issue is unknown to most. It might be helpful to think of these first few people and groups as the early adopters of an issue, so they may also become, in effect, advocates seeking to influence what meanings other members of publics develop about that matter. Some, although not all, of these early adopters are what several SC subfields such as marketing, advertising, mass media, health communication and political communication researchers often call opinion leaders (e.g., Flodgren et al., 2011; Weimann et al., 2007) or thought leaders.

There are far fewer embryonic issues than pre-issues so these are more easily identifiable and environmental scanning becomes much more manageable and productive at this stage. More importantly, because embryonic issues have not yet developed a final form or become broadly adopted in the minds of the members of publics, a whole range of strategic options remains available for addressing them. Creative resolutions can often be found at this stage because relatively little damage may have been done to any of the parties and they may not be ego-involved or overly committed. For example, a corporation facing an embryonic issue may be able to resolve the matter quietly by

changing their behavior or sometimes by just informing publics about why they did something. A wise organization tries not to wait for significant numbers of publics to become concerned before addressing an issue, so it moves as far up the time stream as possible, and the embryonic stage is usually about as far up as one can get.

Beyond the embryonic stage, publics involve more and more contributors in their cocreational activities. This can often include how the mass media frame an issue as it moves into the next stage. Thus, while practitioners may be able to get their client's views covered by the mass media, allowing the organization to continue to get a vote, power in the relationship shifts more and more to publics as they cocreate understanding of what an issue means and desired resolutions. However, as implied by Murphy (1989) using game theory, issue attrition is a countervailing force to this process. As publics develop an issue the organization can be forced more and more into a reactive mode that, ironically, is the inverse of the instrumental school of thought about publics. The next stage in an issue's development is when it moves to the open stage.

Stage Two: Open Issues

Once an embryonic issue is adopted by major publics such as consumers, environmental groups, the media or regulatory agencies, the issue acquires what Crable and Vibbert (1985) called legitimacy in the eyes of those publics and possibly others. This may be why Crable and Vibbert called a somewhat similar stage the public stage. This is where meaning making about the issue kicks into a higher gear, with new and larger publics cocreating and exchanging new ideas. The ability to influence the meanings attached to an issue shifts dramatically so that, from the point of view of the organization, the issue may appear to take on a life of its own. Of course, this is not really what is happening; publics are simply exercising their prerogatives by cocreating new meanings about the issue, and more publics are choosing to do so.

Publics develop and exchange meanings irrespective of what those who initiated or first identified it want. At this point, the issue becomes independent in the sense that any one party, group or practitioner no longer controls it. The issue is now the property of publics so what it means, what outcomes are acceptable and how long the issue exists are all cocreated by publics. Because the issue is now part of the cocreational process, strategic options for practitioners become somewhat limited, and the cocreational process defines acceptable outcomes.

In the past, the agenda-setting function of the mass media was usually relied upon to open issues up to new publics, which is why the proverbial news release, product launch campaign or news conference has been so important in the history of SC. Today, however, social media have become a tool of publics for sharing the cocreational process at least as much as they are a tool for practitioners and clients to attempt to manage issues.

While those with different grand strategic views may differ in recognizing embryonic issues, all recognize that an open issue is on the public agenda for all to see and participate in. One way to think about this is with the classical diffusion of innovations curve (cf. primarily Rogers, 1995; 2006; also Kaminski, 2011). Valenti (1993) applied diffusion theory to public policy issues more than 20 years ago. Austin and Pinkleton (2008) discuss diffusion's use in the subfield of PR, and several other authors have applied diffusion to the fields of communication, management communication and health communication for years. So there is some history of applying diffusion to IM in particular and to SC in general. It is also possible to use diffusion theory to describe not just how publics adopt new technology, but to help illustrate the stages in the life cycle of an issue.

Diffusion means how widely and how fast an innovation is communicated about and adopted across populations over time. Thus, if we think of the issues cocreated by publics as a kind of innovation

in thinking about what is important, diffusion theory becomes one way of modeling the adoption of those new meanings by others. Again, however, issue attrition has to be taken into account.

Diffusion theorists often use categories like innovators, early adopters, early majority, late majority and laggards to discuss when different publics adopt an innovation, and they refer to the point when the few early adopters give way to the early majority as either the tipping point or the point of critical mass. The leap an innovation has to make to cross from early adopters to early majority is also sometimes referred to in the diffusion literature as the "chasm," which helps show how significant and difficult this step is. This chasm is somewhat analogous to the big step from embryonic to open issues, which really changes the game in SC because the organization and even early adopters of the issue see control taken over by larger publics with the power not only to define the issue but to decide when it is or is not resolved. Intransigent and highly resistant organizations are at the greatest danger of misunderstanding this *qualitative* difference between embryonic and public issues, seeing it instead as simply a matter of more people showing an interest in the issue.

For example, if a few neighbors decide to oppose some new construction in their neighborhood, that issue is embryonic. But if they manage to convince the local Homeowners' Association to call a large meeting of concerned citizens, with local politicians and the press included, the matter moves to the open stage. Because it is now an open issue, the results of such a meeting may be quite different from what the construction company, or even the neighbors calling the meeting, wished. This is in part due to the continuation of the cocreational process during and after that meeting. Once an issue is opened up, whether by the mass media, social media, public meetings, protests or any other means, it takes on a new and more public life as determined by publics through the cocreation process. The organization exerts less and less influence during this process, with a corresponding loss of strategic versatility. Negotiated solutions are still possible, but frequently these involve careful, even scripted, language to ensure that no party is portrayed as the loser. A good example is the settlement of well-known court cases. Notice how even in the most widely known lawsuits, the paying party always insists on a clause that both parties sign saying that neither side is admitting guilt. Such public statements may be aimed at letting both sides save face, maintain deniability, or avoid future legal exposure.

Whether the media are involved or not, a movement from embryonic to open status is often the result of conscious efforts by activists, journalists and the like. Movement from an open to a mature status signals higher stakes and far fewer strategic options.

Stage Three: Mature Issues

There are three kinds of mature issues: normal, crises, and meta-crises.

Normal mature issues Normal mature issues are the most common. Based on Crable and Vibbert's (1985) work, an issue reaches its mature, or fully developed, stage when publics demand a resolution. Just as there is a qualitative difference between embryonic and open issues, there is another qualitative leap between open issues and mature issues. In the open stage, many groups and people are familiar with an issue and may share opinions about it, but there is no agreement on what outcome is needed. In this stage, advocating further study and fact-finding, or giving everyone a chance to be heard are often viewed by publics as appropriate and reasonable. In a mature issue, however, the major publics have usually staked out positions and there is some degree of agreement on what must be done, although some disagreements may continue to exist. Thus, publics begin to demand a single solution or a few specific steps. An issue moves into its mature stage when, for example, increasing numbers of people and publics make the qualitative change from seeing calls for study or airing opinions as

acceptable to beginning to see such calls as stalling or avoiding responsibility. From a cocreational perspective, an issue is in the mature stage when publics decide that it has developed enough and they have heard enough to make their own decisions.

One particularly challenging aspect of the mature stage is when *publics are divided*. This occurs either when most are ready for a resolution while some are not, or when different publics are demanding *different* resolutions. For example, recently in the US many publics were calling for significant changes in government policy and practice concerning immigration. They were not, however, all calling for the *same* changes. Some wanted all illegal immigration, and even much legal immigration, stopped or greatly reduced, while others wanted an easier path for immigration of all kinds. In such a case, finding enough support for any one solution may not be possible so the issue may just go on until enough support is built around one alternative that those unwilling to agree cannot keep the issue at the mature stage on their own, or until a resolution based on satisficing emerges. Satisficing is a strategy in which an alternative is adopted that is sufficient to satisfy the minimum requirements of enough publics to work even though it is optimal for none.

In deciding on a satisficing strategy, both careful research and the steadying hand of experienced practitioners who understand both the art and science of SC may be needed. More intransigent organizations that may have ignored embryonic and open stages of an issue may be seen very negatively by the time an issue reaches the mature stage, so a satisficing strategy that would have been acceptable earlier in the life cycle might no longer be acceptable at this stage.

Crises All mature issues, including crises and meta-crises, share the same characteristics just described, particularly that publics are demanding a solution. But crises include at least two additional characteristics (see Figure 20), while meta-crises include those two and a third additional characteristic.

First, in a crisis there is little time to respond (Hermann, 1963) because publics, of which the media can be one, have become insistent that a decision be made and implemented immediately. As a result, decision-making becomes compressed and is often forced out of the organization's or government's normal decision-making process. This is part of a crisis that publics define.

If an unlimited amount of time were available for study, preparation and planning, the sense of crisis might well not be present. This is one reason why maintaining an ongoing environmental scanning and research function is a kind of risk management investment. It is like buying an insurance policy, but one that protects from much bigger risks than most insurance policies do. Such a level of preparation requires grand strategy policies toward publics above the resistant level, so the organizations most likely to need such an environmental scanning function may also be the ones least likely to have one.

Second, in a crisis the stakes are higher than normal, possibly even threatening organizational survival (Mishra, 1996; Weick, 1988) or national safety. For example, a terrorist attack can be unexpected, cause very high stakes for a government and a population, and jump very quickly to the mature stage where answers are demanded in a very short time frame.

Figure 20 Cocreational definition of a crisis

A crisis is the effect on an organization of publics adding two characteristics to an already mature issue: (1) publics demand a response with insufficient time for the organization's normal decision processes, and (2) publics make the stakes for the organization higher than normal, possibly including organizational survival.

While publics also often have the leading voice in defining the time frame and number of chips on the table in a crisis, deciding, for example, to stop buying a product, the organization also has a part in defining the stakes involved in two ways. If the organization has chosen to be intransigent or highly resistant about an issue, it often raises its own stakes. In addition, there is a part of a crisis that might be called the organization's psychosocial component. Part of what makes a mature issue into a crisis for the organization is the sense of being forced to make high-risk decisions without the information or time normally needed to make such decisions.

Both time pressure and high stakes usually have to be present for a mature issue to be a crisis because if there is no time pressure, or if the stakes are quite small, neither the organization nor major publics may see the issue as a crisis. But with high enough stakes involved, even an organization that has available all the time it needs to go through a careful decision-making process may see the issue as a crisis.

Crises also differ from normal mature issues in another way that is not so much a new characteristic as a matter of two usages of the term "crisis." Recall that publics experience and define issues, while the organization experiences the resulting problem. When a mature issue reaches the crisis stage, it can be seen as both an issue in the minds of a public and a problem for the organization, but it is often spoken of only as the latter. There is nothing wrong with this usage as long as the cocreational role of publics is not ignored.

A crisis represents a turning point for an organization such that it is unlikely to return fully to its pre-crisis state, whether for better or for worse. In a crisis, the organization's reputation may be permanently damaged, as in the case of Exxon after the *Exxon Valdez* oil spill, or permanently enhanced as in the case of Johnson & Johnson after seven deaths from the poisoning of Tylenol medication in Chicago in 1982. Both were crises and in both cases the organization had to make decisions and take action more quickly than they would have liked, and neither organization returned to its pre-crisis state. The fact that Johnson & Johnson was innocent in most people's eyes, while Exxon was not, was certainly important, but had Johnson & Johnson adopted the intransigent/resistant strategies of Exxon, the outcome could well have been very much more negative for the company. Because crises are a special kind of mature issue with even shorter timelines than with normal mature issues, a crisis usually also involves a substantial loss of *strategic versatility*.

Strategic versatility and strategic ambiguity Strategic versatility is a characteristic of the situation referring to the numbers and kinds of strategic options available, although a practitioner who is creative in identifying and using available strategic options might also be referred to as strategically versatile. So the number and kind of options available to all parties, not just to practitioners, define the strategic versatility of a situation. Generally, the more stages an issue has gone through, the fewer the strategic options available. When a mature issue becomes a crisis, everyone's feet can be said to be set in concrete, so the strategic versatility of the situation may be near zero, because of factors such as the intransigence of an organization or the outrage of publics. As a general principle, SC practitioners and clients want to preserve as much strategic versatility in a situation as possible.

Strategic ambiguity should not be confused with strategic versatility and it is by no means tied only to crisis situations, but it is related to strategic versatility in some ways so this is where it fits best in this book. Strategic ambiguity refers to the intentional use of ambiguous wording or practices and can be used either instrumentally or cocreationally. Using it instrumentally the organization might make a statement with ambiguous wording, or with a lack of precision or multiple meanings, with the intention of getting what they want from a public while leaving semantic maneuvering space to avoid delivering on what a public thought was a promise or agreement. For example, a politician

might publicly promise tax reform to multiple publics and then, in separate meetings with a rich potential donors group and an activist group for the poor, give very different interpretations of the word reform, hoping to get the votes or donations of both. This is a deceptive, and therefore unethical, use of strategic ambiguity, because its purpose is solely to benefit the organization. Being ambiguous in order to maneuver the other party into tipping their hand while not disclosing your own hand is another example of ethically doubtful strategic ambiguity.

Strategic ambiguity by an organization (organized publics can also practice it, but this is less common) can also be used cocreationally, giving publics or organizations a chance to share in defining and shaping a situation to meet their needs. For example, two corporations seeking a merger with each other might each state their opening positions fairly ambiguously because they want the other to be free to cocreate the meanings they wish out of the ambiguity, thus giving guidance as to what will be needed in order to work out the merger both want. The same sort of strategic ambiguity exists at the interpersonal level when both members of a couple intentionally start a discussion with some ambiguity to see which direction the other wants to take. There is a lot of potential for unethical mistakes in using strategic ambiguity, but when used ethically it can help facilitate relationship building and the cocreational process.

Surprise in crises Surprise is sometimes said to be part of what defines a crisis. In events like earthquakes and airliners crashing into skyscrapers, surprise is legitimately an aspect of crises. But many crises are not really surprising, such as worn-out bridges and shabbily constructed buildings that collapse, the deaths of fire victims who were locked into their workplace, or having to recall a few million cars that the manufacturer knew for years had defective and unsafe parts in them. In such cases, the term surprise may be used to imply that an organization or individual should not be held fully responsible because they are as surprised something bad would happen as their publics are. In other cases, however, the only thing that might remotely be called a surprise is which particular day a previously known event or practice becomes widely known to publics, who then demand a fast response.

In another example of the real role of surprise in crises, recall the earlier discussion of issue attrition. If an organization with an intransigent or highly resistant grand strategy stalls when facing an obvious open or mature issue, hides behind overly technical language, employs experts to offer conflicting testimony, puts sacrificial low- to mid-level employees out front, blames others, as Ford and Firestone famously did in their dispute about SUV accidents, or engages in other half-measures, the organization is in effect deciding to double its risks in return for the opportunity to bet that issue will fall to issue attrition. If a crisis ends up developing around the issue, the only thing the organization can reasonably be surprised about is that they did not beat the odds that time.

Therefore, I respectfully disagree with the many authors, some of them friends, who list surprise as a characteristic of crises. It is possible they may just be addressing the time pressure characteristic of crises with a different term, but in so doing they may also inadvertently provide a bit of a semantic escape hatch for those seeking to avoid responsibility for their role in causing, or exacerbating, a crisis. Surprise should not be considered a characteristic attribute of crises because many, maybe even most, crises are "unpredicted but predictable" (Smith, 2013, p. 32).

Truth in a crisis Because high stakes characterize crises, there is naturally a temptation to avoid admitting responsibility for practices that incur losses. From the perspective of cocreational ethics publics have a right to generate their own meanings about issues, including those at or near the crisis stage. Thus, on ethical grounds, the best way for an organization to address a crisis is the same as in all non-crisis situations: the old standby of *Tell the Truth—Tell It All—Tell It Now.*

Of course it is much easier to say this in a book than to live by it when one sees a 30-year career apparently threatened. Rapidly escalating events, sometimes sped up by information technology and social media, can exacerbate a feeling of loss of control—exactly the opposite of what organizational leaders spend years learning to exercise. The result is often the natural fight-or-flight instinct taking over and a siege mentality setting in. Then, when an already trusted legal team advises reducing legal exposure, the temptation to withhold "just a little" of the most damning information or point the finger of blame elsewhere can feel almost overwhelming.

But doing anything except telling the truth, and all of it, immediately takes away part of a public's right to generate its own meanings and understandings of the situation and to act on them in its own interest. And, because the organization is often under a mass media or social media microscope in such situations, it also literally invites the most dangerous and devastating kind of crisis, the secondary or meta-crisis.

Meta-crises or secondary crises A meta-crisis is, as its name implies, a crisis about a crisis. More specifically it is a new crisis about how the original crisis was handled (Figure 21). So, in addition to the two extra characteristics of a crisis, a meta-crisis adds the third new characteristic because the *focus of publics shifts from the content of the crisis to the conduct of the organization* in addressing it. A meta-crisis therefore puts the trustworthiness, honesty or attitude of the organization in the spotlight in addition to the content of the original issue. One implication is that the organization's ability to address the original crisis may be severely compromised because its honesty or motives may be brought into question.

As a result, organizations and careers are often much more threatened by a meta-crisis than by the original crisis. In the widely known case of the poisonings of Tylenol, for example, the behavior of Johnson & Johnson did nothing to arouse suspicions about the organization's motives so no meta-crisis developed and Johnson & Johnson remained trusted to effectively address this very serious crisis. This laid the foundation for their famous rebound from the crisis. In the cases of BP's finger-pointing over the Gulf of Mexico oil spill and GM's attempt to hide their use of unsafe ignition switches, however, the organization's honesty and motives became huge issues in their own right. In effect, when an organization adopts a crisis strategy that causes its motives or honesty to be questioned it has *more than doubled its risk.*

Meta-crises are often directly attributable to foolish decisions by one or more individuals, or even a whole management team. The Watergate affair is an example from American political history. It is unlikely that the burglary of a political party's office could have forced the resignation or impeachment of a sitting US president, but the original issue was mishandled when a purely intransigent stance was adopted and this put Richard Nixon's presidency at risk.

Strategic communication practitioners often have fairly clean hands when it comes to what caused the original crisis because practitioners usually did not participate in the mistakes that caused the original crisis. Not so with a meta-crisis. Part of the practitioner's job is to handle crises, so when one is mishandled the practitioner may be involved. Stonewalling and stalling, both characteristics of the intransigent and resistant grand strategies, are common causes of meta-crises. In such cases, resistance to telling the truth, telling the whole truth, and telling it immediately can put doubts about the trustworthiness of the client into the minds of publics and such doubts tend to be remembered for a

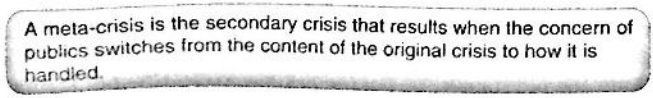


Figure 21 Meta-crisis defined

long time. Think of a meta-crisis as creating a long-term lien against the organization's ability to handle other, even unrelated, crises in the future. Meta-crises can also sometimes come about when lurking issues return to an active stage.

Lurking Issues

A lurking issue is one that has already been at least temporarily resolved, whether through some kind of apparent resolution or through issue attrition. But an issue is never fully resolved, which is why Crable and Vibbert (1985) called this the dormant stage and they eschewed the term resolved to emphasize this point.

If the stages from embryonic through mature can be thought of as the active stages of a life cycle, meaning that an issue is under active consideration by one or more publics, then a lurking issue has entered an inactive stage. A past issue in effect lurks in the environment and can be brought back onto the active agenda any number of ways.

Since the publics and the organization have already dealt with the same or a similar issue together, the organization is expected not to make the same mistake again. Thus, if the same issue arises for a second or third time for the same organization, it has already gone through some of the stages of its life cycle and may not have to go through them again before it can emerge as a mature issue—unless there are some new circumstances that can explain why the issue reemerged. If the issue had been a crisis in the past, it can reemerge in crisis status.

If a lurking issue reemerges, its publics may judge the organization very harshly, either for not learning from the first experience or for not keeping their implied commitment to correct the issue. This can be the basis for a new meta-crisis, so resolved issues, particularly recently resolved ones, have to be watched even more carefully than new issues.

An issue does not have to make it to the mature stage the first time around to become a lurking issue. For example, an issue that suffered issue attrition at the open stage in its first time around, because not many publics demanded a resolution, can recur and might jump almost immediately to the mature stage because of the organization's history with that issue.

Conclusion

Issues typically go through several stages or steps in their development. Any one issue may never develop past a certain stage, or may reemerge and not go through all the stages the second time around. Nevertheless issues typically have to go through something like the stages discussed here and this is important to strategic IM because it is the existence of stages that allows IM to be pursued strategically and also that limit which strategies are available at each stage. Because stages open up the possibility of strategic planning, they actually bring the reader face-to-face with the whole broad question of strategy in public relations.

6

Basic Theories of Strategic Communication

Summary

The basic theory ideas most usable in SC are those that pass three tests. They (1) are compatible with a cocreational perspective, (2) can apply to many different kinds of campaigns, and (3) have stood the test of time by being used in different kinds of SC campaigns over time, often in social interventions such as in public health. These ideas may also be familiar because of their popularity in undergraduate university curricula. Think of these basic SC theories as serving as fall backs, when in doubt one of these might help get the strategy development process started, right after researching the publics and the situation. To have stood the test of time means that these are not the newest theories in SC, although they may be among the most influential.

Introduction

Recall that theories serve to abstract the knowledge learned from one or more applications and summarize it, making the experience and knowledge of many people, from many places and many times, usable in new ones. Thus theories discussed in this chapter can provide general strategies for SC, but general guidance is not enough because each situation is different from others. This means that a theory cannot be used in the same way in all situations, or even any two situations, and that practitioners and theorists need to use their experience and skill to decide which theories are most useful in which situation and how. This process can also be called strategic versatility because it involves making a theory more versatile by adapting it to a specific situation and thus helping to answer questions such as: What are publics thinking and feeling? What should be said? In what order? To whom? When?

Basic Theory in SC

The theories covered in this chapter are in effect suggestions for membership in an intellectual core for SC. Suggesting part of such an intellectual core is the easy part of the job. The real challenge will fall to those who work to develop theories that are original, or at least indigenous to SC because a field cannot coalesce properly around borrowed theories. Borrowed theories can, however, help both SC practitioners and academics from various subfields see that, for all our different titles and challenges, we have more in common than we have separating us. The theories covered in this chapter are particularly compatible with a cocreational perspective because they each feature the role of publics as the real decision-makers in SC and because they can be very broadly applied.

Strategic Communication Theory and Practice: The Cocreational Model, First Edition. Carl H. Botan.

The latter part of the chapter moves on from specific theories to discussing theoretic constructs and ideas useful in SC, including what for some is the very large issue of whether SC should try to persuade or to inform. This question internally divides some major subfields such as PR and health communication, and it leads to many different names, and what are mostly artificial distinctions, between overtly persuasive subfields (e.g., political campaigning, advertising, marketing, social movements, etc.) and those subfields that by law or custom seek to avoid the appearance of persuasiveness, including military public affairs, charitable fundraising, educational institutions, public health, community relations, social marketing, public diplomacy and a host of other often government-related practices.

Challenge

Evidence abounds that SC needs a theory of its own. For example, some subfields have stretched their vocabulary and models to cover other subfields, possibly suggesting an underlying feeling of commonality with those other subfields. Marketing has been particularly active in this way, having evolved two or three such efforts. For example, at least since the turn of the twenty-first century, the concept of branding has been applied to cities (Hankinson, 2001), national development and countries (Caldwell and Freire, 2004; Olins, 2002), and even to individuals as brands (e.g., White, 2009). The concept of integrated marketing communication (Duncan and Caywood, 1996), or IMC, has replaced public relations in some organizations (albeit as only a narrow form of PR), and social marketing has become a common name for health communication campaigns. IMC started as an effort by advertising to offer one-stop shopping because "ad dollars [were] flowing to other marketing communication disciplines, and ad agencies needed to do something to respond" (Novelli, 1989, p. 8). Groom (2008) also acknowledges that IMC was a term for "what was taking place between advertising and marketing communication" (p. 10). Thus it is probably fair to say that IMC was born out of a history of turf wars between SC subfields and, therefore, may make developing understanding across SC harder rather than easier. Nevertheless, IMC has developed into a major contributor to marketing communication and, thus, to SC.

The real solution, however, is not to stretch terms like brand to cover territory from a child to a nation, or IMC as a substitute for SC, because constructs that evolve in one subfield often do not address the nuances of a second subfield, let alone a whole field, very well. For example, there are reasons why many subfields of SC explicitly avoid the term public relations and reasons why political campaigners typically do not publicly refer to their candidates as products or brands.

In addition, other subfields sometimes see such stretching efforts to cover some of their work as threatening. Since both practitioners and scholars have massive investments in their own subfields, they may respond to perceived encroachment by overemphasizing how different their subfield is. Academics can make such defensiveness by practitioners look gentle because academics often have contractual duties to study and teach in one subfield and straying into the teaching of another department/subfield is prohibited.

This book argues that there are fundamental commonalities in SC that make unifying the field both possible and desirable. Because this book does not start from any one subfield, trying to make it ascendant over others, I hope it does not trigger subfield defensiveness. The fact that all practitioners start out in one subfield or another, and know more about that subfield than others, is just part of our histories and does not constitute a threat to any other subfield.

The first step toward unifying SC has been taken over many years with the wide exchange of experiences, concepts and models that have characterized the practitioner community. The academic community, however, has not kept up. This book attempts to take the next step by providing

a theoretical approach to strategy that crosses subfields. Unfortunately, the primary weakness of this book, and of SC, is that there is not yet a body of SC theory to fill it. Thus, the next step is to discuss a set of basic theories that SC can borrow, for the time being; the goal, however, is ultimately to develop a body of dedicated SC theory.

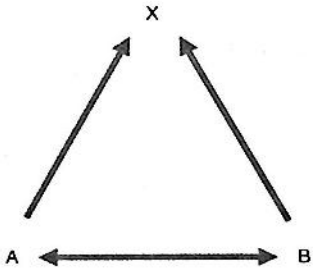
Coorientation Theory

There may be no other single theory so well suited to guide and help unify SC practice, and that fits a cocreational approach so well, as coorientation theory. The idea is so basic that it can apply across almost all of SC. It is also basic enough that many of us fail to spot it in our daily work. The marketing subfield is an example. Millar (2012), in defending the view that the term branding is overused, talks about the fact that there is no real value in a brand or, for that matter, in the product itself. The value is cocreated through a social agreement with customers that there is a value in the product. No agreement from customers that what you offer has value means it has no value. *In this sense, the whole idea of value is a subset of the cocreational approach* because a coorientation between the providers of products and customer publics creates the value in their product or service.

Background

More than two-thirds of PR practitioners thought balance/coorientation theory was both valid and practical in a study by Terry (1989). Like several other theories, coorientation evolved from the psychologist Heider's (1946) original balance theory. Newcomb (1953) first described coorientation as having three components in a relationship between two parties (see Figure 22). Coorientation is about the simultaneous orientations of two parties (A and B) toward some object of common attention (X), as well as toward each other.

Thus coorientation, which started in psychology, has obvious applications to SC because two parties, such as your company and its publics, have a coorientation toward, for example, the company's recent environmental practices. Yet it was not until McLeod and Chaffee (1973) applied coorientation to human communication that SC practitioners and scholars began to develop the



Note: Adaptation of Heider's (1946) original P–O–X model and Newcomb's (1953) coorientation model. Here the A–B double-headed arrow represents meaning cocreation through strategic communication, either within a public (persons/groups A and B) or between a public (A) and an organization (B).

Figure 22 Coorientation

body of literature necessary to apply coorientation to SC. Even then the early attempts were quite narrow. For example, Johnson (1989) used coorientation to study how practitioners and clients see practitioners' roles.

Concepts in Coorientation Theory

The most important component of coorientation for SC practitioners is the idea that the two parties have a relationship with each other that is first built and then modified and maintained through a communication relationship. Newcomb (1953) added this idea of a two-way relationship between the parties to Heider's original balance scheme so this chapter starts with Newcomb rather than the original Heider (1946). Newcomb took what was a psychological theory about *internal* states in the individual and made it at least potentially applicable to SC. Thus the coorientation literature is today broad enough to be applied to many areas of SC (e.g., Whitcomb, 1976), and it is particularly useful in a negotiating approach because of three basic concepts: (1) agreement, (2) accuracy, and (3) congruency. Different authors have different combinations of these concepts, and even use different terms in defining them. Maybe the clearest definitions came from Ajieh and Uzokwe (2014), who say, "Accuracy refers to the similarity between one person's estimate of another's perception and other person's actual perception [e.g., Box 2 vs. Circle 1 in Figure 9]. Congruency compares a person's perception with his or her estimate of another's perception, while agreement is the similarity between two persons' perceptions" (abstract).

Scheff (1967) focused on just accuracy and agreement, and Botan and Penchalapadu (2009), who discussed coorientation theory in the SC subfield of emergency response communication, also focusing on the accuracy and agreement concepts, said:

> Coorientation is of potential interest to those concerned with coordinated responses to emergencies, such as those required during evacuations and rescue operations ... Thus, coorientation is a construct that is very relevant to emergency public communication and helps explain the need for emergency communication efforts to go beyond simply one-way efforts.
>
> Stretching back through Lee (2007), Verčič and Verčič (2007), Bowes (1997), Pearson (1989b, 1989c), McLeod and Chaffee (1973), Scheff (1967) and even the "interactionist social psychology of Dewey and Mead" (Scheff, p. 33), coorientation is a relationship-focused construct that deals with consensus—the kind of shared sense-making needed to respond to emergencies. (pp. 202–203)

If the publics and client disagree, a very different campaign strategy would be needed than if they agree. For example, if they were in agreement, messages designed to facilitate supportive inoculation (see Pfau and Wan, 2005) would be a good idea, while those intended to facilitate refutational inoculation might not be. However, Botan and Penchalapadu (2009) said that, in the context of emergency communication, regardless of how much the views of A and B are in agreement regarding X, emergency officials' *understanding* [e,g, Box 2 in Figure 9] of how publics feel will largely determine whether they develop effective campaign strategies. If emergency officials have an inaccurate perception of what publics know, coordinated response attempts can have unanticipated and even counterproductive consequences. This is just one of the reasons professional SC begins with research.

For example, Botan and Penchalapadu (2009) explained one famous incident during the 2005 Hurricane Katrina disaster in New Orleans using coorientation. When some of the victims of Katrina appeared to have shot at some of their potential rescuers, local police and rescue authorities took certain actions. However, it is unknown, according to Mitchell (2007), if these victims were shooting at their rescuers or just attempting to use the loudest signaling device they had to summon

help. Suppose that the rescuers in question were right in their assessment that they were being shot at. Extreme precautions would be in order, even if that meant further delay of aid to victims, including those who had been stranded for days. But what if these rescue workers had low accuracy regarding their interpretation of victims' actions and delayed aid to those who were just desperate for help?

This sort of analysis is rich in strategic implications. For example, if a client and publics have high agreement and are accurate in assessing that agreement, a campaign might focus on letting publics know that the client already supports their position. But if there is a problem with congruence (i.e., perceived agreement), a campaign planner might act as if the parties are in disagreement, even though there is no disagreement, and run the wrong campaign.

Evaluation of Coorientation

Theory boxes explained Figure 23 is the theory box for coorientation. Theory boxes summarize the SC potential of each theory discussed in six areas:

1) A very brief summary of the theory as it applies to SC.
2) The subfields in which each theory seems to be most frequently used.
3) How wide a range of SC this theory is likely to be applicable to.
4) How compatible the theory is with the cocreational perspective.
5) How specific and how much guidance the theory offers for SC practice.
6) How difficult it is likely to be to apply the theory in real-life SC situations.

The last four items in a theory box are scaled on a hypothetical 1–5 scale (low, low medium, medium, medium high, high) and the last two segments, guidance and difficulty, are somewhat related. More specific guidance helps make a theory easier to apply. But difficulty is a very subjective assessment and can vary greatly based on, for example, practitioner experience and education level. A rookie practitioner might find making effective use of even a relatively simple theory with very specific guidance quite difficult, while a 20-year practitioner with a theory-based graduate degree might well find even a low guidance theory easy to use. Difficulty is in part a function of the degree of abstraction, the kind of research required and the complexity of operationalizing the concepts and relationship in a theory. See Frey, Botan and Kreps (2000, pp. 82, 110–125) or any social science methods text for more discussion of operationalizing theoretical concepts.

Coorientation

The three dimensions of agreement, congruency and accuracy describe how much publics and clients share an orientation toward some referent. High coorientation calls for *very* different campaign strategies than low coorientation and high accuracy is particularly crucial to good SC. Research on the degree of coorientation between publics and clients is the starting point for campaign planning in SC.

Subfields commonly using	Health, PR
Application	High+
Compatibility with cocreational	High
Guidance	High
Difficulty	Medium to medium high

Figure 23 Coorientation theory box

It is easy to see how this kind of coorientation analysis can be applied to most SC campaigns, whether persuasive or non-persuasive, and whether marketing a product, promoting a religion, planning for national security, handling an epidemic, or planning an election campaign. Coorientation is therefore a basic SC theory with extremely wide applicability and it offers high guidance about what needs to be assessed when planning a campaign. It is highly consistent with a cocreational perspective because it focuses on how publics' assessments are largely independent of SC campaigns, thus emphasizing the importance of Circle 1 in Figure 9 as well as why research is the starting point of all truly strategic campaigns.

Sense-Making Theory

Sense-making is another theory that can apply throughout much of SC and is strongly supportive of the cocreational perspective. It is a concept simple to state but more difficult to use. For example, Hodgson (2007) says: "People seek cues from their environment, and interpret and structure information in conversations with others in their social system to construct 'plausible' stories explaining what is happening and why" (p. 234). As Maitlis (2005) puts it, "Sensemaking allows people to deal with uncertainty and ambiguity by creating rational accounts of the world that enable action" (p. 21).

Background of Sense-Making

Sense-making has been used in many fields and is closely associated with, among others, Dervin (1989; 1992; 1998), Weick (1979; 1995) and Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld (2005). Sense-making theory focuses on how individuals and groups make sense of their environment, in both organizational and other contexts. Sense-making methodology is "a theoretic net, a set of assumptions and propositions, and a set of methods which have been developed to study the making of sense that people do in their everyday experiences" (Dervin, 1992, p. 61), so it could be argued that sense-making serves as a methodological meta-theory. However, sense-making has developed a substantial body of literature, it serves several of the functions of a theory (cf. Weick, 1995), and it is often treated in the literature as a theory.

Sense-making has drawn attention from several authors who contribute to SC, including Dervin and Frenette (2001) in health communication campaigns, Walker (2006) in public relations and Botan and Penchalapadu (2009) in risk and crisis work. It has also been used in non-SC fields such as information science (Savolainen, 1993; 2006), and the concept, although not always the theory itself, has been used in mathematics, science and even child development (e.g., Bruner and Haste, 1987).

Weick (1995) used sense-making differently from Dervin. His work may be more easily applicable to SC than Dervin's because, for example, it explains how different communication strategies might be required for different publics. Nevertheless, Dervin is an originator of sense-making and argued for the idea of gap bridging which is at the core of sense-making. The concept section is based on that work unless otherwise specified.

Concepts in Sense-Making Theory

Sense-making takes some study to understand as a methodology, and even as a theory it has several key components, the most important of which is probably the idea of gaps:

> There are always gaps between reality and perceptions that need to be bridged, different times, different spaces, a message meant and a message actually sent. The gap relates to the human

> factor and the fact that behavior is controlled internally rather than by outside forces. The idea of the gap applies to all aspects of communication, including research and communication design, management, and practice. (Walker, 2006, p. 406)

Dervin (1992) said such a gap is "the essence of the communicating moment" (p. 66) because it talks about communication as the individual or public experiences it. As Walker (2006) sees it,

> The Sense-Making assumption that humans are mandated to make and remake is captured in its central metaphor of a gap. Theoretically, each micro-moment of experience is a micro-moment of gap bridging mandated by the human condition. Whereas most research and practice focuses on results, Sense-Making focuses on the processes by which people bridge the gaps they encounter. It sees an integral connection between how we conceptualize a situation and how we choose to deal with it. (p. 406)

For SC this means that the really important thing about communication is how publics experience gaps, such as a gap between what the organization says and what publics think they either said or should have said. Extending Dervin a bit, this could mean that publics may use the communication of others to help make sense of their own situations, but their own experience and situation play the largest role in determining what sense they will make of an SC campaign (see the arrow from Circle 1 to Circle 6 in Figure 9). Such sense-making by publics is, mostly, independent of the wishes and wants of the client or practitioner, so sense-making fits nicely with the cocreational perspective.

Caveat on misapplying theories Notice that the last paragraph said, "extending Dervin a bit." This is to acknowledge that there are potential problems whenever, as happens in the SC literature, authors or theorists simply take theories that were designed to explain how and why *individuals* do the things they do and *assume the same ideas and processes apply to groups*, such as publics. This can be conceptually dangerous for at least three reasons. First, being in a group allows people to understand and behave differently than when we are alone, so theoretical explanations that might fit well with the individual process of cognition may not fit as well with the social process of communication and the social understandings and actions that can result. Second, if one assumes something like sense-making can explain how publics operate, how can each individual's contribution to that public sense-making be explained? Third, if sense-making (or coorientation, attribution, etc.) is accepted as operating at more than one level in the human experience, how do we account for any effects sense-making at one level may have on sense-making at another level? For example, Dervin was really discussing sense-making by individuals, but others have used it to explain how sense-making may be engaged in collectively, such as in and by publics. Is it not reasonable to ask how sense-making at the individual level impacts sense-making at the collective level, and vice versa?

This long-standing discussion of the relationship of individual and group/social theories has been discussed in many ways and by many authors, and is frequently seen in the sociology literature. Some authors address fundamentally the same issue using the terms micro level and meso level. Determining the validity of the common practice of applying theories beyond the level where they were produced is beyond the scope of this book, but an interested reader might start a deeper examination with Huselid and Becker (2011), among others. The reader can proceed by keeping in mind the caveat that often there is not perfect transferability between individual processes and group/social processes, or vice versa. This is yet another reason why SC needs to develop its own body of theory and practice.

Application in SC

Sense-making has the potential to be applied across most SC subfields, much like coorientation, so there are numerous potential applications of sense-making in SC (Figure 24). Sense-making assumes that behavior is controlled internally so it helps SC practitioners to avoid falling into a simplistic reactive view of publics (see Chapter 3) and to understand publics as largely self-directed and creative (cf. Botan and Soto, 1998).

One important subfield of SC is crisis and emergency response, and sense-making can be a vital theory in this kind of work, although it can be a little hard to use because, as Weick (1988) says, "crises are characterized by low probability/high consequence events that threaten the most fundamental goals of an organization. Because of their low probability, these events defy interpretations and impose severe demands on sense-making" (p. 305). Botan and Penchalapadu (2009) also say that sense-making is one way by which reality is socially constructed in such situations, and Hodgson (2007) suggests it is particularly relevant in situations involving high levels of uncertainty. Homan (2003) and Mileti and Sorenson (1990) suggest that among the factors influencing these social constructions of risk or crisis are culture and ethnicity.

Botan and Penchalapadu (2009) applied sense-making theory to disaster communication along with coorientation. They cited Murphy's (2004) argument that people's perceptions about a given risk, as well as their response to it, are often not based solely on objective environmental reality but are also socially constructed at a discursive level. In some ways this argument reflects Sandman's (1993a; 1993b) attention to what he called outrage in risk communication. As discussed in Chapter 7, for Sandman outrage is the subjective emotional side of risk assessments. Both Sandman's and Murphy's arguments for focusing on this subjective component in how publics interpret risk, and thus strategic risk communication, are consistent with the cocreational perspective because the focus is on how publics construct meanings rather than simply on how they respond to the meanings of practitioners and their clients.

Through sense-making, people find rational explanations for chaotic situations in an attempt to reduce complexity so that the situation makes more sense (Hodgson, 2007). The stories and

Sense-making

Sense-making theory focuses on how individuals make sense of their environment. The key concept is "gaps" and how they are bridged, such as the gaps between one moment and the next, or between what is said in an SC campaign and what one thinks should have been said, or was really meant. Sense-making is how individuals fill in such gaps, but it can be extended to address how publics do so with the caveat that social sense-making does not have a perfect conceptual fit with internal individual sense-making. Sense-making helps explain why publics and clients so often understand the same circumstances and messages so differently.

Subfields commonly using	Risk and crisis, management, information sciences and systems, organizational communication
Application	High
Compatibility with cocreational	High
Guidance	Medium to low medium
Difficulty	High

Figure 24 Sense-making theory box

explanations that emerge when meaning is created from information allow people to deal with ambiguity and enable them to take action (Maitlis, 2005). The constructed realities that emerge from the sense-making process also influence collective response actions (Hodgson, 2007), which in emergencies could mean critical activities such as evacuation, sheltering in place and so on. These explanations are formulated tentatively and early in an emergency when information is scarce, and they are "continuously revised as new information is found and created" (Weick, Sutcliffe and Obstfeld, 2005, p. 415). By providing the information people need in their sense-making efforts, SC not only helps them construct effective responses to sometimes chaotic situations, but also builds and extends relationships.

Evaluation of Sense-Making Theory

The sense-making metaphor is the opposite of the transmission metaphor and fits very well with a cocreational perspective because

> it makes no attempt to transmit information or to influence people with magic bullets. It simply asks actors how they bridged their own gaps. The reason sense-making makes this assumption is that when it comes to communication, what people make of messages is as important, if not more important, than the actual message. (Walker, 2006, p. 406)

Savolainen's (1993) article continues this line of analysis, summing up sense-making in its title, "The sense-making theory: Reviewing the interests of a user-centered approach to information seeking and use." By emphasizing the user-centered nature of sense-making, Savolainen also places sense-making clearly within the cocreational perspective in SC. Sense-making supports a cocreational perspective because it focuses on how publics make sense of situations rather than how clients or practitioners do. It is also well adapted to strategic use because it clearly emphasizes that the meanings publics make from messages are as important—and often even more important—than the meanings intended by practitioners and their clients.

Sense-making acknowledges that publics are not passive recipients of information but are active knowledge creators with the capacity to develop their own theories about the world (Dervin, 1998). The decision-making of publics is "ultimately based not on objective information that exists in the message, but on the mental representation of the information that is constructed by the recipient" (Keselman, Slaughter and Patel, 2005, p. 331). The sense-making approach thus alerts us to the possibility that different publics may draw differing meanings from the same message—and thus that a single strategy may be useful with only one or a few publics and useless, or worse, with other publics.

While strongly representing a cocreational perspective, sense-making can be difficult to operationalize, as Walker (2006) conveys:

> Sense-making conceptualizes each person as a social theorist with the capacity to develop ideas and theories about his or her own experience. If people are theorists and knowledge-makers in their own worlds (Dervin, 1998), a researcher must involve the person being researched as a thinking and contributing participant in research. Such an approach to research cannot pretend to think for individuals or presume to develop their perceptions for them. It requires a partnership between the researcher and the individual whose world is made available for study, rather than the all-too-conventional expectation of access to data. This methodology demands a constant personal involvement and cannot be performed to a formula or in a predetermined way. (p. 399)

Thus, research that fully adheres to sense-making methodology can be time-consuming and expensive. In some SC cases such as crisis communication, real sense-making research may be too slow to be of much use. For example, according to one study in Norway, even where research has clearly established that a large-scale geologic disaster is imminent (in the geologic time frame of 80 to 100, or more, years), that research has not been heeded by many residents (Rød, Botan and Holen, 2011; 2012a; 2012b), possibly because their sense-making time frame does not extend that long.

Attribution Theory

Background of Attribution Theory

Attribution theory (cf. Kelley, 1967; 1973; Weiner, 1992) is a conceptual kissing cousin to sense-making but it comes out of a different era and tradition, so it provides quite different tools for SC. Attribution theory is the older of the two, with writers frequently tracing the theory back to Heider (1958) (as they sometimes do with coorientation). It developed as a social psychology theory in the positivist tradition to explain the cognitive functions people engage in to explain (make sense of) behavior. On the other hand, sense-making comes out of the constructivist interpretivist tradition and seeks to explain how people construct their own realities. Finally, attribution theory is slightly narrower than sense-making in that it explains only how people attribute motivation to others, while sense-making is concerned with the whole range of sense-making behaviors and not just how sense is made of others' behaviors.

Concepts of Attribution Theory

The most important applications of attribution theory to SC will be discussed under two key hypotheses that have been generated in attribution theory work, so this account of the basic ideas of attribution theory is kept deliberately short (see also Figure 25). Attribution theory essentially says that human beings make attributions about the motivations behind behaviors so that they can understand what causes those behaviors. The primary attribution made is whether the motivation is internal or

Attribution

Attribution theory seeks to explain behavior by attributing it to internal motivators such as attitudes, or external motivators such as situational constraints. The fundamental attribution error explains one reason publics sometimes attribute more negative motives to organizational behaviors than organizational members expect. The self-serving bias helps explain why those organizational members are sometimes shocked by how their behaviors and statements are interpreted.

Subfields commonly using	Marketing, advertising, crisis communication, corporate reputation, leadership
Application	Medium high to high
Compatibility with cocreational	Medium high
Guidance	Medium to medium high
Difficulty	Medium

Figure 25 Attribution theory

external: whether behaviors are motivated by internal attitudes or by external constraints. For example, if publics see a utility company that has ignored them for years suddenly start communicating with them a lot, they will likely attribute the changed behavior to some internal motive. The public might attribute the sudden change in behavior to an internal motive such as preparing the ground for a coming rate hike or regulatory filing.

Attribution theory clearly has something in common with sense-making because both address how people construct explanations of what is happening in their environment. Someone who feels most comfortable with a traditional social sciences view of the world may find attribution theory to be more useful than sense-making. Someone who is most comfortable with a more interpretivist or constructivist view of the world will probably find sense-making more useful.

Applications of Attribution Theory

Attribution theory has been applied across many subfields, including marketing, advertising, political communication and crisis communication. For example, Laczniak, DeCarlo and Ramaswami (2001) reported on two studies that used attribution theory to test the effects of negative word of mouth advertising on consumers' brand evaluations. They found that when receivers (publics) attributed negative word of mouth comments to the brand, their evaluation of it went down, but when they attributed it to the communicator, evaluation of the brand went up. This is just one of the many kinds of situations in which attributions by publics can completely reverse the effects of a message and is one reason why *SC practitioners should never limit their strategic thinking to messages or channels but first find out what publics think about the sponsor and the context of the message. Only then should they turn to message construction.*

Attribution theory was also used by Settle and Golden (1974) in two experiments to study what attributions consumers make about the content of advertisements. They started by saying:

> Attribution theory states that the individual will attribute observable events to their underlying causes on the basis of covariance of cause and effect. An event will be attributed to a cause that is present when the event is observed and absent when the event is not observed. The majority of attribution theory research has been conducted in social psychology but the theory appears to be applicable to the study of consumer behavior. (p. 181)

Settle and Golden found that the then conventional wisdom that advertisements should never say anything favorable about a competitor or anything unfavorable about one's own product might not be valid. Consistent with attribution theory, they found that "when superiority was disclaimed for some product characteristics, confidence increased" (p. 181) and value expectations did not go down. One explanation that could be important to SC practitioners would be that consumers have learned to expect only highly—sometimes absurdly high—positive claims in advertisements so when they hear more balanced claims they may attribute a higher level of honesty to the sponsor and therefore report greater confidence in that ad's sponsor than another's. Similarly, Sjovall and Talk (2004) applied attribution theory in studying corporate reputations.

Attribution theory has also been used in SC campaigns for workplace safety by DeJoy (1994), who reported that "actions to manage safety derive more from attributions than from actual causes" (p. 3). Coombs (2007) applied attribution theory as a guide for post-crisis communication research, and Weiner (2004) used it in a chapter on transforming cultural plurality into theoretical unity. Martinko, Harvey and Douglas (2007) reported that "attributions account for significant proportions of the variance in leadership behaviors" (p. 561). In political campaigns, Gomez and Wilson (2001) found

that voters with low sophistication tend to assume the US President controls the economy and therefore attribute responsibility there, while more sophisticated voters "understand that the economy is affected by many actors" (p. 899) and vote accordingly.

The two best-known hypotheses associated with attribution theory, fundamental attribution error and self-serving bias, may be the most useful parts of the theory for SC practitioners. These ideas are sometimes discussed in popular literature as if they were separate from attribution theory; however, they are actually hypotheses derived from attribution theory, although they have often been tested independently.

Fundamental attribution error This chapter will treat what is sometimes called actor-observer bias or actor-observer asymmetry and fundamental attribution error (FAE) as if they are two sides of the same coin, although the literature often treats them as separate ideas, and at least one source (Malle, 2006) used meta-analysis to challenge the existence of actor-observer bias. FAE and actor-observer bias seem to say roughly the same thing, but just start on different sides of the process.

Tetlock (1985) described the FAE as a tendency to overascribe the behaviors of others to internal motivations: "Previous attitude-attribution studies indicate that people are often quick to draw conclusions about the attitudes and personalities of others—even when plausible external or situational causes for behavior exist (an effect known as the over attribution effect or fundamental attribution error)" (p. 227). That is, we tend to attribute poor behavior by others to their poor attitude or bad motives and then hold them responsible for what they do, while at the same time we have an actor-observer bias in which we tend to attribute our own, or our "side's," poor behavior to external situational constraints. Thus, we excuse ourselves from part of the responsibility for our behaviors when we do not similarly excuse others. This is important to SC for at least two reasons. First, neither our clients nor we as SC practitioners can fully grasp how much our publics hold us responsible for things until we ask them. This is another reason SC should always begin with research. Even if we have done similar campaigns a hundred times, the publics and situations involved are always changing.

Second, remembering the caveat above, the attribution literature regularly takes what started as an individual cognitive theory about individuals and applies it to groups. For example, Laczniak, DeCarlo and Ramaswami (2001) and Settle and Golden (1974) applied FAE to consumers, and other authors to other groups that clearly qualify as publics. If both groups and individuals make attributions, the doors to potentially damaging or potentially positive effects in SC are opened. That is, right when a client or practitioner is seeing their own behavior as forced or required by situational factors, publics may be seeing it as internally motivated and a reflection of the client's attitude toward that public. This can create real problems because, if the public holds the client responsible for poor intentions while the client thinks they are in a no-choice situation, the client is likely to conduct a campaign that misses or even aggravates the concerns of key publics. BP comes to mind.

Ironically, the risk of such complications may be highest in the non-persuasive subfields, such as military public affairs and government health campaigns that are frequently based on assuming "if they only knew what we know they would make the same decision" (Gaudino, Fritsch and Haynes, 1989). Of course, if publics are questioning internal motivations and the client engages in a "here are the facts" campaign, it can confirm the original suspicions about motivation *and* appear that the organization is being paternalistic as well. SC in public health and social marketing, for example, is based largely on knowing the best available science or medicine and, for institutional ethical and sometimes legal reasons, seeking only to inform publics about those facts. When confronted with a lack of success, health communicators sometimes assume that if publics simply knew and

understood the facts, those publics would make more appropriate decisions. So when publics do not make the *right* decision, the fundamental attribution error can lead health communicators to assume that a more attention-grabbing or louder campaign is needed. At the same time, publics may be attributing other motives to that behavior, such as paternalism, so from their point of view they may just hear louder paternalism. I have worked with at least a hundred different health communicators on SC campaigns and cannot remember a true paternalist in the lot, but that does not matter if publics attribute paternalism to health communicators because publics respond to their own attributions rather than the client's intentions.

Actor-observer bias (also known as actor-observer asymmetry) is in some ways the other half of the fundamental attribution error. While the fundamental attribution error is about making too harsh a judgment about bad intentions in the behavior of others, the actor-observer bias involves making a correspondingly too soft judgment about one's own behaviors (cf. Cherry, 2017; Fiedler et al., 1995; Malle, 2006). Typically, this error involves recognizing situational constraints that make some behavior seem necessary when we are responsible, but then not recognizing such constraints when others do the same thing.

In SC, actor-observer bias has the potential to work both ways in any given situation. That is, publics and the client/employer will often tend to attribute worse intentions to the other's behaviors than the situation may warrant, and both will also have a tendency to attribute better intentions to their own behaviors than may be warranted. For example, when a company experiences an oil spill, it may see the spill as an accident, just bad luck. The publics who fish, own shore property or defend the environment may see the spill as primarily attributable to the greed of the company in not being willing to invest in safety and clean-up measures. Imagine how much damage the company could do to itself in the critical few hours after a spill if it launched a campaign based on its own attributions of cause, as BP did right after the Gulf of Mexico oil spill. Not only might publics continue to see the company as much more responsible for the spill, but they may also interpret the company's SC campaign as attempted blame shifting and denial of responsibility.

Self-serving bias Self-serving bias is the tendency to attribute success internally and failure externally (Duval and Silvia, 2002). Self-serving bias is seen to support the need for self-esteem in individuals, but Taylor and Doria (1981) found support for such a bias to serve both the self and the group. Findings confirm that the self-serving attribution bias is pervasive in the general population but demonstrates significant variability across age, culture and psychopathology:

> Researchers have suggested the presence of a self-serving attributional bias, with people making more internal, stable, and global attributions for positive events than for negative events. This study examined the magnitude, ubiquity, and adaptiveness of this bias. The authors conducted a meta-analysis of 266 studies, yielding 503 independent effect sizes. The average d was 0.96, indicating a large bias. The bias was present in nearly all samples. There were significant age differences, with children and older adults displaying the largest biases. Asian samples displayed significantly smaller biases (d = 0.30) than US (d = 1.05) or Western (d = 0.70) samples. (Mezulis et al., 2004, p. 711)

Self-serving bias has also been shown to affect consumer judgments. For example, when consumers use computers to help make choices about purchases, they "tend to blame computers for negative outcomes and tend to take personal credit for positive ones" (Moon, 2003, p. 125). Larwood and Whittaker (1977) suggested this bias means "people hold a variety of self-serving biases" at the

personal level and that if these were "extended to the organizational level it would lead to overly optimistic planning for the future" (p. 194, abstract).

One piece of advice for SC practitioners is to avoid the problem with conflicting attributions when possible by explaining the client's motives openly and honestly whenever the situation calls for it. Such explanations have to be, and appear to be, genuine, otherwise there is a risk of negative attributions being attached to this disclosure behavior. Once again, research to determine what attributions publics hold is the safest basis for such decisions.

Evaluation of Attribution Theory

Both FAE and actor-observer bias illustrate the need for a cocreational approach to SC because both are about how publics interpret and judge communication independently of what practitioners or clients hope or intend. Understanding FAE helps in seeing why "just get our story out there" is almost always a non-strategic decision; and often the wrong one. The organization and its publics can attribute very different motives to this behavior. Thus, attribution theory fits very well with a cocreational approach to SC.

Trust

Background of Trust

Trust is a widely applicable theoretical construct that can also offer strong support to a cocreational perspective, although it is not a theory per se. Trust has become a buzz term among advanced practitioners in marketing (e.g., Morgan and Hunt, 1994), internet transactions (e.g., Resnick and Zeckhauser, 2002), management (e.g., Gulati, 1995), organizational sciences (e.g., Botan and Frey, 1983; Kramer and Tyler, 1996), PR (Edelman, 2012), in SC (Botan and Taylor, 2005) and in a host of other fields.

Edelman, a PR and marketing firm, publishes the widely cited Edelman Trust Barometer each year. It surveys more than 30,000 people in 25 countries, many of whom are college educated and at upper income levels (Edelman, 2012) in subject areas across communication, business, marketing, PR and NGOs. Summaries of Edelman's findings are available to the public (Edelman, 2012; 2016). As one might expect, in the wake of the global financial crisis, in 2012 trust in CEOs, government and financial institutions continued to plummet. Most notably, according to Edelman, "the 2012 Edelman Trust Barometer sees an unprecedented nine-point global decline in trust in government in twelve countries" (2012, p. 1, executive summary).

Concepts in Trust

Trust is strongly supportive of a cocreational perspective because it focuses entirely on how publics think and feel about a client or referent (see Figure 26). However, trust is not really a single theory; it is more of a construct that has been approached in many different ways by different authors, although Yamagishi (2011) does speak of "the theory of trust" (p. 107).

The unifying element in all trust discussions is the idea of risking something into someone else's hands, of expecting an outcome that the person or institution being trusted can choose to deliver or not. In other words, how much we trust is a measure of how much we are willing to risk our own interest in the hands of others. Thus one important attribute of SC is how trustworthy both the campaign and the sponsor are perceived to be.

Trust

Trust focuses on the idea of risking one's well-being into the hands of others. Thus, in SC, trust can be used to assess the meanings publics cocreate about the relationship between a client and its publics, both before and during SC campaigns, so it is a highly cocreational construct. The specific components of trust, and the measurement techniques used, vary widely. Thus, although many SC practitioners worldwide are familiar with the concept, each may have slightly different meanings when referring to it.

Subfields commonly using	Marketing, advertising, health, corporate reputation, management and leadership, online commerce, interpersonal and organizational communication
Application	High to medium high
Compatibility with cocreational	High
Guidance	Medium high
Difficulty	Medium to medium low

Figure 26 Trust theory box

Although trustworthiness is usually thought to be an attribute of the source of a message, it can also be an attribute of messages themselves. For example, many years ago Frey and I undertook a study titled, "Do workers trust labor unions and their messages?" (Botan and Frey, 1983), in which we compared the levels of trust in labor unions as an entity versus the messages labor unions send to their members. We found that union messages were more trusted by their own members than was the union as an organization. Thus, trust can be assessed separately for organizations as entities and for the messages they send their publics, so it is possible that a message can be trusted but not the sender or that the sender may be trusted but not a specific message. This finding suggests that it is possible for generally trusted organizations to send messages to their publics that are not trusted at all, or vice versa.

Trust is a ubiquitous concept that is important in all kinds of human transactions from the personal and family kind right up to international relations. For example, Dasgupta (1988) said, "trust is central to all transactions and yet economists rarely discuss the notion" (p. 49). Botan and Taylor (2005) went further, saying:

> Trust is also a foundation of civil society because communities cannot function without it (Friedman, 1996; Misztal, 1996: Murphy, 2002). Tonkiss et al. (2000) identified trust, norms, and networks as the key elements that underpin social and economic relations. Every social interaction, from crossing a street to using an elevator, purchasing products, or exchanging services, is based on an implicit assumption of trust in others, or at least in the messages one receives about those others and their intentions, capabilities, and dependability. When low levels of societal trust persist citizens may have difficulty communicating and cooperating and the ultimate prospect for a civil society diminishes. Therefore, the authors do not assert that trust in channels of communication is just a constituent part of civil society but rather that such trust is a foundation of civil society that can be understood and studied through both interpersonal and mediated channels. (p. 687)

Measurement of Trust

As Bhattacherjee (2002) acknowledged, "empirical research in this area has been beset by conflicting conceptualizations of the trust construct" (p. 211). Some sources cited here and under "Applications of Trust" have used two dimensions to measure trust, but most use three or more, so trust is what is called a multidimensional concept. My own approach to measuring trust in organizations (Botan and Frey, 1983) and in nation building, another important subfield of SC (Botan and Taylor, 2005), will serve as an illustration.

My approach to trust uses a 27-item modification of the three-dimensional construct of Giffin (1967a; 1967b; 1968; 1969) and Giffin and Patton (1971). Giffin and Patton's pioneering work was in trust at the interpersonal level but, with a few modifications, I have used their scale across organizational and national contexts. Given the cleanliness of item loadings and the explained variance, their original construct appears to be applicable across a variety of contexts and levels.

A *dimension* in survey instrument parlance means a subpart of a bigger idea. Trust is too complex an idea to be effectively measured by a single idea so, following Giffin and Patton's lead, I used the three dimensions of *character, expertness* and *dynamism*. All three refer to publics' assessment of information sources or information itself. As Taylor and Botan (2005) said about trust in Bosnia and Herzegovina shortly after the terrible ethnic cleansing there:

> The first dimension, character, refers to perceptions of the intentions of the referent toward respondents. Giving this dimension increased weight seemed appropriate in a situation in which hundreds of thousands are still displaced refugees due to ethnic cleansing. The second dimension, expertness, refers to perceptions of the knowledge and expertise of the referent. The third dimension, dynamism, refers to perceptions about the degree of activity of the referent or the likelihood that the referent can be trusted to give the effort necessary to be trustworthy. Reliability for the overall scale was alpha = .96; for the three subscales, it was character, .92; expertness, .93; and dynamism, .74.

In the Bosnia study we elected to weight character twice as heavily as the other two dimensions (i.e., 2 × character + 1 × expertness + 1 × dynamism = total trust). This yielded a scale with a range of 36–252. Giffin and Patton had also weighted the dimensions differentially but this is a judgment researchers must make based on theory and conceptual elements of the particular research project in question. We then simply divided the scale into three equal intervals for low trust, medium trust and high trust and used these to compare how much the SC channels in Bosnia-Herzegovinian society were trusted by gender, nationality, religion, political affiliation and so on.

Applications of Trust

Trust has been studied for many years but the period since about 1990 has seen an emphasis on trust in health communication, particularly in patient–physician communication and general medical care. In particular, since about 2000 the study of trust in online relationships and marketing has surged. Articles have reported studies of trust as a facilitator of online commerce (Bhattacherjee, 2002), of patient trust in primary care providers (Hall et al., 2002), trust in virtual communities (Ridings, Gefen and Arinze, 2002), how trust in organizations varies across seven nations (Huff and Kelley, 2003) and consumer trust (Sirdeshmukh, Singh and Sabol, 2002). Sichtmann (2007) used face-to-face interviewing and structural equation modeling to assess trust in a brand, and Frewer et al. (1996) studied what determines the perceived trustworthiness of information about food-related risks.

Evaluation of Trust

Figure 26 shows an assessment of the concept of trust, a highly cocreational construct, and the many contexts in which it arises.

Although not concerning a theory per se, this chapter closes with a brief discussion of the very important theoretic issue of whether SC should be persuasive or informative. This artificial distinction sometimes causes SC practitioners and scholars to not even recognize fellow practitioners and practices.

Persuading versus Informing

Some limit the definition of persuasion to efforts where a conscious persuasive intent exists before any communication takes place. Others define persuasive communication as any that has a persuasive impact on receivers whether intended or not. Of course, the former is a sender-centered, rather than cocreational, view of persuasion, while the latter only includes publics (those impacted) by how much they are impacted, and thus is not very cocreational. From a cocreational perspective, persuasive communication is defined by how publics perceive and respond to SC campaigns, so both intended and unintended persuasive effects are included.

Both one-way and two-way—monologic and dialogic—communication can be used to inform, just as both can be used to persuade. Thus, dialogic communication can be persuasive or non-persuasive and informative communication can also be persuasive or non-persuasive. For example, speeches are primarily one-way and can be persuasive or informative, while interpersonal discussions are typically more dialogic but can also be either persuasive or informative. Persuasive vs. non-persuasive SC is the issue here (Figure 27), while dialog vs. monolog was discussed in Chapter 4.

Non-Persuasive and Persuasive Subfields

Several subfields of SC typically seek to avoid being overtly persuasive. Some of these specifically avoid using subfield names like advertising, political communication or public relations, even when engaging in practices that are indistinguishable from them. Instead they call themselves by other names in an attempt to distance themselves from the core persuasive function often associated with advertising, political communication and PR. Such subfields are sometimes parts of government and are required by either law or custom to eschew the term "public relations" and to downplay the fact that they are engaged in persuasion. Others engage in practices that are indistinguishable from marketing communication but avoid the term marketing. These practices are nevertheless very clearly examples of SC as it was defined in Figure 2.

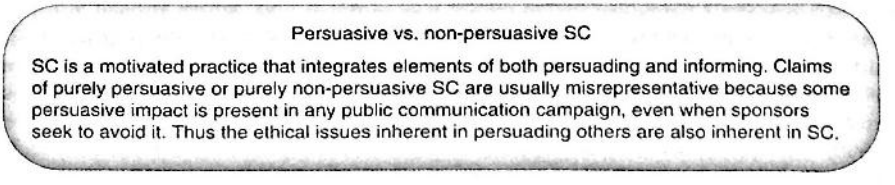


Figure 27 Persuasive vs. non-persuasive SC

Background of non-persuasive SC The history behind this tendency, according to Turney (2009), began with respect to the subfield of PR in 1913, with the Gillett amendment:

> several special interest groups and political activists were beginning to express public concerns about the appropriateness of government agencies being involved in public relations, and particularly their attempts to influence legislative decisions. So, they began lobbying Congress in an attempt to have strict limits placed on government spending for public relations. Much of the impetus for this came from lumber-related big business interests that resented the public relations success of the U.S. Forest Service ... Additional pressure arose because of partisan political rivalries, and still more pressure came from political activists who promoted vague and general fears that a government public relations activity could be perverted into a propaganda machine that would manipulate public opinion. As a result, what's now known as the Gillett Amendment was added to the statute that created the Interstate Commerce Commission ... Although it's now often described as a ban on government public relations, that's not what the Gillett Amendment started out to be. It didn't prohibit government public relations; it simply said: "Appropriated funds may not be used to pay a publicity expert unless specifically appropriated for that purpose."

Turney went on to list some of the substitute terms for PR (most of which are applicable to all the core SC subfields and many secondary SC subfields) that appear just in federal job titles. Within a matter of a few years, and even more so today, a search of the job titles used in almost every federal government agency will reveal absolutely no political communication or public relations listings, and typically no marketing communication listings. There are, however, multitudes of

public information officers,
public information specialists,
public affairs managers,
public affairs officers,
publication specialists,
communication specialists,
community facilitators,
community relations coordinators,
constituent liaisons,
client relations managers,
and dozens of other types of communication specialists. (Turney, 2009)

In addition to these federal job titles, state, local and county government have many, many other terms for SC.

In 1948, Congress passed the Smith-Mundt Act (amended in 1972 and 1985). It was updated in the Smith-Mundt Modernization Act of 2012, which Armstrong (2012) says "removes the prohibition on public diplomacy material from being available to people within the United States," observing that "Smith-Mundt applies only to the State Department and the Broadcasting Board of Governors." Thus the Act still applies to the State Department and projects such as Voice of America and the US Information Agency, known as USIA. According to Armstrong (2008; 2012), that Act, which was originally intended to promote one kind of (persuasive) SC outside the US, has been interpreted to

limit some kinds of persuasive government SC within the US, but the new provisions in the Modernization Act appear to support Armstrong's view, suggesting that the Act does not apply to the US military and most other departments of government unless the courts or an authorized administrative body chooses to change this.

Health communication, which is often but not always government sponsored, also typically avoids the term SC, as well as terms associated with subfields such as PR. Instead, these thousands of practitioners are most often referred to as social marketers, community education or health education specialists. Andreasen (1995) defined the goal of social marketing as voluntary behavior that target audiences engage in for improving their own and society's welfare. As an activity seeking behavior change, social marketing is clearly an out-and-out case of persuasion. Other types of organizations that eschew the term SC (or major subfields) but nevertheless conduct SC campaigns, some persuasive and some not, include non-profits, charities and religious organizations. Marketing communication appears to be more open to using terms such as SC.

Academic non-persuasive SC In addition to practitioner differences with respect to whether SC is or should be persuasive, academics in at least the PR subfield have engaged in the same debate since the early 1980s when J. Grunig (1984; 1989) introduced the two-way symmetrical model of public relations. He saw this as a more ethical and effective alternative to what he called persuasive or two-way asymmetrical PR. Symmetrical advocates feel that "understanding ... is the principal objective of public relations rather than persuasion" (Grunig and Grunig, 1992, p. 289). This symmetrical theory later provided the foundation for the excellence theory, suggesting that, while persuasion could be used in excellent organizations, non-persuasive campaigns are still to be preferred. Pfau and Wan (2005) disagreed, however, saying, "The truth is that the continuing controversy over whether public relations should operate from a two-way symmetrical or asymmetrical model is a classic 'straw man,' which has stunted public relations scholarship. There is no single best approach, and attempts to suggest otherwise fly in the face of reality" (p. 105). In the PR subfield the vast bulk of practitioners, and a substantial majority of theorists, continue to treat their part of SC as a fundamentally persuasive endeavor, as argued by Pfau and Wan and by Miller (1989), while some other subfields, such as health communication, continue to treat their part of SC as anything but persuasive. To complicate matters, the subfields of SC that see themselves as charged with informing or educating publics rather than being persuasive are actually often highly persuasive, and those that overtly seek to persuade often first seek to inform as a means to persuade. Recall that being persuasive can be either a matter of intent or of impact on others.

Virtually all overtly persuasive efforts include some elements of educating or informing. From the salesperson who explains the features of a used car, to the politician who provides data or graphs to the charity fundraiser that show the numbers of starving children to increase dissonance (cf. Festinger, 1957) and contributions: all inform to persuade. In fact, in teaching persuasive speaking, all of these are grouped together under the title proofs. Conversely, non-persuasive efforts at informing or educating typically seek to achieve some level of behavior change. From the public school teacher explaining the healthy eating food pyramid to a public health campaign educating a community about the dangers of smoking, all are attempts to persuade publics to change their behavior.

SC as a motivated practice SC is a motivated practice (see also Chapter 2). This means clients engage in campaigns because they want to get something (Botan, 1993c). Corporations, government bodies, even non-profits, charities and religious bodies only commit time and money to communication campaigns because they want something that they think is important enough to justify the expenditure. Thus, they use SC campaigns to pursue persuasive goals. Take, for example, the public

health communicators that define themselves as social marketers. Their end goal is almost always the reduction of morbidity and/or mortality and this typically requires behavior change. Because many of the medical threats they hope to reduce are generated or exacerbated by lifestyle practices, their goal is often to persuade publics to change the way they live.

Virtually all planned communication efforts, even those that are officially non-persuasive, have persuasive impacts on publics for several reasons. First, by choosing what topic to discuss, these campaigns influence or determine what topics publics will think about (cf. McCombs and Shaw, 1972, on agenda-setting). Second, by exercising the power to define the problem, they are highly persuasive.

Third, and often most important, they usually also exercise the power to define the cause of a problem. The campaign against smoking is an outstanding example. Although defined as a public health issue, most anti-smoking campaigns in the US focus on altering individual smoking behavior. Thus, they imply that the cause of this multibillion dollar public health problem is the practices of individual smokers, rather than government subsidies to the tobacco industry, said by the Environmental Working Group (2012) to have totaled $1.5 billion between 1995 and 2012, or the corporate profit interest that leads to the continued manufacturing of cigarettes (see also Salmon, 1989).

Fourth, humans are persuasive to one degree or another almost all the time, and the more sophisticated we become, the more persuasive we are. For example, at the non-verbal level people choose their clothes, hairstyle and even cars in part to persuade others to see them in a certain way. Some choose a car to communicate their affluence and others to play it down. Some dress to show off sexuality and others to play it down, some get hair plugs or do combovers while others do not, and so on. Fifth, and finally, one of the most fundamental aspects of persuasion is to provide new information that alters previous ideas. Indeed, this is the essence of the beliefs component in the traditional beliefs-attitudes-behavior model of persuasion in which one changes behaviors by first changing attitudes toward a referent which, in turn, are changed by first changing beliefs (assessments of what is or is not) through new information.

When all is said and done, it is hard to argue that there is really a distinction between information and persuasion. Those that seek to inform typically have, and often actually seek, persuasive outcomes and those that seek to persuade often do so by sharing new information. As Pfau and Wan (2005) concluded about one subfield, "public relations is best viewed as a form of strategic communication, in which persuasion plays an integral role" (p. 102). Therefore, this discussion of basic theories focuses on the theories that are most widely applicable in SC regardless of whether one's approach is to be persuasive or not. From the cocreational perspective, being strategic means *publics* drive the decision of when and how much to use persuasive or informative tools. Determining which tools to use before researching publics, the issue, or the relationship with them, is distinctly non-strategic.

Persuasive and non-persuasive SC should not be confused with dialogic (two-way) and monologic (one-way) communication, although some SC authors tend to conflate the two issues. As cited earlier, "dialogue manifests itself more as a stance, orientation, or bearing in communication rather than as a specific method, technique, or format" (Botan, 1997, p. 192). In the SC subfield of public relations, Kent and Taylor (2002) refer to dialogue as "dialectic," "discourse," and a "process" (p. 21), observing that several (e.g., Botan, 1993b; 1996; 1997; Kent and Taylor 1998; 2002; Pearson, 1989d; Pfau and Wan, 2005) have discussed dialogic PR practices.

7

Risk and Preparedness Communication

Summary

Risk and preparedness communication is used to help publics avoid, or at least mitigate, disasters, emergencies and crises. Thus, risk and preparedness communication is fundamentally strategic in its purpose, although some practitioners and organizations still try to treat risk communication at a tactical-level of understanding and practice. Risk communication is the broadest of these concepts, addressing all communication about both naturally occurring and human-caused threats, including public policy, while preparedness more specifically addresses how to avoid or mitigate such risks. Strategic communicators in this area not only work under a host of titles, they are also often given specific instructions about what to say and how to say it from various organizational authorities who have little or no training in communication or the ethical issues involved in communicating with publics in risk situations.

Introduction

Whether using mouthwash to avoid bad breath or saving for retirement we spend much of our daily lives immersed in dealing with risk and risk information. So it is little wonder that, like the proverbial fish swimming in water that may not think of itself as being wet, risk communication has become such a normal part of our lives that we may not even notice it. Some kinds of risk communication get special designations such as national preparedness and anti-terrorism (see Chapter 10), or combating epidemic diseases, that can make it hard to see what characteristics they have in common and how they differ.

There are many non-communication approaches to risk management, such as buying an insurance policy or quarantining those with an infectious disease, but this book focuses on strategic communication. Thus, this chapter examines the use of SC to communicate about risk and threats to public safety of various kinds by discussing the differences between the two poles in risk communication, the instrumental and the cocreational views. Unlike Chapter 5, where some similar matters were mentioned in the context of responding to crises, this chapter addresses the strategic management of risk.

Risk communication has most often been practiced as an instrumental endeavor, with those who have particular knowledge or positions telling others what to do or not to do, and then measuring compliance. For example, Edwards et al. (2000) did not specifically define risk communication but clearly indicated an instrumental bias in their medical perspective, saying the objective was "to assess whether risk-communication interventions are associated with changes in patient knowledge,

Strategic Communication Theory and Practice: The Cocreational Model, First Edition. Carl H. Botan.

attitudes, and behaviors, and to identify aspects of these interventions that modify these effects" (p. 290). Others are less hierarchical about the roles of the parties in the relationship, such as North (1995), who said,

> Risk communication is the process by which the results of risk assessment and risk management are communicated to decision-makers and the public. Adequate risk communication is essential in explaining official policies to stakeholders ... Risk communication must also be a two-way process, with the concerns of stakeholders being heard by officials and addressed adequately. (p. 913)

Cohrssen and Covello (1989) also said of the parties in a risk communication relationship, "parties convey, transmit, or exchange information about levels of health or environmental risks" (p. 4). More current definitions, such as Covello and Milligan (2010), continue to represent these two poles, sometimes reflecting a stance that is a little more cocreational.

The pattern that may be emerging seems to reflect two observations. First, there has been a fairly clear swing toward more two-way and inclusive views of the role of publics in risk communication among those preparedness professionals who are communication specialists, particularly in the health communication subfield. Second, the view of risk and preparedness communication among most of those planning and conducting responses to risks, including incident commanders, technical experts, political leaders and others, remains instrumental and guided by often unexamined common sense or lay theories. Nowhere is this clearer than at the top levels of government, as clearly reflected in the emergency operations plans that state governments throughout the US operate under and under which the federal government provides funding to states. The overall assumption of these, as will be discussed, is that the authorities know what is best for publics and, thus, should control all flows of risk information. This might be called the information god model of risk communication.

Parting from these top-down views of risk communication, this chapter covers (1) a cocreational perspective on risk and risk communication, including the content and relationship components in all SC including risk communication and a cocreational definition and formula for risk communication, and (2) traditional preparedness communication and the risk planning that seek to reduce risk, its causes, and how that communication is understood by publics, as well as the common underlying assumption of rationality. An emerging risk communication specialty, terrorism and counterterrorism communication, is then examined in a separate chapter (Chapter 10).

The Cocreational View of Risk Communication

The generic model for risk used across many fields is Risk = P × M (Figure 28), where P is the probability of an event happening or not happening and M is the magnitude of the impact should it occur. For example, this is the underlying calculation used to determine the price of insurance policies. In terms of financial risk, if the probability of an issue reaching a stage where it could cost the organization $10,000 (M) is only 1 in 20 (P = 0.05), that organization probably should not spend thousands of dollars in staff time addressing the issue in its embryonic stage. If, on the other hand,

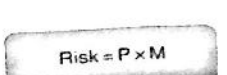


Figure 28 Generic risk formula 1

the magnitude of possible damage is $15 million, spending the same few thousand dollars addressing it as early as possible makes good sense because M has changed, even if P has not.

One problem with the generic formula is that it is intended for use across a number of fields, some of which are not concerned with publics as a meaning-creating force. In fact, it makes no room for human emotions or relationships at all. A second problem with this generic formula is its implicit assumptions. By considering only the technical issues of probability and magnitude, this formula implies to some that what humans think and feel is not a defining attribute of risk or, at least, that it is no more than a small subpart of either P or M that does not warrant discussion. This is one of the times SC practitioners have an obligation not to turn against experience or organizational rank, but still to explain some of the SC body of knowledge about publics. It is a little ironic that SC practitioners in for-profit product promotion are sometimes listened to more readily than those in government agencies, suggesting that those in for-profit industries can be more concerned with how their publics think and feel than those assigned to protect the lives and well-being of those publics.

A cocreational view of risk suggests that risk is first and foremost a human experience, so the meanings publics cocreate about risk are very important. By considering only probability and magnitude, the generic model does not allow for the greater vulnerability of the weak, very old, very young and ill-prepared, among others. It also does not allow for the fact that overall risk can be increased or decreased by the understandings and decisions of publics.

So, as useful as this generic model of risk has been, it does not account for the central role of publics in SC relationships. An SC-specific model is needed to complement the generic risk model. Fortunately, the heavy lifting involved in creating such a model was done more than two decades ago by Sandman (1993a; 1993b; 1998) and others, much as Crable and Vibbert (1985) had done for the leading role of publics in issues, and as Vasquez (1993; 1995) had done for the internal functioning of publics. What Sandman (unfortunately) calls outrage is really the meanings cocreated by publics. But there are stepping-stones, the two components in all communications, content and relationship, to discuss before beginning to address an SC-specific risk communication model.

Two Components of All SC

In spite of the fact that risk communication practitioners are almost always motivated by the genuine desire to help and to protect, the things they actually say and do sometimes feel to publics like a parent telling a young child how to behave. This results partially from the fact that, like all communication, every risk communication has two components, an explicit content component and an often implicit relationship component. The latter component of all SC communication can generate trust or distrust, resistance or support, and sometimes anger even when particular risks are successfully managed. These two components of all communication come from Watzlawick, Beavin-Bavelas and Jackson's often cited second axiom of communication from 1967 which says that every communication has a content and relationship aspect such that the latter classifies the former and is therefore a metacommunication (Watzlawick, Beavin-Bavelas and Jackson, 2011, p. 35). This means, according to Coates (2009), that

> Each person responds to the *content* of communication in the *context* of the relationship between the communicators. The word meta-communication is used in various ways ... but Watzlawick uses it to mean the exchange of information about how to interpret other information. Just as the interpretation of the words "What an idiot you are" could be influenced by the following words "Just kidding," it could also be influenced by the relationship between the

> communicators. In the example given, the word "idiot" might be accepted quite happily from a close friend, but convey an entirely different meaning in other circumstances. (Axiom Two)

For SC this means that in every communication with publics there are two parts. First, the content of what is said. Publics often want this content to include technical information but seldom want it limited to that. Second, the relationship that the sender assumes between the parties is implicit in the message. The content is the actual words and the agreed-to meanings of those words, and it is too often the sole focus of government and expert communication. This content is usually verbal meaning it is made up of either written or spoken content. The non-verbal component of messages, on the other hand, carries critical information about how the sender sees the relationship, regardless of whether they intend to communicate this information or whether they even realize that they are communicating it. Senders are usually not aware they are communicating this information so they typically cannot control it well. Publics may be consciously aware or unaware that they are "hearing" this extra dimension of a message because people process much of the non-verbal communication at the non-conscious level as well.

Non-verbal aspects of SC include such simple but powerful cues as practitioners not communicating when publics think they should, failure to observe expected rituals or honorifics, sarcasm, interrupting or failing to take turns, the use of terms like compliance or obey, use of overly technical terms and other implicit messages about how they see the relationship between practitioners and their publics.

For example, when a physician or health communicator uses the term *compliance* to describe what publics decide in response to their communications about a threat to health, they are assigning to publics a subordinate role in their relationship, irrespective of any other content in their message. They are also assigning themselves the role of information gods in relation to their publics. Sometimes a failure to "comply" is not about the medical or technical information. Sometimes it is just about not complying with the relationship the campaign sponsor is implicitly calling on publics to accept. A surprising percentage of even experienced experts in risk and preparedness, many of whom are quite sensitive to any relational cues in what their boss, or a university professor, says, are pretty relationship deaf when it comes to their relationships with their own publics. *Make no mistake that publics both want and need accurate technical or medical information in many situations*, but many of them are unwilling to pay the relational price some risk, preparedness and emergency communicators seem to want in exchange. It might be wise to start with public health communicators simply banishing the word compliance from their vocabularies.

The real challenge for SC practitioners comes from the fact that publics often process the relational content of a message at the non-conscious level. This is part of why the relational component is usually processed first and then, consciously or unconsciously, serves to frame how the content part of the message will be understood. So while a person or group may process one word at a time, they may also process many, many relational cues in the same period of time and then use those to decide how to process the few words involved, with the result that the relational part of a message often simply overwhelms the content component.

One useful analogy might be to think of this relationship between content and relationship in SC messages as a kind of information highway. The content is usually verbal (words), moving back and forth along a one-lane road. The road is one-lane because we usually have to attend to each word or group of words one at a time, and take turns speaking or listening. Thus, processing the content component of SC communication can be a rather slow process. At the same time, there is a multi-lane expressway running between the parties, over which relational cues, that are largely non-verbal, are whizzing back and forth past one another. This road has multiple lanes because people usually do

not have to stop to consciously process each relational cue one at a time. In fact, with a lifetime of experience behind them, people often process such cues in a holistic manner, using several together to get an overall feeling rather than discrete meanings of individual pieces.

Too often, risk communicators act as if they are, and publics should be, free of emotion or subjectivity in communication. Such a view, whether expressed in the content or relational components of communication, may be a large part of why Sandman wrote so much about what he called outrage in risk communication.

Social-Emotional Dimension of Risk

Risk, as defined by Sandman's (1993a; 1993b) often quoted definition, is the actual hazard that is present *plus* the amount of anger, fear or concern ("outrage") of the involved individuals and publics. Hazard, according to Sandman, is the amount of actual danger, and its assessment is achieved by the traditional multiplication of probability (P) and magnitude (M) as before. That is, how likely it is that something will happen is multiplied by how bad it will be if it does happen.

In adding a social-emotional dimension to thinking about risk, Sandman made a seminal contribution to understanding a cocreational view of risk (and all of SC, for that matter) because he ascribed to publics a previously unacknowledged independent role in risk communication in which publics cocreate the meaning of a risk for themselves by including in it a non-technical, social-emotional dimension. So the actual formula for risk following Sandman's model would be risk = (probability × magnitude) + outrage (O). It can also be expressed as risk = hazard (H) + outrage (Figure 29).

However, the term outrage carries some unfortunate baggage by associating publics with angry emotionalism when confronted with a risk. This may imply to some that publics have *only* calculated or outraged responses to risk situations. What publics bring to the table is a more human understanding of risk, with both emotionalism *and* calculated rationality involved in that more human perspective. Sandman used the term outrage as a partial expression of the role of cocreation by publics, so a better term for his component might be the *social-emotional dimension* of risk that includes outrage but goes well beyond it.

The social-emotional component of risk is intimately related to an issue's life cycle stage in that as one increases the other tends to also. As an issue moves along its timeline, more publics not only become aware of it but are also ready for a decision because of their calculated and social-emotional concern, so they begin to demand a decision. Thus, as the stage of an issue advances so do the social-emotional aspects as well as the P × M calculation. My practice years convinced me that as the stage of an issue advances, the social-emotional component often skyrockets, although at the time I did not fully understand the role of publics in this. Thus, at least for this discussion, the social-emotional component of risk can be thought of as reflected in the stage to which publics decide to take a given issue, so a risk model specific to strategic communication should include the stage (S) of an issue in its life cycle.

Cocreational Model of Risk Communication

Recall from Chapter 5 that in SC social meaning cocreation by publics is the most powerful component in the organization–public relationship, in part because it is the primary determinant of the

Figure 29 Sandman's model of risk

$$R = (P \times M) + O$$
or
$$R = H + O$$

life-cycle stage of an issue. This in turn influences the other parts of the relationship and, therefore, the risk an issue carries for the organization, in at least three ways: (1) how many publics are concerned and/or angry, (2) the level of anxiety attached to the perceived probability and magnitude of the threat and (3) the number of strategic options still available to the organization because at each new stage of an issue's development fewer and fewer strategic options are available.

Strategic communication, then, needs a new model focusing on the reality that the stage publics determine an issue to be in is a significant determinant of the risk faced by an organization. A simple formula might look like $R = S_i \times (P \times M)$ (Figure 30), where the risk associated with an issue (R) is determined by its stage (S) with subscript 1 = embryonic, 2 = open, 3 = simple mature *or* lurking, and 4 = mature crisis stage, because as publics move an issue deeper into its life cycle, the risk associated with it becomes much greater. Thus stage, which includes the social-emotional dimension of risk, serves as a multiplier of the technical components of risk in determining overall risk. Conceptually, this model is not very different from Sandman's outrage model except that stage is a much broader idea than casual readers might understand outrage to be—although, to be fair, for Sandman outrage is also a broader concept than its label implies. The major difference in this model is that the stage of an issue is not just an equal part, as outrage was, but now becomes a multiplier for both probability and magnitude, even while recognizing that forces outside the control of publics or clients account for much of the probability and magnitude of any risk. Thus, it is unlikely that either precise probabilities or an acceptable scale of magnitude of potential damage could be known, but a hypothetical example can still help illustrate these relationships.

Suppose that probability and magnitude could both be put on a 0.00 to 1.00 scale, with higher scores indicating a greater probability or magnitude. Then the risk associated with an issue in the mature (but not crisis) stage, which has a 50 percent chance of happening (P = 0.50), and that is also halfway up the magnitude scale (M = 0.50), would be $3 \times (0.50 \times 0.50) = 3 \times 0.25 = 0.75$. Whereas the risk associated with an issue with P and M both at 0.75, but at the crisis stage, would be $4 \times (0.75 \times 0.75) = 4 \times 0.56 = 2.25$ on a scale where the highest possible risk would be $4 \times (1 \times 1)$, or 4.0.

It is important to remember that this is a cocreational model of risk so it is an attempt to explain the relationship of what publics think and do with other factors in risk *communication* situations (Figure 31). In this case the role of publics is expressed primarily through their influence over the stages in the life cycle of an issue that was discussed in Chapter 5. This model does not apply to assessing the probability of a landslide, earthquake or viral outbreak occurring, or how many lives they might take (where $R = P \times M$ probably works better).

Many risk communication practices emerge from the roles people enact as they prepare for crises. For example, in a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy that is consistent with their assigned roles, content experts, managers and government leaders often assume that the key to effective risk communication is for them to simply educate publics about the best available science or medicine. From their standpoint, the public's lack of knowledge about physical threats ($P \times M$) is the major obstacle to public safety. This perspective has been called the technical view in both risk and crisis communication (Fiorino, 1990) and that term can be used in a similar manner in SC.

$R = S_i \times (P \times M)$

Figure 30 Risk formula for strategic communication

Risk communication is *all* the communication within publics and between publics and organizations about actual and perceived risks.

Figure 31 Cocreational definition of risk communication

In contrast, publics often perceive their own lack of power or control in risk and crisis settings as a fundamental impediment to safety. From this standpoint, not knowing what officials may be doing, or not doing, is frightening and adds to anxiety and the sense of being at the mercy of yet another unknown. This latter perspective has been called the democratic view of risk and crisis communication (Fiorino, 1990). Thus information, and who has access to it, is important at both the content-expert level and the social-emotional level in risk communication.

Traditional Risk and Disaster Preparedness Communication

Various government and non-government organizations practice risk communication, although often under other names, among which are emergency communication, disaster communication, preparedness communication and readiness communication. Which term is used often depends more on who is doing the speaking, and what kind of organization they represent, than on any real differences in practice or scholarship. Traditionally, however, all these terms have been created and used to describe situations or practices from the perspective of the sender or organization. Little attention has been paid to the meanings publics cocreate in understanding and responding to such situations and practices. Brief summaries of these traditional views follow.

Emergency communication The term emergency communication is often associated with government-sponsored communication in response to declared emergencies such as when the US Federal Communications Commission (2016), in its very non-cocreational view of emergency communication, says

> There are three main components of emergency communications:
>
> 1. 911 call processing and delivery through Public Safety Answering Points (PSAP) and call dispatch;
> 2. The Emergency Alert System; and
> 3. Radio and/or broadcast or cable television station news and updates.

Disaster communication The term disaster communication is used by authors such as Tierney, Lindell and Perry (2001) to discuss "two key topics in the disaster field: pre-disaster planning and post-disaster emergency response activities" (p. 2). Here, pre-disaster planning overlaps with risk communication as it is discussed in this chapter.

Preparedness Communication

Preparedness communication is risk communication that focuses on making plans and preparations for handling both expected and unexpected risks. Nations prepare for earthquakes, war, combating terrorism and the like. Smaller units of government prepare for everything from floods to toxic spills on the highway and from snowstorms to political protests. Private organizations prepare for accidents, financial loss and bad conduct by leaders. Preparedness communication is often also associated with being ready for health or natural disasters, similarly to pre-disaster planning, such as in the form of making a plan or preparing an emergency kit of some kind. For example, ready.gov is one of the most popular of these kinds of websites in the US and has major sections called "Make a plan" and "Build a kit" (Ready.gov, 2014). In this sense, the term preparedness clearly overlaps with readiness communication.

Preparedness communication also includes all the plans and communication campaigns practitioners use to prepare for threats and disasters, both natural and human made, as well as all the communication and meaning cocreation that goes on internal to publics about how to prepare for risks. This last component is important because so much literature and practitioner training focuses on what professional practitioners should do to prepare for risks with, again, little or no consideration given to the cocreational role of publics. Publics may sometimes feel excluded from preparedness or even feel talked down to by risk communicators. This may be one reason why members of publics sometimes turn not to authorities but to each other to understand the realities of risks they face. Depending on each other allows publics to prepare themselves to act in their own best interests. Unfortunately, it also sometimes opens the door to conspiracy theories and extremist views, both of which thrive in situations where publics distrust risk communicators, such as the anti-vaccination movement discussed in Chapter 2.

Readiness communication The term readiness communication is not as widely used as other terms, possibly because it largely overlaps with the term preparedness. For example, the Centers for Disease Control (2014) has a web page dedicated to Ebola readiness, part of which discusses "risk communication" and reads like other pre-disaster planning and preparedness communication pages.

Terrorism communication Terrorism communication (discussed in Chapter 10) differs from other kinds of risk communication in that, although some regular risk communication campaigns do set out to generate a sense of risk (e.g., anti-smoking), the purpose is a positive outcome such as improving health and safety. Terrorism communication, on the other hand, sets out to generate a sense of risk, vulnerability and fear to achieve some political agenda rather than for any positive purpose. Nevertheless, risk communication still follows the molecular model of SC, with terrorists often times paying as much or more attention to Circles 5 and 6 in Figure 9 than do counterterrorism practitioners. They thus gain an advantage over counterterrorism communicators if these limit themselves to Boxes 3 and 4. Whether, or to what extent, the mass media help generate or proliferate the sense of danger and fear terrorists seek is a matter for mass media practitioners and scholars to address.

Some organizations seem to acknowledge and accommodate the obvious overlap in the traditional use of these terms by just using them fairly interchangeably. For example, the Center for Public Health Readiness and Communication (2016) at Drexel University says on its homepage that it provides "services and education in the field of public health emergency preparedness," and goes on to say that it seeks to build "capacity for disaster response" and has expertise in "crisis and emergency risk communication," thus getting the terms readiness, emergency, preparedness, disaster, crisis, and risk communication all into the first four sentences of its website.

The term an organization chooses to describe its risk, or crisis, communication may be important to that organization, and much effort may go into deciding why the chosen term is right for it. In the broader world of SC, however, which term is chosen becomes relatively unimportant—except for the fact that throwing slightly different terms around probably causes unnecessary confusion among publics, occasional turf battles, and wasted time. Thus, the Drexel program just cited might have struck on a good solution.

The Cocreational View

Although interchangeable terms can be confusing, the ones cited all have one thing in common. None of them focuses on the meanings publics cocreate in risky or emergency situations. Each either

defines the situation being faced, or addresses the kind of message content needed, based on the knowledge of experts about a particular situation.

To be clear, *there is no doubt that accurate expert message content about health, climate, terrorism, or the like is critically important.* But that information is not important by itself. It is important because of the meanings publics cocreate with that information. Thus a solely message-centered focus on risk communication can be counterproductive, even if it is completely accurate.

Using the terms as they were defined in Chapter 2, risk communication in general and health communication in particular may be among the most consistent users of theory in SC, although many of those theories appear to be lay and practice based theories, or even metatheoretic issues. Risk communication and health communication are probably among those most lacking in open debate and discussions about their underlying metatheories. Like the many generations who never thought about their assumption that the Earth was at the center of the solar system, much of risk communication practice and scholarship is conducted based on an unexamined worldview that places the risk communicator and, worse, their messages at the center of the risk and health communication universe.

When metatheories are brought to the conscious level and examined, some of those who have based a lifetime of practice or scholarship on them may feel threatened. Much risk communication is based on a metatheory that assumes, to some degree, that those who are experts in science or medicine are *thereby* the unchallengeable experts in risk communication relationships as well. So a cocreational perspective might cause a considerable level of discomfort for some. The assumption about the relationship between content experts, publics and who decides what risk communications actually mean is a metatheory. Like most metatheories, this metatheory used in risk communication, which might be called the "information god" view, is unrecognized and unchallenged by most practitioners, many academics and even some publics. Because the scientific and medical experts this metatheory empowers have not examined it as carefully as they examine their science, they can make simple communication mistakes and earn the distrust of, and sometimes even anger from, publics.

Of course, all risk and emergency communication experts seek to avoid conflicting and confusing messages about risky situations, although using different terms for what is essentially the same thing suggests that *avoiding confusion is not always their top communication priority.* On the other hand, organizational identity, for example, may in some cases be more important to them than the meanings publics cocreate. Little wonder then that some publics do not trust risk and emergency communication efforts even in the most dangerous situations. The meta-communication aspect of much risk communication, and particularly of much past risk communication from the same or similar authorities, may lead to confusion over the current content in risk messages regardless of how precisely and accurately these are worded. The cliché that the primary mission in risk-emergency-disaster-preparedness-environmental, etc., work is merely to provide "the best available science/medicine" suggests to many that risk communicators are just message centered (Boxes 3 and 4 in Figure 9) and that they value the role of information gods more than the role of partners in the meaning-making process.

Put another way, outward transmission of the best available science is only that, transmission. It ignores most of the relationship, and the fact publics will act, or not act, based on the meanings they cocreate. If a risk message generates confusion or anger among publics, it is providing anything but the best available science *for those publics.*

Of course, when faced with mass disasters like a hurricane or epidemic, and the reality of communicating with many publics at once, *experienced risk communicators know that there is often no time to tailor one's communication to each public* and know that providing enough detail to help one public may be providing enough detail to confuse the next public. In addition, experienced risk

communicators know that even the best thought-out messages can get mangled in the process of interpretation and reformatting by the mass or social media. For the most part, today's risk messages do a good job of striking a balance between being tailored or generic, and between being detailed or brief. Nevertheless, they maintain a decidedly instrumental bias and would be located well to the left on Figure 8.

Practitioners and authors sometimes also treat preparedness for natural disasters, medical issues, environmental threats and terrorism as distinct fields. This may be because of a focus on the different technical content needed for facing each kind of risk, or because of the different kinds and levels of agencies that may be charged with addressing each. Differences in content *are* important, but a message-centered understanding of any communication relationship misses many equally important matters related to the meanings publics cocreate and the relationship risk communicators share with their publics. From a cocreational perspective, where the focus is on the meaning making of publics, all forms of risk communication can be represented by the model in Figure 9 and the meanings the public start with in Circle 1 are as important in risk communication as the meanings risk practitioners start with in Box 3, while the meanings publics cocreate in Circle 6 are far more important.

Understanding Risk Analytically and Experientially

People understand risk in two fundamental ways according to P. Slovic et al. (2004): analytically, which uses probabilities and formal logic; and experientially, which uses intuition, is fast and mostly automatic, and not characterized by conscious awareness. The former matches up well with the content aspect of communication and the latter has some similarities with the relationship aspect. Thus, the analytic route to understanding risks may be most easily addressed through the content component of risk communication, while the experiential route to understanding risks can be addressed through both the content aspect (e.g., when scenarios are used) and the relational content in risk communication. Although less common these days, the tendency of some authorities and risk experts to present medical, environmental and other risk information just in the form of data may sometimes contribute to what S. Slovic and P. Slovic (2004) refer to as a numbing or apathetic reaction by publics if their needs are more experiential.

Rod, Botan and Holen (2012a) discussed the role of these analytic and experiential constructs by drawing on Hendrickx, Vlek and Oppewal's (1989) earlier idea of scenarios, which are narratives or stories. They suggested that combining social and technical components in risk messages might be a good strategy because it allows publics to use both kinds of information. They also reported that, while presenting scenarios in risk communication contributes to increased perceptions of risk, the presence of scenarios in risk communications also strongly suppresses the effect of analytic information, such as facts and data, so scenarios should be used with care. This analysis tends to support the inclusion of a subjective component in understanding risk and preparedness communication, as Sandman (1993a; 1993b) originally suggested by introducing the component he called outrage, and also argues for the importance of the subjective/emotional component in the meanings publics cocreate about risks.

This discussion of the rational/analytic and experiential sides of risk and preparedness communication is, in many ways, a rehash of a much older and larger metatheoretic discussion about the assumption of rationality, so that is discussed next, followed by a discussion of major preparedness plans.

Assumption of rationality Many theories of persuasion and persuasive communication are based on the assumption of rationality, as are many economic models. The assumption of rationality simply

means assuming that people are always rational in their decision-making; that they make decisions based solely on rational arguments that can often be presented in the form of logic, numbers or data. This is very handy when, for example, one wishes to create a nice precise mathematical formula to explain human behavior. This in turn allows those creating risk communication (or other kinds of SC) campaigns to avoid the fact that practitioners, clients and publics alike are not always rational. Recall from Chapter 3 that in its trademarked slogan the Institute for Public Relations says it is "dedicated to the science beneath the art of public relations™" (2017). Taken to its extreme, the assumption of rationality would basically eliminate the art part of this slogan.

Thus the assumption of rationality can be particularly problematic from the cocreational perspective because what clients and practitioners assume is rational may not be so in the eyes of publics, and vice versa. Not surprisingly, the assumption of rationality can also be an indicator of the instrumental worldview in SC in which the meanings a particular public cocreate can be ignored by simply assuming that all publics think the same way *and* specifically that they think the same way as the client and practitioner do. The fact that the client or practitioner may actually think very differently from their publics, or that whole cultures can differ about what is viewed as rational, is not allowed to get in the way. In other words, the assumption of rationality allows risk communicators to believe that publics will only cocreate meanings the practitioner believes they should—the old "*if they only knew what I know*" (Gaudino, Fritsch and Haynes, 1989) assumption. The assumption that the client has already arrived at the most rational decision, and that publics think and value in the same way clients do, also leads to the SC "strategy" that "we just have to get our story out better," sometimes adopted by government agencies such as those in military public affairs. The old *just get our story out* strategy may also explain part of why the spam-filtering software business seems to be booming.

The generic $R = P \times M$ model of risk is also a rational model. Just measuring or figuring out the probability of something happening, and how bad it would be if it happened, and risk managers will know the level of resources needed and the risk communicator know how to explain why a vaccination, for example, is necessary. Until, that is, our eager risk communicator runs into a room full of parents, each of whom is deeply concerned about the risk to their own young children. Then, as so often happens when risk and preparedness communicators focus too much on the content of their messages and not enough on the relational aspect, those publics may begin to doubt the values and intentions of that risk communicator. If that risk communicator then also resists discussing any factors outside their rational model, those doubts may be confirmed in the minds of publics.

Similarly, Murphy (2004) said that disaster constructionists see people's perceptions about risk as not necessarily based solely on objective environmental factors but also on socially constructed meanings. Factors like culture and ethnicity play out in this process and help produce well-documented variations in publics' risk perceptions and response actions (Homan, 2003; Mileti and Sorenson, 1990). For example, vulnerable publics like those with disabilities may have a different set of informational needs than other publics (Spence et al., 2007) and may cocreate different meanings than either less vulnerable publics or preparedness authorities.

None of this is to suggest that risk communicators should not be rational or not communicate accurate scientific or technical data. Being rational is part of what makes us human and the right to make rational decisions is, therefore, a right that risk communicators have an ethical responsibility to respect. But the social and emotional side of decision-making is also legitimate and an equal part of what makes us human, so it also is a right that has to be respected by SC practitioners.

Simply reporting scientific and technical information accurately does not meet the needs of, for example, the poorly educated, the illiterate, those who are semiliterate, or those under great emotional stress. This is not a trivial issue because in 2014, in the US alone, 32 million adults, 14 percent of the population, could not read and 21 percent of adults were reading below the 5th grade level, and

these rates had not gone up over the last 10 years (Huffington Post, 2014). More tellingly, 22 percent of US adults scored "below basic" in quantitative literacy in 2003 (National Center for Education Statistics, 2003), so many, if not most, of these may have a hard time reading line and bar charts or understanding scientifically expressed probabilities, exactly the kind of information often provided in risk communication. Even more confusing for many are all the qualifying statements often appended to technical information.

Thus risk and preparedness plans should be evaluated not just on technical grounds but also on relational grounds, which is what Botan and Penchalapadu set out to do in the study discussed next.

State Emergency Operations Plans

One example of risk and preparedness communication is the emergency plans most local and national governments have prepared. These plans usually include an SC component and they reflect the specific histories and resource levels of a given jurisdiction. Some make provisions for incorporating the meaning-making function of publics, at least at a rudimentary level, but most do not.

In a study of state-level preparedness communication, Botan and Penchalapadu (2009) evaluated all the available state-level emergency operations plans (EOPs) in the US for how closely they conformed to national risk and preparedness communication standards and how well they provided for two-way communication, which the authors viewed as a necessary but not sufficient condition for cocreational SC.

Emergency operations plans include protocols for managing emergencies and detailed actions to be undertaken in emergencies (Alexander, 2002; McLoughlin, 1985), as well as a snapshot of a jurisdiction's preparedness strategies (Perry and Lindell, 2003). Within the United States, state-level plans usually adhere fairly closely to the Robert T. Stafford Disaster Relief and Emergency Assistance Act (as amended in 2007), which specifies a number of components and responsibilities, including communication responsibilities, for jurisdictions seeking federal funds.

The Botan and Penchalapadu (2009) study used the presence of provisions for two-way communication within an EOP as an indicator of interest in, and respect for, the meanings publics cocreate. These authors reported that only three states, including Ohio (Ohio Emergency Management Agency, 2006), had provisions for substantive two-way communication in their EOPs. The authors concluded that state EOPs on the whole do not provide for substantial two-way exchanges with their publics in either the planning or responding stages of emergencies and this suggests much more of an instrumental than a cocreational approach to emergency planning, response and mitigation.

Some states made their EOPs publicly available, some redacted part of the content and a few even withheld their EOP from the public in the Botan and Penchalapadu (2009) study. Such a proclivity for withholding information from publics may result, in part, from the stereotypical view that publics cannot handle important information well. For example, Quarantelli (1960) explained that authorities sometimes let their concern about possible panic prevent them from informing the public about threats. From the point of view of publics, however, not knowing what officials may be doing or not doing can be both frightening and a relational cue indicating that authorities think of them as unable to handle accurate information. Thus, some risk and emergency communicators believe it is best to keep publics in a state of information dependency as a means of control, which publics often understand to be the case.

Multiple studies have documented that communication also plays a large role in preparing for and responding to unavoidable natural disaster as well as often avoidable human-caused environmental disasters. Preparing for such disasters involves traditional risk and preparedness communication, including in cases of natural and environmental disasters.

Natural Disasters and the Environmental Risks

Natural disasters such as landslides, earthquakes and hurricanes/typhoons are sometimes unpredictable while at other times there is plenty of warning. Traditional models of risk communication and preparedness are often well suited to such events but even with warnings years or decades in advance of the event, traditional approaches face many challenges. Rød, Botan and Holen (2011; 2012a; 2012b), in a series of three articles based on Rød's research, explained some of these challenges in relation to large-scale and completely predictable landslides.

Rød's study and the resulting articles investigated the publics' attitudes toward an imminent rockslide that is expected to create a tsunami much larger than one in the same area in 1934 that caused the deaths of 40 people. The study focused on the Norwegian expression "otte" which means worry about a rockslide resulting from experts' predictions that in Åknes, Norway, the side of a mountain containing from 0.6 to 1.9 billion cubic feet, or 18–54 million cubic meters, of rock will soon (in the geologic sense) break off and slide into a fjord. This will cause a tsunami that could, in the narrow confines of the fjord, be compressed up to an amazing 269 feet (82 meters) high when it hits the four villages in its path. The community of Hellesylt would be struck five minutes after the slide and Geiranger within 10 minutes after the slide (Rød, Botan and Holen, 2012a).

Rød developed the social support by narrative model, based in part on Bandura's (1986) social cognitive theory and Cialdini's (2001) principle of social proof. Social support by narrative is consistent with the experiential approach to risk communication and with cocreation of meanings by publics, because it is an example of members of a public creating their own meanings by using a mixture of current information, often in the form of testimony from experts, and the values and opinions of other members of the public, in asynchronous narrative form rather than synchronous discussion. Many members of that public reached decisions diametrically opposed to the intentions of experts and government risk communicators, another example of how cocreation of meaning differs from simple interpretation. Social support by narrative suggests that for the most effective risk communication, people who have actually experienced the threat, or who at least live in areas that have, are important assets.

Rød, Botan and Holen (2012b) found that, for the respondents living in the impact area of the potential tsunami, the more worried individuals are, the more likely they are to comply with evacuation orders, and that dialogue with experts significantly increased worry about the rockslides in a multiple regression ($p < 0.001$). However, distrust of experts was significantly inversely related to worry about rockslides ($p < 0.001$). Some, although by no means all, of that distrust of experts likely results from the relational content of government and expert communication, but whatever the source such distrust can cost many lives in natural disaster situations.

Human-Caused Disasters

Public health and safety risks also result from human behaviors but can be an even bigger threat to public safety than 80-meter tsunamis. Nowhere is this clearer than in the case of the risk communication challenges faced by the US Department of Energy in its management of the risks associated with nuclear energy and contaminated nuclear sites such as Rocky Flats and Oak Ridge.

For example, the risks in transporting and storing nuclear waste materials are highly technical, full of uncertainty and very long term. In 2001 the newly formed Environmental Risk Management Alliance, a joint venture of researchers at Purdue, Carnegie-Mellon, Colorado State, Harvard, New Mexico and Virginia universities and the Argonne National Laboratory, submitted a combined grant proposal to the US Department of Energy for risk assessment, communication planning, clean-up and long-term stewardship for nuclear wastes in the United States. One portion of the proposal addressed the communicative relationships involved. Consistent with the cocreational view, the life

cycle of issues discussed in Chapter 5 and the focus on relationships, and the two aspects of all risk communication discussed in this chapter, Botan et al. (2001) said of that component,

> Stewardship can be understood as a multilateral relationship that is as much social and communicative as it is technical and physical in nature ... So it is appropriate to approach today's scientific, technical and other decisions as parts of a long-term and reflexive relationship in which scientific and technical decisions have a meta-communication relationship that inevitably will influence the future of the stewardship relationship.

Such reflexive communication relationships are hard to build and maintain, particularly when the relational or meta-communication aspect of risk messages comes into play.

Expert–Media Relations

The challenge in many preparedness and emergency situations is to get what may have to be state-of-the-art scientific and technical information to those who need it, when they need it, and in a form end users can actually use. Although there are multiple channels available, including the internet, the mass media are often preferred. But once the information is turned over to the media, the people who turned the information over sometimes do not appreciate how the media do their part of the job.

Media professionals know that there are differing opinions among scientists and experts and that most publics will not or cannot read and understand the technical results of top-flight research, which makes it hard for them to integrate the results of such research into the meanings they cocreate. In keeping with the well-developed standards of their profession (full disclosure, the author did very brief stints as both a print and radio journalist), media people make choices, edit, shorten and paraphrase the information they are about to print or broadcast. The intention is not to change the information government agencies and researchers provide but to make it more accessible to more publics, and this helps with the cocreational process. Nevertheless, this practice often drives technical experts and researchers to distraction because they understand and are careful to explain exceptions and qualifications that may be important in actual practice. Experts may not intend to demonstrate superiority in any way, just to be accurate, because they know inaccuracy can be dangerous and because their training and professionalism lead them to eschew overgeneralization and overclaiming. Many are driven to distraction by the teasers on the evening news, such as "a possible new cure for cancer was announced today—back after these messages," only to find out that the cure only works with mega-doses, on a single species of sea slug under 5,000 feet of ocean; or some such qualification. On the other side of the coin, journalists also do not intend to mislead, although seeking to make the news understandable to all may cause some to be misled.

Major natural and environmental risks like rock slides, tsunamis and the transport and storage of nuclear wastes raise both complex scientific and emotional issues that many publics find hard to come to terms with. In such cases, both quasi-scientific explanations and sensitivity to perceived costs to publics are needed.

Quasi-Scientific Explanations

Sometimes difficulty in understanding complexities does not result from technical terms or difficult wording but happens because something actually is complex, particularly scientific concepts or where causes are only partially or occasionally related to outcomes. This is part of why people who experience a particularly cold winter sometimes have a hard time understanding warnings about climate change or global warming, or someone whose uncle smoked two packs of cigarettes a day and

lived to be 84 may have a hard time believing how dangerous smoke can be for them. Quasi-scientific explanations can help publics understand such complex issues by, for example, visualizing complex structures or processes (Rowan, 2003).

Effective quasi-scientific explanations, Rowan said, use titles, previews, headings, analogies and figures to help audiences see the gist or main components of complex concepts. Similarly, Mayer (1989) said that texts can assist readers by offering "envisionment" aids, which include such techniques as previews (such as explaining that "there are two things working together here"), the use of headings and subheadings, drawing or diagrams or other tools to assist in comprehension and understanding. Mayer et al. (1996) give the example of a study in which people given a text with simple diagrams and captions about lightning strikes were better at explaining how to avoid being struck by lightning than were readers given the same information accompanied by dramatic photographs of lightning instead of simplified diagrams. Although tools like quasi-scientific explanations and envisionment aids do not work all the time, they can help publics use technical or scientific information in cocreating new meanings for themselves.

Costs to Publics

Another factor complicating risk communication about natural and environmental hazards but applicable to virtually *all* risk communication efforts, including public health campaigns, is the *cost* or loss that publics feel they would experience if they agreed with what risk communicators want. These costs are part of the meanings publics cocreate in any relationship and can range from the purely economic to the emotional and social. So any risk communication that fails to demonstrate a clear understanding of these costs, as perceived by publics, may not fare well. One attribute of these costs is their certainty in the minds of publics compared to the uncertainty of any benefits, of which Rowan et al. (2009) said,

> One factor that makes preparation for catastrophic events difficult is that doing so involves certain losses and uncertain gains. That is, there will be substantial time and expense associated with protecting the nation from high-consequence terrorist attacks and the gain from such efforts is uncertain if no such events occur. (p. 427)

But costs and benefits do not occur only at the collective level. Costs can mean personal financial costs, emotional costs, embarrassment, loss of social standing, loss of a sense of safety and control, loss of parental authority, surrender of strongly held beliefs to which other beliefs are linked, and a large number of other kinds of losses. Sometimes such losses can be measured and a rational cost-benefit analysis argued, but many times the loss is social or emotional in a way that does not lend itself to a rational justification. Other times, the loss is a simple expenditure of the effort to overcome the inertia behind old and bad habits. For example, smokers deciding whether to quit may well count among the certain costs loss of pleasure, loss of relaxation, loss of social contacts and so on. Such perceived losses may be certain in the mind of the smoker, while better health may be seen as an uncertain gain because they realize they may not get cancer, or may die of causes unrelated to smoking.

Conclusion

Risk communication is a large area of work and study covering natural and human-created risk, disasters, emergencies, public health threats, and terrorism and counterterrorism communication. Each risk message involves two major components, the content of the message and the relationship

between the parties, which is often implicit rather than explicit. Yet traditional models and practices in risk communication typically reflect an organization-centered point of view and message content-centered focus, which often limits the effectiveness of the messages.

There are also too many kinds of risk communication to be covered in one chapter or even one whole book. One example, preparedness of publics, has been discussed a bit in this chapter and most of the core subfield of health communication is also risk communication. Another major example of risk communication with special characteristics is terrorism communication because, as explained earlier, while other kinds of risk communication typically seek to alleviate feelings of risk, at least in the long run, terrorism seeks to generate feelings of fear and uncertainty in innocent civilian populations. Thus acts of terrorism are a *very* instrumental kind of inverse risk communication. This makes a cocreational understanding of the relationship between publics, terrorists, and counterterrorism communication even more important than some other areas of risk communication, as discussed in Chapter 10.

Part III

New Challenges

8

Social Media and New Information Technology

Summary

The goal of this chapter is to discuss SC aspects of the internet and social media, which have become popular and powerful in large part because they contribute directly to the cocreation of meaning. New information technologies, and particularly social media, make it easier to see the cocreational power of publics in SC. That power has always been present, but has often not been taken into account in SC practices or scholarship because the theories, and assumptions, employed by both practitioners and scholars often were developed before the role of new technologies was fully understood.

Introduction

The internet began life in 1969 as ARPANET and is a network of connected computers, and other technologies often not even called computers, such as tablets. Social media are the programs and applications that facilitate using the internet for both synchronous and asynchronous sharing of the meaning-cocreation process among individuals and publics. As Lewis, Pea and Rosen (2010) said in the title of their article on education, "Beyond participation to co-creation of meaning: Mobile social media in generative learning communities," and others have suggested, social media have become a major tool used by publics to cocreate meanings (cf. Kietzmann et al., 2011).

New information technologies, including the internet and social media, are often used and studied in SC subfields as a revolutionary new way for organizations to communicate with their publics. An instrumental view of new information technologies sits primarily on the left side of Figure 8, although using this technology to collect feedback from publics would tend more toward the center of that figure. There is also a cocreational view of the new information technologies, however, because they facilitate more and faster communication between publics just as well, thus shortening the cocreational process *within* as well as *between* publics, while also making it more inclusive. Thus, what has come to be called the social media, or Web 2.0, facilitates the cocreation of new meanings by users, even across nations and cultures, rather than just wider dispersal of sender-developed information to those thought of as receivers, as was often the case on the early internet. Social media are part of why it may be time to replace older understandings of SC with a cocreational metatheory.

Strategic Communication Theory and Practice: The Cocreational Model, First Edition. Carl H. Botan.

To avoid too much quibbling over terms, this chapter uses social media as a collective term encompassing those aspects of the internet and other new information technologies that facilitate publics not only sharing their own meanings but sharing in the cocreation of new meanings. This chapter first looks at how social media fit into the cocreational view by helping publics interconnect with one another, thereby increasing their cocreational reach. It then addresses the role and attributes of new information technologies, including social media, as well as how these are forcing SC to move up the time stream. Related to the stages of an issue's development from Chapter 5, up the time stream here means the need to detect and respond to issues earlier and earlier as the power of social media and other new information technologies develop. The third section covers the success rates of internet and social media campaigns as part of a broader look at the overall success rates of SC campaigns, and a final, shorter, section covers what might be called the free lunch and the changing of the guard in SC.

Interconnected Publics and the Cocreation of Meaning

The new information technologies pose serious challenges both for SC strategies and for practitioners in at least three circumstances. First, if the practitioner or scholar forgot to integrate into their strategies or theories the power of publics to cocreate the real meaning of a message. Second, when they just cannot keep up with the sheer speed at which strategies have to be developed and implemented. Third, when old strategies are used that fail to take into account the role of new information technologies in connecting hitherto relatively isolated publics to each other without the participation, or maybe even the knowledge, of the organization. For example, the a priori terms often used for publics (see Chapter 3) suggest that much current thinking about publics in SC reflects an unacknowledged assumption that publics are largely discrete, as when authors include overlapping publics as if this is rare enough to be explained as a special kind of public. In reality, virtually all publics overlap with others. Today, however, readily available communication and news information resources help publics not just to recognize overlapping interests but to cocreate shared meanings about those interests and to act on them. Thus, new information technologies can facilitate and extend the cocreational process.

One new theory that addresses parts of this phenomenon, although it is not focused on publics, is the blog-mediated crisis communication model (BMCC) of Jin and Liu (2010) and Liu et al. (2012). This theory, which would also fit in the crises section of Chapter 5, provides "an emerging model for managing the blogosphere throughout the crisis lifecycle" (Liu et al., 2012, p. 353).

This interconnectedness of publics is also raising the stakes involved in communication mistakes, both because of how fast strategic errors come home to roost and because of the risk of mistakes or inconsistencies when communicating about the same issue with interconnected publics. This challenge can be particularly problematic because, while different publics can cocreate very different meanings, they can also cocreate very similar ones, with or without the practitioner's knowledge. For example, the old trick of telling each public what they want to hear during political campaigns, never a very ethical practice, now faces a greater risk: when those publics are interconnected, they can more easily cocreate a new understanding of the communicator as dishonest or cynical.

Social Media–Cocreation Nexus

Another way to think of this relationship between social media and the cocreation of meaning is as a nexus where the two come together to create a (hopefully useful) junction. In the case of social

media, for example, the nexus with cocreation can elevate them to possibly their highest role, helping human beings to become both more cooperative and ever more human. The cocreational process, for its part, is able to work faster, with many more participants, and across great distances, than it often can without social media.

Both the downsides of instrumental campaigns and the upsides of cocreational campaigns can be accentuated by social media relations. For example, one critical nexus in studying and combating cyberterrorism (see Chapter 10) is how social media both contribute to and can be used to combat it. The downsides of instrumental SC campaigns can be accentuated by social media when they are used to reach very large numbers of people in the hope, not of engaging in substantive dialog, but of prospecting for the relatively few whose meaning-cocreation process already makes them susceptible to, for example, get-rich-quick schemes or terrorist appeals. It is probably fair to say that since at least 2000, terrorist organizations have done a better job of understanding and adapting to the meanings that primarily young male publics cocreate about terrorism using social media than have those relying largely on a military-legal-technical model for combating them.

Mass Media and Social Media

Traditional mass media have made it possible for strategic communicators to reach much larger audiences than we could have on our own and have imparted a kind of third party stamp of approval on the content they carry insofar as the reporters and editors involved are trusted. Although, with trust in the mass media at a historic low in the US at least (Riffkin, 2015), that stamp of editorial approval is becoming less valuable in the eyes of some practitioners, some of whom turn to new media as an alternative. The number of people questioning the objectivity of such outlets as the MSNBC network, Fox News and even the *New York Times* no doubt contributes to this historic low. Nevertheless, the traditional mass media remain an important public in many SC campaigns, in part because of an editorial practice they share with some but not all new information technologies.

Traditional, and to a lesser extent, new media often do their job in part by changing messages as needed to make them understandable and appealing to the largest customer base possible. Although this can be an issue for all the subfields of SC, this been the particular bane of science, climate change and health practitioners. Science and medical SC practitioners are also doing their jobs when they are precise about topics, and particularly when they speak with qualifications. Often what they are speaking about can have life and death, mental health or other serious implications and what appear to be small qualifications can make the difference. As indicated earlier, science and medical practitioners often react poorly when the mass media do their job of modifying precisely worded messages to meet the needs of audiences or for salability. They quite naturally bridle when they put out a release saying something like "early test tube research indicates that drug 'X' may some day help slow the progression of Alzheimer's disease" and then read in the next day's paper a headline saying "New Hope for Alzheimer's Patients," with all the crushed hopes such headlines may generate in patients and families living with Alzheimer's. Although still making use of traditional mass media, all the subfields of SC embrace social media to one extent or another today.

Social media has also changed the game in core subfields of SC, for example marketing, where "thanks to social media, marketing is everyone's job. Social media now is a prospective buyer's primary research tool ahead of purchase" (Burgess, 2014). In the core subfield of health communication, "social media has enhanced communication between individuals and organizations

and it has the potential to augment public health communication" (Thackeray et al., 2012). In the core subfield of public relations,

> Because social media has reignited the public relations profession and influenced a new world of communications, PR professionals are increasing their roles and responsibilities ... When PR meets social media, and communication unites with technology, public relations professionals have the opportunity to expand their skill set and their PR practices. (PRSA, 2015)

One outcome of the spread of new information technologies in SC subfields has just been faster and wider exchanges of information (Sriramesh and Verčič, 2003). Such exchanges are not always democratic or inclusive, of course, but they do increase the opportunity for more meaning cocreation. Because these technologies put more people in touch with others than ever before, and because many of them increase the opportunity for a give-and-take relationship, they are building blocks of cocreation. McLuhan (1964) used the metaphor of a global village to summarize part of this effect.

Examples of how this might influence global communication can be seen in how organizational websites serve visitors from across the world. Blogs, tweets, chat rooms and other new communication channels allow for new types of relationships and meaning making between members of different cultures, even providing near instantaneous free translation. In the eyes of many, new information technologies in general and social media in particular represent a major power shift away from Boxes 3 and 4 and toward Circles 1 and 6, of Figure 9. Thus social media are making instrumental models less and less viable by both highlighting and enabling the cocreational process among publics.

The mere existence of new information technology does not ensure success. There are counterexamples and exceptions aplenty. For example, Toppo (2014) quotes Boyd, the author of *It's Complicated* (2014), as saying, "Social divisions, including racial divisions, are not disappearing simply because people have access to technology. Tools that enable communication do not sweep away distrust, hatred and prejudice." The mere existence of new technology "neither creates nor magically solves cultural problems. In fact, their construction typically reinforces existing social divisions."

Blessings and Curses

Thus social media can be both a blessing and a curse to SC practitioners. They are a blessing when they make it easier to develop fuller relationships with publics than was possible with traditional media, and often to do so without the cost, waste coverage and loss of control involved with using the mass media. They are sometimes a curse because they allow anyone to masquerade as strategic communicators, because they compress the time frame within which SC operates, because messages that pass from person to person become distorted, and for other reasons. Indeed, once a message gets out into the social media the kind of filtering, changing, misquoting and out-of-context use that can occur can make practitioners long for the "good old days" when only reporters and editors changed what they wrote.

Practitioners have always discussed the difference between controlled, or unearned (e.g., bought time and space for advertising) media, and uncontrolled, or earned (e.g., news, where an editor decides a story is newsworthy). While the new media are sometimes perceived as more controlled than traditional news media, and cheaper than advertising, that is not always the case. Once in the hands of publics, a story becomes even more uncontrolled than when in the hands of editors.

In addition, the old news cycles, tight as they were, were relaxed compared to the way new information technologies have forced practitioners to publicly respond to issues more and more quickly.

A brief discussion of the key attributes of new information technologies, including social media, will prepare the ground for discussing one of the major effects social media have on SC.

Key Attributes of New Media

One very useful system for categorizing three attributes of the new media was that of Williams, Rice and Rogers (1988), which heavily influenced my thinking in this area and upon which the next five paragraphs are based. Their system of three attributes (interactivity, demassification and asynchronicity) remains useful today and leads me to a fourth attribute relevant directly to SC, moving up the time stream.

Interactivity

Interactivity describes the two-way nature of new information technologies, particularly the social media. Sender and receiver are no longer two distinct roles as in traditional media, and in fact these two roles now often switch back and forth as rapidly in online and wireless communications as they always have in the interpersonal context. Social media make possible an interactive give and take that tends to level the playing field and blur the distinction between senders and receivers. This helps both (or all) parties cocreate their own meanings. Even more traditional new information technologies, such as homepages, offered some interactivity in the form of visitors selectively deciding what information they chose to view and take away with them, which leads to the next attribute called demassification. Social media is defined by its interactivity, which applies across cultures as well as within cultures.

Demassification

The ability to demassify messages by not sending the same message to everyone is a key to the appeal and effectiveness of new information technologies, including social media. If a homepage, for example, has 1,000 visitors per day, each visitor could come away with a different individually tailored packet of information that satisfies his or her needs and maybe no one else's. Because publics have learned that organizational websites can be operated this way, they have come to expect such demassification so they can select the information they need for cocreating their own meanings. Sometimes this is such a strong expectation that websites that do not facilitate cocreation of meaning by publics in this way are non-competitive and, in some cases could, even be objects of suspicion. Publics may wonder why, when it is possible and relatively inexpensive to make demassified information available on demand, a particular organization may choose not to make it readily available. Social media are about a special kind of demassification, or maybe more precisely, controlled massification with little or no waste coverage. Facebook postings may be available to several people at once, but only to those the writer wishes to make them available to, for example.

Many feel that the importance of the mass media has been reduced in the face of the demassification of new information technologies because mass media, by their nature, involve waste coverage. That is, traditional media put out a single packet of information that is essentially the same for everyone—that is why we call it mass media—including those who do not need the information or whom the sender has no interest in reaching. This is especially galling for many advertisers, who are typically charged fees based on the circulation/reach of a particular outlet. As a result, they are on

never-ending searches for the media that can reach their desired public most efficiently and with the lowest waste coverage rate. To these folks, the ability of new information technologies to demassify messages might appear almost as a holy grail, but it is not. Just stretch the idea of waste coverage a little bit so that it covers all the costs and time needed to put all kinds of information on homepages that is never used (let alone the time in monitoring what is used to cull out what is not) and this particular advantage is narrowed.

Asynchronicity

Being asynchronous means that two events do not have to happen at the same moment in time. It applies to social media, on demand or recorded or printed mass media, and even some older analog technologies, the first of which was probably the telephone answering machine. Asynchronicity means that people do not have to be using the technology at the same time in order for it to work. The answering machine revolutionized telephone usage because the second party no longer had to be present to answer the phone in order for the phone to be a useful communication device. One of the most loved attributes of email is that you can also choose when to reply. Social media are largely asynchronous, which, although not a defining characteristic of social media, allows communication partners to make use of information in their own meaning cocreation when they wish. One of the drawbacks of most asynchronicity is that everyone knows you got their message and not replying is a kind of meta-communication that tells them you are ignoring them.

Used together, these three attributes of new information technologies present a number of strategic opportunities and challenges. In general, they offer immense opportunities for relationship-building with publics. As a result, opportunities are opened up for matching the parts of large SC campaigns, correcting mistakes, following up on suggestions by important publics, and a host of other opportunities. Taken together, however, these technologies also have the effect of helping push SC up the time stream, forcing practitioners to be more watchful than ever, to move more quickly on potential issues than we had to in past generations, and to be judged more harshly and more quickly than ever before.

Up the Time Stream with Social Media

"Up the time stream" is just a way to summarize how the time constraints on SC planning and operations have grown much shorter over the years. This idea was discussed at some length in Chapter 5, where the need to learn how to address issues early in their life cycle was covered. The question for this chapter is how new information technologies make this need greater and how practitioners should respond to it. Moving SC practice up the time stream is the cumulative effect of a number of factors, not all of which are the result of new information technology, but these no doubt play the largest single role.

Instant or near instant communication is often made possible by new information technologies, such as social media, and knowing this, today's publics often expect far shorter response times than 50, or even 25, years ago. For example, practitioners in the 1970s and 1980s had as much as a day and a half to respond in many crises, if things happened at the right point in the news cycles of newspapers. If the event happened in a distant country, that response window might have been several days. Even in developing countries today there are cell phones and digital cameras capable of reporting an event to almost anywhere else in the world in moments. With the ability to communicate almost instantly has come an expectation that SC practitioners will do so. In fact, failure to respond to a question or issue almost instantly today can sometimes look like stalling or covering up and also allows others to get control of the story by sharing their own views, often through

social media. The organization that allows two or three iterations of this kind of social media sharing before getting its own position on the public record can face real trouble. Zufall (2014), for example, said,

> While social media has shifted organizational communication from one-way communication to free conversation, organizations have lost power to control what is being said about them in the world. This can lead to threats for an organization in many cases and many ways ... This research has revealed that crisis situations can be facilitated and accelerated via the social media environment ... (abstract, p. 5)

The old days of waiting for an event and then writing a draft news release for a client to consider, and even pass among the leadership team for comment, are fast disappearing. Moving up the time stream can introduce new perils for SC practitioners. Pressure for near immediate responses can sometimes cause practitioners to respond without first collecting all the facts, for example, which is extremely dangerous. So today's SC practitioner also has to move up the time stream in terms of explaining to clients the need for ongoing collection of critical facts and, often, for monitoring of social media so as not to fall too far behind a story from the outset.

Because the success rate in SC campaigns is complicated, however, even moving up the time stream cannot guarantee success. The next section helps illustrate this fact by looking at success rates of some SC campaigns.

Success Rates of SC Campaigns

The standards used to define success vary greatly by subfield and even between practitioners. For example, success of online advertising might be measured by how many people click on the ad, by how many provide contact information, by how many report the intention to change a behavior such as overeating, by how many report that they believe they have changed their eating behavior, or by how many have eating behavior changes externally documented over a 24-month period. Discrepancies between just the last two, a person's report of their own behaviors (called a self-report) and impartially measured behavior, can be very great. For example, Klesges et al. (1990) found that some subjects reporting their physical activity levels underestimated sedentary activities and overestimated aerobic activities "by over 300%" (p. 690).

The danger is that to untrained readers and practitioners (and journalists), numeric indicators of SC campaign success can appear to be superficially comparable even when they are not. A "success rate" of 5 percent in recall about the title or the main message of a campaign is not even remotely comparable to a success rate of 5 percent in a campaign in which individuals show up at a community meeting to discuss a public health issue. And even the latter is not comparable to a 5 percent success rate when measuring actual behavioral change over 12 months for a binge-drinking campaign or a childhood vaccination campaign. Of course, the more the definition of success varies across campaigns, the less comparable their findings are. Even within the bounds of these tremendously disparate definitions of success, however, two generalizations are probably fair.

First, success rates are low. For example, in the marketing subfield Lohrey (2015) reported that when compared to direct e-mail marketing, direct postal mail marketing translates to an average success or response rate of about 4.4 percent Lohery then cited Direct Marketing Association

director Yory Wurmser saying, "that's about 10 to 30 times higher than direct email marketing." This suggests the average response rate of direct email marketing ranges from about 0.1 to about 0.4 percent, and Lohrey says it has "an average success rate of 0.12 percent." Other sources report the success rates for public health communication campaigns to be higher. For example, Bertrand, Merritt and Saffitz (2011) say,

> The level of effectiveness of health campaigns that include the use of the mass media and avoid coercion have an average effect size of five percentage points (r = 0.05). That is, if 60 percent of the target population performed the desired behaviour before the campaign, the percentage post-campaign would be 65 ... alcohol reduction (r = 0.11) ... drug and marijuana campaigns have had the least success (r = 0.01-0.02) ... tobacco prevention campaigns (r = 0.04). (p. 320)

These figures sound a bit high, but that might in part be a result of how success is defined in these particular studies. Note, for example, that it is alcohol *reduction* that was measured rather than some set standard or quitting altogether.

Golesworthy (2013) says "measuring call-to-action responses in low, single-digit percentages" is the age-old problem with strategic communication campaigns—that is, extremely low response rates. For example, Snyder (2007) found that only about 5 percent of nutrition campaigns achieved any specific behavioral changes. Snyder's remedy was to simply suggest better use of the old paradigm, under which these low success rates had been reported, by paying "attention to specific behavioral goals of the intervention, target populations, communication activities and channels, message content and presentation, and technique for feedback" (p. 32).

In the marketing subfield, Brow (2009) reported on customized, personalized campaigns for more than 650 cross-media campaigns across 27 vertical markets, finding that "the average response rate across all industries with 10 or more campaigns was 6.5%" (p. iii), quite high compared to other models but still in mid to low single digits.

Expressed in terms of sizes of statistical effects, the effects of SC campaigns, at least in the health communication subfield, are minuscule. For example, Snyder et al. (2004) reported:

> A meta-analysis was performed of studies of mediated health campaigns in the United States in order to examine the effects of the campaigns on behavior change. Mediated health campaigns have small measurable effects in the short-term. Campaign effect sizes varied by the type of behavior: $\bar{r}$ = .15 for seat belt use, $\bar{r}$ = .13 for oral health, $\bar{r}$ = .09 for alcohol use reduction, $\bar{r}$ = .05 for heart disease prevention, $\bar{r}$ = .05 for smoking, $\bar{r}$ = .04 for mammography and cervical cancer screening, and $\bar{r}$ = .04 for sexual behaviors ... The average media campaign effect given as a correlation (r) was converted into the average percentage campaign behavior change by first converting r to d with DSTAT ... The average media campaign effect on behavior was $\bar{r}$ = .09 with a 95 percent confidence interval of .07 to .10. The total number of participants (Tn) was 168,362: the average n per study was 3508, and the number of studies (k) was 48. (pp. 71, 78)

Second, intercultural SC campaigns appear to face even greater challenges than SC campaigns within a culture, although it is hard to find well-documented research supporting this and the data are sometimes presented only in the context of particular kinds of campaigns. For example, there is wide divergence between social and commercial marketing campaigns, as Noble and Camit (2005)

found when they specifically compared social marketing campaigns to commercial marketing campaigns. They observed that

> Social marcoms [marketing communication] campaigns are credited with a very poor rate of success in changing people's behaviour. Rossiter and Bellman (2005) claim they are only successful in 10% of cases. In contrast, approximately 50% of commercial marcoms are successful in increasing consumers' purchase or product usage rates (Clancy and Krieg, 2000; Sethuraman and Tellis, 1991). Several factors may contribute to this difference in success rates. Often, the behaviour social marcoms target is harder to change than the behaviours commercial marketers target (Rossiter and Bellman, 2005). It is more problematic to change an addictive behaviour like smoking than the low-involvement purchase of a product such as soap powder. The nature of the audience that social marketers target is suggested as another reason ... Social marketers frequently target audiences within the least accessible and hardest to reach sections of a society. These audiences often include members of minority ethnic groups. When the target audience includes individuals from "culturally and linguistically diverse" (CALD) communities the challenge of producing successful social marcoms can become even more problematic. In these circumstances social marketers need to confront additional issues such as different cultural values, practices, and attitudes (Darley and Luethge, 2003). (pp. 1–2)

Intercultural SC campaigns face yet another challenge in dealing with acculturation, as emphasized by Noble and Camit (2005). Acculturation is typically viewed as explaining how immigrants learn and adopt the ways of the new culture they have moved into. In the age of social media it is possible that "using social media might strengthen or weaken people's tendency toward certain cultural value systems" (Li and Tsai, 2015, p. 204). It may be fair to think of a kind of, no doubt incomplete, acculturation as getting started through social media use. For example, if an American social media user establishes a relationship with one or more peers from Turkey or Uganda they have to learn to understand some of how the culturally bound meanings and values of those others differ from their own, and vice versa. That is, they have to begin to understand how culture affects the meanings they cocreate within their own culture, the meanings their intercultural peers cocreate within their culture, and how these contribute to the new meaning that characterizes that particular relationship. And this in turn may contribute to a new understanding of the role of new media in SC.

The Free Lunch and the Changing of the Guard

Even with the advent of the internet and social media, many, probably most, SC campaigns have not changed much because they still assume an instrumental worldview with all of its limitations. The sponsors of these campaigns still are primarily focused on getting publics to fulfill the organization's needs. In some cases, they are even still focused on getting what they think of as free publicity, the proverbial "free lunch." The free lunch originally meant getting a story on a product or candidate into the traditional mass media as a news story and avoiding the cost of buying advertising time or space. Coordinating paid advertising with legitimate news coverage can be an effective thing to do, and can even have a strategic component, but those looking for free lunches seldom approach it that way, maybe because avoiding spending money is not a communication strategy.

Such traditional SC campaigns, based in the instrumental metatheory, are characterized by massive waste coverage and occasional fraud when conducted through the traditional media and they

have not changed significantly because of new information technologies. Even some new media campaigns are still characterized by massive waste coverage as evidenced by the fact "80% of all email is either spam, phishing or email fraud" (Untangle, 2017) or that "between 70% and 80% of email traffic worldwide" (Internet Society, 2012) is spam.

Long-standing and substantive questions as to how SC campaigns are thought about, planned and carried out had not been fully addressed even before the advent of the internet and social media, or before the cocreational paradigm for that matter. In the era of the internet and social media, these questions are being pushed to the forefront in several ways, not the least of which is the vicious cycle and continuing decline faced by the traditional mass media. A rather lengthy quote from the Pew Foundation's 2013 report on the state of the news media summarizes the situation well:

> In 2012, a continued erosion of news reporting resources converged with the growing opportunities for those in politics, government agencies, companies and others to take their message directly to the public.
>
> Signs of the shrinking reporting power are documented throughout this year's report. Estimates for newspaper newsroom cutbacks in 2012 put the industry down 30% since 2000 and below 40,000 full-time professional employees for the first time since 1978. In local TV, our special content report reveals, sports, weather and traffic now account on average for 40% of the content produced on the newscasts studied while story lengths shrink. On CNN, the cable channel that has identified itself around deep reporting, produced story packages were cut nearly in half from 2007 to 2012. Across the three cable channels, coverage of live events and live reports during the day, which often require a crew and correspondent, fell 30% from 2007 to 2012 while interview segments, which tend to take fewer resources and can be scheduled in advance, were up 31%. *Time* magazine, the only major print news weekly left standing, cut roughly 5% of its staff in early 2013 as a part of broader company layoffs. And in African-American news media, the *Chicago Defender* has winnowed its editorial staff to just four while *The Afro* cut back the number of pages in its papers from 28–32 in 2008 to around 16–20 in 2012. A growing list of media outlets, such as *Forbes* magazine, use technology by a company called Narrative Science to produce content by way of algorithm, no human reporting necessary. And some of the newer nonprofit entrants into the industry, such as the Chicago News Cooperative, have, after launching with much fanfare, shut their doors. (p. 1)

The vicious cycle referred to above is outlined in the same Pew report (2013):

> This adds up to a news industry that is more undermanned and unprepared to uncover stories, dig deep into emerging ones or to question information put into its hands. And findings from our new public opinion survey released in this report reveal that the public is taking notice. Nearly one-third of the [2009] respondents (31%) have deserted a news outlet because it no longer provides the news and information they had grown accustomed to.

Thus, as the traditional news media suffer through declining income they can afford to employ fewer and fewer actual reporters. This results in less coverage of real news and investigative reporting, which in turn results in lower readership and lower viewership, which in turn results in less news reporting, and so on. For SC practitioners this has, of course, meant less reliance on traditional mass media and more reliance on the internet and social media. What it has not appeared to mean, however, is meaningfully greater success rates in SC campaigns than before. The "get *our* story out"

attitude may function more quickly today than yesterday but the story has, largely, not changed and neither has our success rate.

The cocreational paradigm is no magic answer to these challenges, but it has grown in the age of new information technologies. It may therefore offer an opportunity to change the old instrumental approach which asked "how can we get the media to print what we want?" into a new paradigm which asks "what do publics want to know about us?" and which the social media are well designed to answer. Thus, the internet and social media may be leading SC practitioners toward a more cocreational paradigm and away from the instrumental. On the other hand, the internet and social media may contribute to what might be called the "shrilling of society."

Shrilling of Public Discourse

To be shrill means to be loud, forceful and often high-pitched, either literally or figuratively. So the shrilling of public discourse refers to what many see as more repetitive, insistent and extreme efforts by those caught in a purely instrumental mindset. From an instrumental view, the answer to breaking out of competitive message clutter or lack of interest is to try to attract the attention of more people with **louder** ... and **louder!** ... and **louder!!** messages, and with more and more of them. But this approach has obvious limitations.

More shrill and more numerous messages can lead to more and more mass spamming, saturation advertising and extreme wording in appeals, to which other campaigns feel the need to respond, usually with a yet more extreme form of the same tactics. Such tactics may be used in almost any SC subfield. Also implicit in shrill messages is the assumption that being shrill is a kind of magic bullet, at least insofar as breaking out of the clutter of messages is concerned.

For example, I only half facetiously tell clients and students alike that when my career was young, appeals for aid for starving children often featured only one hungry child. Later such appeals often featured two hungry children, then three or four. Today appeals may show the dead body of one, or even several, starved children. A famous Pulitzer Prize winning photo taken by Kevin Carter, published by the *New York Times* in March of 1993, showed an emaciated little Sudanese girl collapsed on the ground with her ribs showing and a vulture waiting just behind her (Iconic Photos, 2009).

9

International and Intercultural Strategic Communication

Summary

As was the case with the internet and social media, intercultural SC is far too large a topic to be covered in one book, let alone a single chapter. So the purpose here is not to cover all of intercultural SC but to provide some background and discuss how the cocreational metatheory applies to it, as well as a little of what that means for both theory and practice.

Like the cocreational view of SC elsewhere, a cocreational view of intercultural communication is conceptually simple—publics still engage in meaning cocreation based primarily on what they bring to the relationship and to a far lesser extent on what we bring to the relationship. But, also as elsewhere, a cocreational view is difficult to actually apply and it is made especially so when publics and the organization, or different publics, have differences in values, orientations, goals, traditions and experiences. Thus, intercultural SC has all the complexities of any other SC and more.

International and intercultural SC campaigns face all the challenges discussed both earlier in this book and in the next chapter, and then some, because they do not share acculturation with their publics, as emphasized by Noble and Camit (2005). From the cocreational perspective, this difference in culture, practices and history between practitioners and their publics makes it even harder than usual for practitioners to understand Circle 1, or predict Circles 5 and 6, in Figure 9 than it would be if confined within their own cultures. It is possible that using the social media discussed in the last chapter "might strengthen or weaken people's tendency toward certain cultural value systems" (Li and Tsai, 2015, p. 204), and it may be fair to think of a kind of incomplete acculturation as getting started through social media use, but social media cannot erase all such major differences.

This chapter has two sections. First, it introduces a cocreational view of international and intercultural SC. Second, it provides a way to help understand the differences in SC between cultures, based on an updated version of a tool developed for the subfield of PR some years ago.

Cocreational View of International and Intercultural Strategic Communication

International strategic communication, because it involves publics from different nations, is also always at least somewhat intercultural. Even communication between such culturally close neighbors as the land of my birth, Canada, and my adopted homeland, the United States, involves some

Strategic Communication Theory and Practice: The Cocreational Model, First Edition. Carl H. Botan.

intercultural communication. On the other hand, communication within a particular nation can also be intercultural when it is between, for example, minority and majority communities. The broader of these two terms is intercultural SC because it includes international SC, so this chapter refers to both international SC and intercultural SC as intercultural.

Such intercultural communication goes by many names. Some authors even treat intercultural, multicultural, cross-cultural and global communication as essentially synonymous terms. Sometimes this goes so far as defining one of these terms by simply cross-referencing it to one of the other terms.

For example, Curtin and Gaither (2007) were speaking of only one SC subfield but could have been speaking about all of SC when they pointed out part of how complex intercultural SC can be, saying, "notions of public relations vary greatly around the world because of different cultures, languages, and socioeconomic and political conditions" (p. 16). Curtin and Gaither's observation suggests that merely translating terms into another language does not come close to real intercultural communication. The argument in Chapter 3 that terms and labels are very important remains true even if literal translation of such terms is not sufficient for intercultural practice. Additionally, definitional inconsistencies that have been unresolved in SC for decades do not have to be resolved in order to address intercultural SC. All that is needed for now are working definitions, and these are either explicitly or implicitly incorporated into the following text based on several earlier articles and papers (Botan, 1991; 1992a; 1992b; 1993b; 1997; Botan and Taylor, 2005; Taylor and Botan, 1996; 1997; 2005; 2006; 2009).

Intercultural and Cross-Cultural Models

Much of what constitutes both cultures and paradigms is found in our assumptive worldviews because what we *assume* exists, or is right, heavily influences the meanings we all cocreate about others, about ourselves and about our relationships. Some of these sets of meanings evolve into conceptual models depicting the components in a situation and how they relate to each other, and some of these can be depicted visually as in Figure 9.

Conceptual models can involve both consciously thought-out components and elements or relationships that are simply assumed to be valid until they are challenged and brought up to the conscious level. Thus, conceptual models often unconsciously help shape the meanings both individuals and publics cocreate. The most challenging aspect of intercultural (between two cultures) or multicultural (between more than two cultures) SC, then, is not likely to be differences in language, laws, governments or religions but between assumptive worldviews, including the models used, when cocreating meanings in our communication relationships. This is part of why simple literal translation of words often not only does not help, but can even hinder, intercultural communication.

Strategic communication is difficult enough when senders and receivers are of the same interpretive community (see Chapter 3) and bring many similar experiences to Circle 1, Box 2 and Circle 5 in Figure 9. But, as Botan (1992a) stated:

> The complexity grows when they are members of interpretive communities that differ by way of nationality, culture, history, level of national development, motive for practicing [SC], legal context for the practice, and the like. Such practice is intercultural because it is an attempt of one culturally bound interpretive community to deal with the interpretations of another. Because much of what experienced practitioners bring to [SC] efforts is based on experience and repeated usage, its application is often unintentional, based on unquestioned cultural assumptions and formulations that have "worked" in repeated successful applications within their own culture. This is at the heart of what has been called the ethnocentric model. (pp. 150–151)

Ethnocentric and polycentric models Botan's (1992a) article drew on Kinzer and Bohn's (1985) original work to describe one set of distinctly instrumental assumptions that make up the ethnocentric approach to SC campaigns. Kinzer and Bohn said of the ethnocentric view that "activities at the overseas operations are directed by the international headquarters staff in the corporation's home country ... assum[ing] that home country nationals are the experts" (p. 4). From a cocreational view, this simply means that these practitioners do not care about the cocreation of meaning or the sovereignty of publics (see Chapter 3). This approach is so focused on instrumentalizing intercultural publics that even the opinions of practitioners from another culture are not seen to have any value at the strategic level of campaign planning, because it is "assumed that there is no major difference between motivating and persuading people at home or in other countries" because "people are functionally the same everywhere" (Botan, 1992a, p. 151).

The competing polycentric view, although somewhat more cocreational in its assumptions, was clearly not fully cocreational because "host country practitioners exercise a high degree of autonomy" (Botan, 1992a, p. 151) while the multinational corporation's plans and programs are typically not brought into question and the underlying instrumental assumption—that the host country is primarily a site for fulfilling the corporation's needs—is not challenged.

Ontological knowledge A similar way of viewing the question of different models is by using Hazleton and Cupach's (1986) notion of ontological knowledge, or what communicators know about themselves and the world in which they exist. Such knowledge "defines what a communicator assumes is possible or impossible in a given situation" (Hazleton and Botan, 1989, p. 4). Strategic communication necessarily reflects such unconscious assumptions much of the time, even when a dialogic approach is being used. However, when the monological approach (see Botan, 1997) is used in an attempt to gain instrumental mastery over members of other cultures, these unconscious assumptions may emerge as even more serious problems.

Based on this analysis, ethical and effective international SC can be identified by its demonstrated respect for national and cultural differences between practitioners and publics. Cocreational international SC, like the non-international, focuses on Circles 1 and 6 in Figure 9, while more ethnocentric approaches focus more on Boxes 3 and 4. Circles 1 and 6 are concerned with images within the meaning Boulding (1973) gave the term, which is quite different from the instrumentalist's view of images. Consistent with this view, I suggested that i-images are part of the instrumental view of images and h-images are part of the humanistic and cocreational view of images, based on Boulding's work (Botan, 1993b), and later applied the idea of images to international and intercultural SC (Botan, 1993d). In international and intercultural SC, the most important images are those cocreated by publics, that is, h-images.

Planning, Evaluation and Ethics in Intercultural SC Campaigns

It might be argued that the key to strategic planning for intercultural campaigns, as in all SC campaigns, is the difference, or gap, between what campaign planners think they know about publics (Box 2 in Figure 9) and what publics are actually thinking and feeling (Circle 1). Put in coorientation theory terms, the *accuracy* of practitioners' understanding of publics is a much greater determinant of success or failure in SC than tactical skills (Box 4) can ever be, and is the primary element in good strategic planning (Box 3) as well. Thus the evaluation of an SC campaign focuses on assessing the difference between Circles 1 and 6, as well as the ethics of the campaign. Note, of course, that assessing the difference between Box 4 and Circle 5 of Figure 9 can also be useful for evaluating, message

retention, message understanding, channel selection and the like, but these are not strategic matters in their own right and, thus, cannot assess a complete SC campaign.

One major component in evaluating the ethics of an intercultural SC campaign, as in all SC campaigns but much more challenging in intercultural campaigns, is determining how much the campaign advances the right of publics to access all the information they need to construct their own meanings. This is because the initiator of the relationship has an obligation to make available any information publics might need for informed decision-making. Pearson (1989a) discussed this as the ethical principle of mutuality that says that when one has a right it is the responsibility of the other to both respect and help fulfill that right.

The principle of mutuality would also mean that, if publics in another country are acknowledged to have a right to their own meaning (including goals and values), practitioners have an obligation to take steps to ensure that they get the full information necessary to exercise these rights. This is a particularly challenging responsibility when working with another culture or country, so intercultural SC is not just more complex but sometimes also more expensive than a similar campaign run when practitioners and publics share a common culture. As Taylor and Botan (2006) said, "What makes this [cocreational] perspective as useful in practices in Detroit as ... in Dakar is that the organization's *public is the partner in meaning making*. Indeed, it is the attitude toward the organization's public that differentiates [SC] communication reflecting the functional perspective from [that] reflecting assumptions of the cocreational perspective" (p. 487).

There are other ways to assess any benefits derived from SC campaigns. One of these is the lens and mirror analogy.

Lens and Mirror

In arguing for a cocreational perspective on the subfield of global public relations, Taylor and Botan (2006) used Botan's (1992a) earlier analogy of a window and a mirror. They suggested:

> Viewed from one side, international [SC] provides us with a window through which to look into, and hopefully to better understand, another culture. That is, experienced [SC] practitioners or scholars can learn about another culture, in part, by seeking answers to some of the same questions they ask about [SC] in their home culture. This will help them understand both similarities and differences quickly. Viewed from the other side, international [SC] can function as a mirror. We study our own reflection to see how our practice (or culture) looks in comparison to others. This helps us to spot, through a kind of bold relief, underlying assumptions, cultural prejudices, hierarchies, and time honored bad habits that might otherwise go unrecognized. (p. 488)

A second tool, the matrix, informs the next step in understanding and practicing international SC, although it uses only four of many possible dimensions in doing so.

Matrix

In the late 1980s, work began on a means to understand and compare strategic communication in different nations and cultures. This focused heavily, although not exclusively, on the subfield of public relations and began the comparative international public relations project. I did not realize at the time how this work would tie into the idea of the cocreational metatheory years later, but it involved developing a tool then called the matrix for comparing the widely disparate practices of different countries and peoples around the globe.

Background of the matrix The matrix predates the cocreational perspective with the main article (Botan, 1992a) coming out about a quarter of a century ago and containing a more complete explanation of the matrix than there is room for here. The matrix was originally developed for the subfield of international public relations using the 130 pieces of scholarship on international public relations that could be found in 1989 and the very early 1990s. Thus, *it is useful here more for what it suggests about the kinds of issues faced by those engaged in international SC rather than for any specific results* from such an old study. Illustrating this point is the fact that modern social media were basically unknown in the late 1980s or early 1990s so national differences in its use were not even considered. As a result, several scholars who have used the matrix have justifiably sought to modify it (e.g., Bardhan, 2002; Bardhan and Patwardhan, 2004; Kiambi, 2010) to reflect some of the changes in the rapidly changing area of international SC and public relations.

The original works that led to identifying the four dimensions of the matrix were in English, French, German, Russian, Dutch, Spanish, and Arabic, with the English literature base by far the largest. In the late 1980s and early 1990s, articles that addressed several of today's recognized SC subfields, such as marketing communication, public diplomacy, public health communication and political communication, were often generically referred to as public relations, so these and other SC subfields contributed to the matrix. (See, for example, Hoover and Garmon, 1990; Kinzer and Bohn, 1985; Kunczik, 1990; Riley, 1991.) The body of literature on international and intercultural SC has grown exponentially in the intervening years. For example, international marketing communication alone now returns from 88 million internet search hits with Google, to 271 million with Bing.

The matrix achieved its original purposes of providing a tool for identifying major factors reflected in the big differences that occur in strategic communication across cultures. The next subsection summarizes that matrix and the following suggests an update to it.

Four factors of the matrix The idea behind the matrix was to use the reviewed literature to provide dimensions along which SC practices differed between nations. Then each nation's unique practice characteristics could be described by explaining where it stood on each dimension. Of course, such characterization of national, and thus cultural, differences between nations are quite general and do not tap into all the differences internal to each nation, such as between different industries or in urban versus rural or government versus private practice. Nevertheless, it is a starting point for understanding cultural and national differences in SC.

The idea was to help overcome the then dominant practice of using approaches developed in, and largely reflecting, practice in the United States and, to a lesser extent, Western Europe. There was never a valid reason to suppose that the US and Western European experience was so universal, or so correct, that it would be equally useful in other countries and cultures. This view was just a result of the utter dominance of their professional practice, scholarship and books, particularly in the PR subfield, a quarter to a half century and more ago.

Also driving the matrix project was the realization that sound social scientific, critical, cultural, or rhetorical theories and analysis should not reasonably stop at the political boundaries of a country. The problem was that there was no tool tailored to the needs of SC for deciding when and to what extent theories were truly international in scope or when they reflected the idiosyncratic characteristics of one nation or culture.

Although developed to help assess differences between nations, these same dimensions might be at least somewhat useful for assessing differences between major cultures within multinational states such as the indigenous populations of Norway, Brazil, Australia and the US, or highly identified language and economic communities such as Francophones in Canada and the Dutch- and French-speaking communities in Belgium. The matrix is not as well adapted for assessing purely cultural as

national differences because of the literature base it draws from. A brief discussion of each dimension follows and assumes that all four dimensions of the matrix overlap with one another to some degree.

Level of national development includes the economic development of a country, marketplace competitiveness, level of development of the communication infrastructure and, to a degree, the level of national unity as partially explained by how integrated its local and regional economies have become. For example, in a nation with low national development, the communication infrastructure may not effectively support competitive public relations or health communication campaigns, while a low level of competitiveness in a marketplace driven by scarcity may not effectively support many marketing communication efforts.

Primary client refers to who the primary user of strategic campaigns is or, put another way, what the primary interest represented in strategic campaigns is. Most often this is a question of whether for-profit companies or government are the primary clients for the practice, although in some cases NGOs or even religious leaders may be the primary client.

Legal political context refers to the level of protection and political role of the practice. This includes the degree to which individuals, political candidates, and organizations can safely practice freedom of speech and whether practitioners of strategic campaigns are legally restricted in what they can say. Of course, this dimension is sometimes closely related to who the primary client is. Dictatorships, for example, may seek to make themselves the only client for strategic campaigns in general, or for campaigns on specified topics.

History of the practice refers to the background out of which the practice evolves. The three most common backgrounds are journalism/mass media (as in the US, Canada and some other areas), business, and government. The last is in many ways most interesting and not just because of overlaps with the level of national development. In ex-colonies, for example, strategic communication campaigns were a major tool of colonial control but were frequently much more restricted than in the imperial homeland. When national liberation movements began to develop, they often had to confront monopoly government control of the channels needed for SC campaigns, so early in their development these movements developed their own SC channels and launched their own SC campaigns that enjoyed no legal protections and often even incurred legal sanctions. The Committees of Correspondence developed in support of the American Revolution and the underground revolutionary newspapers developed during colonial rule in many ex-colonies are examples. In ex-colonies, such as many of the nations of the African continent, SC campaigns are sometimes seen to this day as primarily useful as tools of national development or central government advocacy of building national unity in those regions where tribal levels of organization still predominate (Pratt, 1985a; 1985b; Pratt and Ugboajah, 1985; Sattler, 1981). It is not surprising if rural and tribal populations sometimes have a hard time distinguishing between these campaigns and those from the previous colonial governments if they emanated from the same urban areas, used the same SC practices, or quoted the same NGOs as campaigns by their colonial government did.

These four factors come together in a mix unique to each country that helps to describe both the limits and potentialities of strategic communication, and its subfields, in that nation or culture. Understanding this unique mix is a necessary, but certainly not sufficient, condition for understanding and conducting strategic campaigns in a country. Sometimes this would also apply to campaigns involving distinct and long-term cultural groups, such as Francophone Canada, where only one or two of these factors may apply.

Matrix and cocreationality Cultural differences no doubt make understanding the cocreated meanings of others much more difficult than if a culture is shared, but this only makes working to understand the meanings of others in an SC relationship more important rather than less important.

If a campaign sponsor needs to dedicate 51 percent of its overall time, effort and expense to understanding and responding to the meanings constructed by publics when they share the same culture, they may need to dedicate 60 percent or more to understanding the same things about a public with which they do not share a culture. Accordingly, as critical as research is when campaign sponsors and publics share a culture, it is much more important when they do not share one, and the kind of research needed may also differ. For example, much cultural knowledge is not available in books, articles or on the internet but has to be learned by immersion in a culture, through oral history, storytelling, ceremonies and the like. For the purpose of intercultural SC, these more naturalistic kinds of research are often more important than more social scientific kinds. Put into the terms of the cocreational molecule in Figure 9, the gap between Circle 1 and Boxes 2 through 4 is usually larger in intercultural practice than in SC practice within a culture, so the gap between Box 4 and Circle 6 is also often much larger.

The matrix, updated and expanded by others, it is hoped, offers only a structure from which to begin the study of cocreationality in intercultural SC. Each campaign has to be planned, carried out and evaluated on the basis of understanding not only the uniqueness of a culture but also the unique interaction of culture and the topic presented in that campaign. For example, public health campaigns conducted in developed countries sometimes run into difficulties with publics who are inundated with contradictory health messages or who may not trust the particular party in charge of the government at a point in time. These same complications exist in developing countries but can be exacerbated by distrust of the communication channel used to carry health information from the "West," or from another tribe or religious sect. Playing on an old saying, SC campaigns within and between cultures are the same but totally different.

International marketing involves very important examples of how SC can differ among cultures, but so does public diplomacy, in which a whole nation or culture seeks to communicate with another culture, and that is the topic of the next subsection.

Public Diplomacy as International/Intercultural SC

Diplomacy is the "art of conducting negotiations between governments" (Deutsch, 1966, p. 81). By this kind of commonly used definition, diplomacy involves the use of SC because negotiation is a communication activity but the focus is on government-to-government relations. Diplomacy is not primarily about SC, but public diplomacy is. Public diplomacy,

> seeks through the exchange of people and ideas to build lasting relationships and receptivity to a nation's culture, values, and policies. It seeks also to influence attitudes and mobilize publics in ways that support policies and interests. Its time horizons are decades and news cycles. Public diplomacy is distinguished from traditional diplomatic interactions between governments. In an age of global media, the Internet revolution, and powerful nonstate actors — an age in which almost everything governments do and say is understood through the mediating filters of news frames, culture, memory, and language — no major strategy, policy, or diplomatic initiative can succeed without public support. Fulbright scholarships, youth exchanges, embassy press briefings, official websites in language versions, and televised interviews with ambassadors and military commanders are examples of public diplomacy. (US Department of Defense, 2004, p. 12)

Thus, public diplomacy is a kind of SC within the definition in Figure 2 because it uses the information flowing into a particular kind of organization to plan and carry out a communication campaign

addressing the relationship between publics and the organization. Because public diplomacy is initiated by a government for the purpose of achieving a national policy goal, it is never purely cocreational. In Figure 8, most, if not all, public diplomacy SC campaigns would be found anywhere from the left end to the midpoint, or a bit past it.

Complicating this assessment of cocreationality in public diplomacy, however, is the fact that recently some have extended the idea of

> public diplomacy more expansively than as an activity unique to sovereign states. This view aims to capture the emerging trends in international relations where a range of non-state actors with some standing in world politics—supranational organizations, sub-national actors, non-governmental organizations, and (in the view of some) even private companies—communicate and engage meaningfully with foreign publics and thereby develop and promote public diplomacy policies and practices of their own. (Center on Public Diplomacy, 2017)

When public diplomacy is defined this broadly examples might be found further to the right of the middle of Figure 8 in Chapter 2.

Such a broad view is reasonable in the sense that many non-state actors do practice SC, including the Red Cross/Red Crescent and Amnesty International, and they may even negotiate with national governments. But does this mean that the SC they are practicing is an example of public diplomacy? Or is it possible that such broad definitions of public diplomacy represent only an acknowledgment of the fact that many non-state actors engage in SC campaigns intended to influence the policies and actions of the state? If the latter, these campaigns might just as reasonably be labeled as other kinds of SC, such as public relations or social marketing. There remains an important distinction between sovereign states and even the largest and most influential non-state actors that typically cannot enact laws of their own, cannot enforce taxes, cannot command military bodies and cannot decide when a political or religious movement in another nation has acquired the status of a legal government by extending it recognition (although the United Nations has unique authority on some of these dimensions). In any case, there is no denying that public diplomacy is a kind of SC and, thus, a subfield of SC.

Conclusion

The thread that runs through this chapter is that *the cocreational paradigm has a natural fit with international/intercultural SC* and these practices are best understood, and most ethically used, from that perspective as opposed to the older instrumental-functional perspective or any of its variants. The cocreational perspective also has the advantage of focusing practitioner attention on the various worldviews, life experiences, or paradigmatic differences among publics from various cultures.

10

Strategic Communication in Terrorism and Counterterrorism

The Missing Narrative

Summary

Both terrorist and counterterrorist communication campaigns are kinds of SC so the cocreational perspective offers a potentially new way to better understand both. The first major section of this chapter discusses what for some has been a surprisingly high rate of success for many terrorist SC campaigns, including the role of mass media, while the second major section turns its attention to what for some is an equally surprisingly low rate of success for many counterterrorism SC campaigns. The conclusion then seeks to expand and apply concepts from Chapters 2, 7 and 8 to counterterror SC. Although not the goal of this book, recall that some discussion of communication ethics in terrorism and counterterrorism can be found at the end of Chapter 4.

Introduction

The author is qualified only to address the communication aspects of terrorism and counterterrorism so what follows is intended to consider only that, and not the political, legal or other aspects of terrorism and counterterrorism. Addressing terrorism through SC is an important undertaking because for about 40 years we have understood that "terrorism has become not merely a political act, but a carefully designed and rhetorically sophisticated attempt at communication" (Decker and Rainey, 1980).

This kind of understanding is the cornerstone of Matusitz's (2013) book about communication and terrorism which provided a communication-focused definition of terrorism that is only somewhat cocreational in that it directs attention to publics but does not focus on the central role of publics: "Terrorism is essentially a communication process. It is disseminated through public communication and publicized through mass communication. Terrorism is a communicative act because it is aimed at a very large audience beyond the direct target" (p. 35). Terrorism and counterterrorism communication are also both specific kinds of risk communication. Therefore, much of what was said in Chapter 7 also applies in this chapter. In fact, several respected risk communication authors, including Fischhoff (2011) and Sandman (2002), have addressed terrorism from the perspective of risk communication. But terrorism-related communication also differs in some ways from most other risk communication because in terrorism the risk is itself a kind of SC campaign. Terrorism also consciously recruits new members and funding through acts of terrorism, and adapts to efforts by

Strategic Communication Theory and Practice: The Cocreational Model, First Edition. Carl H. Botan.

risk communicators to counter it, which is fundamentally different from natural disasters, epidemics or product liability. For these reasons, terrorism-related SC, although a kind of risk communication, warrants a separate chapter.

Strategic communication efforts by terrorist organizations continue to be more successful than might be expected. For example, Zapotosky (2014) reports in the *Washington Post* that a 29-year-old Virginia woman was arrested for trying to use the internet to aid potential terrorist recruits in making arrangements to travel to Syria to join ISIS. Similarly, a 19-year-old from suburban Denver "pleaded guilty to trying to help the terrorist organization after she tried to board a flight to reach Turkey. She reportedly was trying to connect with a man she met online," and in October 2014 "three teenage girls from the Denver area were detained at an airport in Germany and questioned about possibly trying to join the Islamic State. A school official said the girls were victims of an 'online predator'" (pp. B1, B8). Financial supporters are another major target for terrorist communicators, as Rubenfeld (2014) said: "though not as widely cited as kidnapping-for-ransom, social media is a growing tool for terrorist groups to raise money." Just a few years later, it is arguable that social media and the internet have become equally important for many terrorists.

The success of these efforts has not gone unnoticed or uncontested, but it is also apparent from continuing organizational and programmatic changes that leaders do not feel they have yet found the most effective strategies for countering terrorist SC efforts. For example, Schmitt (2015) reports:

> The Obama administration is revamping its effort to counter the Islamic State's propaganda machine, acknowledging that the terrorist group has been far more effective in attracting new recruits, financing and global notoriety than the United States and its allies have been in thwarting it ... The online messaging has aimed to create a competing narrative that strikes an emotional chord with potential militants weighing whether to join a violent extremist group.

In spite of what for many is strange and distasteful content, however, terrorist communication campaigns are a kind of SC campaign that a cocreational perspective might help us understand better. Counterterror communication campaigns are also a kind of SC campaign and a cocreational perspective on these might highlight ways to make them more effective, and more consistent, than in the past. The terrorist or counterterrorist campaign planners that do the best job of understanding the *primary* role of publics in all SC are likely to come out ahead because the use of SC for both terrorist and counterterrorist purposes reinforces the understanding *that SC is not inherently good or bad, it is just powerful*; one reason the ethics chapter was placed early in this book.

The two main sections of this chapter, terrorism as SC and counterterrorism SC, are intended to provide a background for a cocreational view on these two very different kinds of SC and to provide enough detail to help planners develop strategic counterterrorism communication campaigns.

Terrorism as Strategic Communication

Terrorism as SC is by no means a new idea; it has been a consistent feature of world history regardless of geography or politics for centuries. For example, in the ancient Middle East, Joshua's famous sacking of Jericho (when the walls were reported to come tumbling down after trumpets sounded) included the killing of every man, woman and child except for one who had helped them take the city. According to the Book of Deuteronomy in the Christian Bible, Joshua was obeying God's instruction that, "of the cities of these people, which the LORD thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth," an unfortunately common view in ancient as well as modern

times. Joshua was not concerned with just one battle; he was also sending an SC message of terror to all those city-states he might wish to conquer. In modern times, the same message of terror is communicated either the same way, as in Rwanda, or with slight alteration, as in the use of systematic and mass rape and killing to threaten the entire Muslim population of Bosnia "as Serbian forces 'ethnically cleansed' the Muslim villages of eastern and western Bosnia" (Fisk, 1993). This also suggests that casting modern terrorism as a product of Islam is not reasonable. After all, Joshua was practicing what we would now call ethnic cleansing before the term was coined, and such practices that were common in the ancient world are still used for many of the same reasons today.

There are some major differences between terrorism communication in ancient times and today, however. Mazzoleni, Penchalapadu and Botan (2006) said:

> As is often the case today, historical acts of terrorism are often associated with specific religious views ... For example, in what might be thought of as forerunners of the attack on the World Trade Center on 9/11, an ancient terrorist faction, the Order of Assassins, operated in Persia, Syria and Palestine (Laqueur, 1999), even murdering the chief minister of the Sultan of Baghdad. In fact, Alexander (2006, p. 1) concluded that "modern terrorism really sprang from [these two] groups."
>
> One might reasonably ask, "if terrorism has a long history why does it seem to be such an overriding concern for governments, the media and regular citizens today?" We believe that the information revolution, and particularly terrorist use of new information technologies such as the internet, provides much of the answer. (p. 2)

Meaning and Strategic Communication Purpose of Terrorism

Using the term terrorism can be complicated because some people focus on just the act rather than its strategic purpose. In an American example, when President Obama was criticized by some for not referring to the bombing at the Boston Marathon as terrorism on the first day, Zarate (2013) said

> There are several reasons that any president—and particularly Obama—would rightfully exercise restraint in using the word initially. The term has legal and national security implications ... There are specific legal definitions of "terrorism," found in several variations of U.S. law. In general, terrorism is not just an act of violence but one conducted with a particular purpose in mind: to intimidate a population or to coerce or affect a government's policy.

We reviewed several definitions of terrorism in Mazzoleni, Penchalapadu and Botan (2006) and among them Schmid and Jongman's (2005) somewhat long definition stands out because of the number of SC concepts it weaves together:

> Terrorism is an anxiety-inspiring method of repeated violent action, employed by (semi-)clandestine individual, group, or state actors, for idiosyncratic, criminal, or political reasons, whereby—in contrast to assassination—the direct targets of violence are not the main targets. The immediate human victims of violence are generally chosen randomly (targets of opportunity) or selectively (representative or symbolic targets) from a target population, and serve as message generators. Threat- and violence-based communication processes between terrorist (organization), (imperiled) victims, and main targets are used to manipulate the main target (audience), turning it into a target of terror, a target of demands, or a target of attention, depending on whether intimidation, coercion, or propaganda is primarily sought. (p. 28)

Thus the goal of terrorism is not the tactical terrorist act. The strategic goal of terrorism is to use tactical terrorist acts to communicate danger and a need to be fearful to larger publics than the terrorist could ever affect directly with their tactics and thus accumulate political, ideological or economic power, which, of course, are overlapping. Terrorists and their supporters use, and often see, their acts as a kind of strategic communication so counterterrorist efforts that miss this fact fall into a trap by failing to respond at the strategic level to a strategic-level attack. They thus weaken their own position for the future.

Terrorism's Critical Publics

Terrorism's sympathetic, potentially sympathetic and mass media publics are most critical to terrorist organizations, although the mass publics they seek to terrorize are also critical to their success. The first two are critical because they are major sources of new members and funding, the third because they allow for terrorism to affect vastly more people than it could without mass media coverage, and the latter because terrorists alone seldom have anywhere near the power needed to directly influence the political, ideological and economic environment, so they need to try to sway mass publics to seeing things as they wish them to.

Terrorists begin the process of recruiting the members and money they need to survive by identifying their most important potentially sympathetic audiences, which Razzaque (2013) says include disaffected young males in the late teen to early twenties age groups. Indeed Razzaque says that "it is not a coincidence that university campuses around Europe are sometimes seen as hotbeds of extremist recruitment," and that those who want to recruit future terrorists must catch young males just as they are entering into adulthood, when their self-concept is not fully developed. Terrorists work through SC campaigns complete with planned strategies, narratives, demographic targeting and other attributes familiar to other SC practitioners. For example, according to Razzaque (2013), the disaffected youth often hear the narrative that

> Yes, you are different ... But you are different for a reason. You are a chosen one. You will join the ranks of a hallowed few at the forefront of a cosmic struggle between good and evil. This way, the deflated ego is pumped up. Shame and humiliation are converted into pride and honor ... Like a noose, the community of "the elite" constrict around the radicalized youth. A sense of righteous anger is stoked within and cherished ... That anger comes from giving the young man the most dangerous mindset known to mankind, that of the victim.

Thus the question of how SC can be used to combat the radicalization of youth and others becomes important because terrorism has a secure future as long as it has a pool of recruits and funders that stay receptive to its SC campaigns.

To keep the record straight, none of this is intended to suggest that counterterror actions such as visa checkpoints, military campaigns, terror alerts or blocking certain financial transactions are unimportant—they are important. They are also not SC, so they cannot directly contest the SC efforts of terrorists. The big challenges are in *why* people sneak across borders to join terrorist organizations, or *why* they donate money to them, and how to take the initiative away from terrorist organizations by establishing better communication relationships with terrorism's critical publics than terrorists can.

View of the Role of Mass Media in Terrorism

Using terror as a tool to communicate fear and intimidate publics into political or religious submission has a long history. However, in ancient times behaviors equivalent to beheadings in the Middle East, subway bombings in London, or cutting off children's hands and kidnapping girls in sub-Saharan

Africa did not become known to massive civilian populations on other continents, so they were certainly not the defining experiences for far-flung populations that they are today. As Mazzoleni, Penchalapadu and Botan (2006) suggested, in the modern era of mass and electronic media, terrorism has acquired a central position in the domestic discourse of many nations. This central position is true for millions, even if no one they know personally, or that their families and friends have ever known personally, has actually experienced a terrorist act. The mass media, internet and social media have played the biggest role in making terrorism a kind of daily reality for literally millions of people whose personal experiences do not include terrorism.

Note, however, that tactical terrorist acts are not just part of terrorist strategies. They are also *legitimate news* and the free press has the right to cover and discuss them. Treating such acts as news is legally protected in many countries, and constitutionally guaranteed in the US, although such coverage often falls into the terrorist's trap of providing them with precisely the publicity that is so critical to them. Addressing the role of mass media in making it possible for terrorists to achieve their primary strategic goal is the internal responsibility of professional journalism in nations with legally protected freedom of the press, and of their financial leaders and investors everywhere, so the next subsection comments on these matters only very briefly.

Effects of media coverage of terrorism The question of whether the mass media should cover terrorism has been debated by many authors. Some suggest that the mass media appear unable to refuse to publicize terrorist acts and some research also suggests that coverage encourages more such acts (Chenoweth, 2012; Doward, 2015). Others suggest that the media cover terrorism so extensively because most of the mass media are for-profit corporations and perceive covering terrorism as responding to a profitable market demand.

While many practitioners and academics challenge the judgment of the media in publicizing terrorist attacks, not everyone agrees. Academics such as Cohen-Almagor (2005) have called for a more nuanced analysis, and newscaster Dan Rather was struck by a speech by President Santos of Colombia, who put it like this: "I am not saying, and be careful not to misquote me, that terrorism is the media's fault. No. But terrorism thrives on generating terror." Rather (2012) observed, "it's a message that reporters everywhere should ponder: The news media can help terrorists just by reporting their frightful acts to a mass audience."

As President Santos said, this does not mean that media coverage causes terrorism, for at least three reasons. First, from the cocreational perspective, publics have a right to cocreate their own meanings about terrorism and media coverage is part of making this possible, along with preparedness and coordinated responses to terrorism. Second, a free press is an important democratic right and seeing terrorism as a reason to restrict a free press would play into the hands of terrorists. Finally, terrorism often flourishes in military and religious dictatorships where media coverage is highly restricted, if not outright banned. So it is illogical to think that a free press causes terrorism. There seems to be little doubt, however, that media coverage does contribute directly to some of the most bizarre pseudo-events used by terrorists, including cross burnings, for example.

Terrorism's use of pseudo-events Media coverage is important to terrorist organizations, even to the point of creating their own media outlets and pseudo-events when necessary. The term pseudo-event is not used to trivialize an event. It is a term of art from the SC subfield of PR, although the tactic extends across all subfields, particularly political communication and marketing. Pseudo-events are events contrived for the purpose of getting media coverage, or social media coverage today. That is, a pseudo-event is planned and staged solely to attract attention and coverage in order to send a message to others. The Boston Tea Party during the American Revolution is one famous example.

Elaborate staging and advance publicity made the beheadings of Western captives by Islamic State in late 2014 into pseudo-events because those same victims could have been killed off-camera, but then the accompanying political speeches would not have gotten worldwide media exposure. Other hostage killings have been staged on beautiful beaches and other locations that make the murders themselves stand out. Be clear that *the killings are not pseudo-events*, death is real. The pseudo-event is the elaborate staging, sometimes days of forewarning and buildup, and sometimes free passage to those who record or report on the killings. Such staging is an obvious ploy for coverage to help spread the terrorists' message, and even more extreme pseudo-events are virtually assured for as long as they continue to generate worldwide media soapboxes. Just how elaborate this staging often is was reported in the *Washington Post* by Miller and Mekhennet (2015) who said, "Camera crews fan out across the caliphate every day, their ubiquitous presence distorting the events they purportedly document. Battle scenes and public beheadings are so scripted and staged that fighters and executioners often perform multiple takes and read their lines from cue cards." Indeed, according to their account, Islamic State's "[s]enior media operatives are treated as 'emirs' of equal rank to their military counterparts. They are directly involved in decisions on strategy and territory"; their media people, a defector told them, "are more important than the soldiers ... Their monthly income is higher. They have better cars."

This fondness of pseudo-events may become even more grotesque if Craig (2016) is correct. When referring to the skinning alive of a prisoner of the Taliban, Craig said:

> As the original leaders of the insurgency die, they are being replaced by younger commanders who appear less interested in maintaining ties to the local areas in which they are fighting. These fighters also are more connected through the internet to the global ambitions of militant Islamic groups, which is resulting in some Taliban commanders' attempting to borrow the fear tactics used by the Islamic State in Iraq and Syria.

This is part of why terrorists typically claim credit, even for acts that will bring massive retaliation. Their acts are attempts to communicate with specific publics and if those publics are unsure of whom the message is from, the purpose of the act is not achieved. Terrorists must communicate with the publics they need to supply the two things most necessary to perpetuate themselves: recruits and sufficient resources to keep operating. Thus the terrorist acts themselves are not the main events from the point of view of the terrorists themselves; as the al-Qaeda leader Ayman al-Zawahiri said to another al-Qaeda leader, "I say to you: that we are in a battle, and that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media" (Peritz and Simcox, 2014). Today the media battlefield Zawahiri talked about includes the internet and social media, the use of which by terrorists is sometimes called cyberterrorism.

Narrative Featured in Terrorist Strategic Communication

In "The real war is the war of narrative," Pitafi (2014) said,

> Terrorists of all hues—Al Qaeda, Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan and its countless affiliates, Afghan Taliban and its affiliates like the Haqqani network, India-focused terror groups like Lashkar-e-Tayyaba and sectarian terror groups like Lashkar-e-Jhangvi—use two weapons: incredible hatred towards their victims and a narrative to convince and recruit new supporters to the cause.
>
> This narrative of victimhood, denial and conspiracy theories can easily be deconstructed and dismantled. But what with the rising anger in the country, fracturing of the society and the

> general iffiness of the times we live in, no one has done anything substantial about the issue despite harping on about it at great length.

While Russell and Rafiq (2016) identify what they called the most fundamental of the terrorist narratives:

> In its simplest incarnation, the Islamist narrative is "Islam is under attack and we must defend it." In terrorism, it is used to promote violence, in extremism it is used to promote values that are antithetical to human rights norms, and in radicalisation it is used to exploit vulnerable people and recruit them to the cause. This narrative is sufficiently broad to apply to populations all over the world, to local and international conflicts, and to oppose domestic and foreign policies. It is sufficiently malleable to apply to group and personal grievances, both real and perceived. (p. 3)

Several authors have discussed other themes terrorists weave into the narratives they use in appealing to their sympathetic publics. In an analysis restricted to Islamic terrorists, Quiggin (2009) provides a review of books and concepts that underpin much of their SC because they are central to the ideology of al-Qaeda. Of particular interest is Quiggin's summary of the role of the hero in terrorist narrative and the implication that the receiver can fulfill that role in the narrative if they want to, saying,

> Terrorists at all levels in al-Qaeda, from the leaders of organizations down to the inspired home-grown jihadists tell stories. These stories, or narratives, are used to reinforce their views on global grievances, recruit new members, justify their own actions, and develop new ideas on organization and tactics. Terrorist extremists also use narrative stories to maintain group cohesion, especially among smaller groups or cells that operate in isolation.
>
> Much has been written about what constitutes a story or a narrative. It is not the intent of this article to enter into that debate. In general terms, however, it can be said that a narrative must have a beginning point, a middle part and an end. The beginning is the set-up for the narrative or recalls a grievance or difficult situation. The middle part then must have a hero or agent or potential solution to the problems. The end of the narrative either shows the solution or challenges the recipients to act for themselves on what they now know is the problem. (p. 23)

Arguably one of the most common themes in terrorist SC is appealing to shame and masculinity among their sympathetic publics. In doing so, they present a narrative in which joining or supporting the terrorist organization will allow followers to reclaim their supposedly lost masculinity. For example, Beutel and Perez (2016), in reference to psychology and the terrorist propaganda of ISIS (Islamic State in Iraq and Syria), note that "one consistently recurring theme is the emphasis on masculinity and humiliation." They go on to say:

> Arie Kruglanski, a University of Maryland professor in psychology, points out that much of the appeal in ISIS' messaging lies in its ability to exploit a person's desire to feel respected by oneself and by others. Extremists exploit this "quest for significance," as Kruglanski calls it, by speaking about Muslims' collective humiliation at the hands of Western powers and their Muslim allies. ISIS' use of child soldiers in their propaganda videos plays on the discomfort many men experience at the thought of a child being more empowered than themselves to avenge Muslims' perceived humiliation.

Schmid (2015) explains just how advanced terrorist SC is:

> The media campaign of ISIS is very professional by any standards, with high-quality visual footage and well-crafted ideological statements attracting young Muslims and some recent converts to Islam to join its ranks. Per day, ISIS produces up to 90,000 tweets and other social media responses—a volume of activity unmatched by government counter-messaging. According to the American FBI director, James Comey, ISIS has been issuing statements in almost two dozen languages. (pp. 1–2)

Schmid also says that "ISIS has caught the imagination of a considerable number of young rebellious Muslims all over the world who are attracted by its violent messages and catchy slogans. Its apparent success has also led to a number of instant conversions to Islam among mainly marginalised non-Muslim youths in Western countries" (p. 1). He explains how this happens, saying that, as propaganda, pronouncements of ISIS are generally well-crafted, playing on narratives familiar with many Muslims. He quotes, for instance, this passage from the declaration of the Caliphate by Abu Bakr, where he plays on the themes of shame and humiliation many Muslims have experienced in their lives:

> "Lift your heads up high. You now have a state and a caliphate that restores your honor, your might, your rights and your sovereignty. The state forms a tie of brotherhood between Arab and non-Arab, white and black, Easterner and Westerner. The caliphate brings together the Caucasian, Indian, Chinese, Shami, Iraqi, Yemeni, Egyptian, North African, American, French, German and Australian ... They are all in the same trench, defending each other, protecting each other and sacrificing for one another. Their blood mingles together under one flag [with] one goal and in one camp ... perform hijra from darul-kufr to darul-Islam. There are homes here for you and your families. You can be a major contributor towards the liberation of Makkah, Madinah, and al-Quds. Would you not like to reach Judgment Day with these grand deeds ... A life of jihad is impossible until you pack your belongings and move to the caliphate." (p. 3)

Thus, it is probably fair to say that terrorists make pervasive and fairly successful use of narrative and that their key themes often include increased masculinity, freedom and dignity. The big question is, first, why many of their publics (see earlier note about their success rates) believe what terrorist SC says, and second, why do counterterrorist efforts frequently seem unable to compete effectively against these terrorist SC campaigns? The former is, of course, outside the scope of this book, but the latter is not. From the cocreational view, the latter question can be answered in large part by understanding the strategic value of narrative and then contrasting its strategic use by terrorists to the lack of narrative, and indeed often of any strategic content, in counterterror communication campaigns.

This is a good place to emphasize that only a small minority of all terrorists are of the Islamic faith, and that only a very tiny percentage of followers of that faith ever turn to terrorism. For example, even with the doubtful assumption that all ISIS members actually adhere to the Islamic faith, the *Washington Post* (2016) says that "if attacks with unknown perpetrators are excluded, this means that the Islamic State bore responsibility for 13 percent of terrorist attacks globally [from 2002 to 2015]." Within the United States the numbers are even smaller, with only 6 percent of terrorist acts in the US between 1980 and 2005 attributed to Islamic extremists (Center for Research on Globalization, 2013).

However, much of the academic and governmental research on terrorism in the last decade or two has focused on the biggest, best funded and most internet-savvy terror organizations such as al-Qaeda and Islamic State. Thus, that research is the most sophisticated as well as the most available

and makes up the bulk of examples available for use in this chapter. But specific organizations come and go, while the issues addressed in this chapter are intended to apply across different kinds of terrorist organizations and even across time periods. One of the most important of these lessons is the role of narrative in terrorist SC and the need to become much more sophisticated in the use of this and other strategic-level tools for counterterrorism SC as well.

Narrative as storytelling Narrative and storytelling are the same thing for some authors (e.g., Altman, 2008), and most others studying narrative, or narratology as Bal (2009) calls it, do not make a major effort to differentiate between the two. One of the common strategies used throughout SC is the use of stories and narratives, and this is a strategy involving elements of both the right and left sides of Figure 8. At first using it requires thinking about the meanings publics already have, and will cocreate after sharing in the narrative. Using narratives is an attempt to link to important parts of a public's culture and history, sometimes by linking to their psychological and social needs and sometimes by making other links. Among other advantages of narrative stories, they help individuals and groups to visualize themselves, often in a starring role, in the scenarios. Thus, deciding to use a narrative approach, and on which narrative to choose, is at the level of a strategic decision, and it has a cocreational component. But the ultimate goal remains to instrumentalize those publics.

Deciding to use a narrative approach in an SC campaign is part of Box 3 in Figure 9 and requires a fair amount of thought about Circle 1 of that figure, because presenting a view or opinion as a story is an attempt not only to involve a public but also, by appearing not to directly address the point of the story, to actually make the point both apparent and more palpable to publics, *and* to integrate that point with the public's background and culture. Outside terrorism, a common example of the narrative approach to socializing new members into an organization or belief system is the sacred story common to health, religion and organizational communication, among other areas of study. Such stories are often part of narratives.

Narrative, naming and framing Narrative is closely related to framing and that is yet another way to understand how terrorist SC functions. Framing is used in many fields, including marketing (Maheswaran and Meyers-Levy, 1990), religion (Stout and Buddenbaum, 2003), the news media (Norris, Kern and Just, 2013), psychology (Tversky and Kahneman, 1981), economics, and others. In all these fields, framing means slightly different things, or at least has different emphases, so it is a little hard to pin down. From the subfield of political communication, Schaffner and Sellers (2010) cite a definition of framing from Shanto Iyengar: "The concept of framing is applied quite differently across psychology, sociology, political science, and communications. In operational terms, however, there is less diversity; researchers have converged on a relatively loose definition of framing as information that conveys differing perspectives on some event or issue" (p. x).

In SC, framing is the everyday, but still potentially strategic, endeavor of placing an idea into a particular context that can help publics cocreate meanings with, and about, it. I do not discuss framing at any length in this book because it is by no means solely found on the cocreational side of Figure 8. Framing can be, and very often is, used to help instrumentalize and manipulate publics as much as or more than it is to help publics cocreate their own meanings. At one level, framing can be as simple as naming something, while at another it can be as complex as creating a visual frame or whole narratives.

Framing by naming things (cf. Clark, 2006) provides some well-known examples of framing and is commonly used in communication campaigns and writing. In fact, this book has already discussed framing by naming back in Chapter 3, but without using the term. In Chapter 3 the subsection titled "Labels and Subfields Are Important" used the term labels to mean basically the same thing that the

term naming means in this chapter (because at that point in the book the foundation for discussing naming had not yet been laid and label is a more familiar term for most). The Langer and Abelson (1974) study discussed there was also an example of naming as framing.

Framing a cause or a person by naming is understood to be important by most of us, particularly when it comes to discussing what many consider to be sensitive topics. What members of different races or nationalities are called, for example, puts a frame around how they are being thought about by the campaign sponsor and may also influence how publics think about them. This is why social movements often put a lot of effort into struggling to be named, and thus framed, in ways they think are fair and constructive. The same goes for gender discussions (e.g., girl vs. woman), abortion (right to life vs. right to choose), graffiti (vandalism vs. art) and so on. Even the topic of this chapter, terrorism, is framed very differently depending on which side one sees it from. Those who commit acts of terror (and, of course, naming them terrorists in this book is itself an act of framing) may be labeled as freedom fighters or martyrs in one land, but murderers in another. Counterterror SC practitioners may be called protectors in one land but apostates in another. And so on. Both narrative and framing reflect SC practitioners' metatheories about publics, so it is an ethical responsibility of practitioners to be thoughtful and accountable when they use framing.

Cyberterrorism and the New Media

One kind of communicative terrorism deserving special mention in this age is cyberterrorism (see also Chapter 8). The term cyberterrorism is a kind of catchall phrase for many, but it refers to the use of a few specific technologies such as the internet, in what is termed cyberspace. Denning (2000) says cyberterrorism is the convergence of terrorism and cyberspace and that cyberterrorism is when acts that result in violence, generate fear or harm critical infrastructure. Denning goes on to say,

> Cyberspace is constantly under assault. Cyber spies, thieves, saboteurs, and thrill seekers break into computer systems, steal personal data and trade secrets, vandalize Web sites, disrupt service, sabotage data and systems, launch computer viruses and worms, conduct fraudulent transactions, and harass individuals and companies. These attacks are facilitated with increasingly powerful and easy-to-use software tools, which are readily available for free from thousands of Web sites on the Internet.

Mazzoleni, Penchalapadu and Botan (2006) were referring to cyberterrorism when they said that the new media "represent a significant jump in the 'communication power' of terrorism, because [it] escapes centralized control and preventive censorship" (p. 5). They cited Weimann (2006) in saying that the internet is an ideal arena for terrorist activities because it offers:

- easy access
- little or no regulation, censorship, or other forms of government control
- potentially huge audiences spread throughout the world
- anonymity of communication
- fast flow of information
- interactivity
- inexpensive development and maintenance of a Web presence
- a multimedia environment ...
- the ability to shape coverage in the traditional mass media, which increasingly use the Internet as a source for stories. (pp. 29–30)

Weimann (2006) also argued that there are seven rhetorical strategies often found on terrorist websites, including (1) *displacement of responsibility* (the use of violence is attributed to compelling circumstances and is therefore not the aggressor's free choice); (2) *diffusion of responsibility*; (3) *dehumanization of targets* (this causes the victim to be viewed as subhuman, in his or her symbolic dimension); (4) *use of euphemistic language* (to present aggression as a tolerable act; the example is al-Qaeda's reference to 9/11 as an attack on the symbols of American power without mentioning the killing of 3,000 people); (5) *making of advantageous comparisons* (by emphasizing the far worse actions attributed to the "enemy"); (6) *distortion of sequence of events* (e.g., 9/11 attacks as retaliations for US aggression in the Middle East); (7) *attribution of blame* (the victims are blamed and accused of causing the attacks, while the aggressors' actions are retaliatory or defensive) (pp. 54–56).

While cyberterrorism in expert terms involves only terrorist attacks against communication (cf. Infosec Institute, 2012), the term is often used more informally to describe all uses of the internet to advance terrorist interests, including recruitment. For example, Mazzoleni, Penchalapadu and Botan (2006) was a content analysis of how terrorist websites are used to support and recruit for major terrorist organizations, particularly those claiming to be motivated by the Muslim faith. They studied the role of three constructs, religion, violence and aggression, as they related to terrorist websites and found a strong correlation between the presence of religious and violent keywords in the text of extremist websites.

Cocreational View of Terrorism Communication

From the cocreational perspective, publics do not cocreate their meanings using just message content, but they also use their own understanding of both the channel employed and the source of the message. Thus, any counterterror communicators operating from an instrumental view have too simplistic an understanding of what their messages end up meaning to publics. The more nuanced the understanding counterterror communicators have of publics, channels and sources, the more likely they are to be more successful. For example, channels have both strategic and tactical roles in terrorist as well as counterterrorist SC campaigns, and they also have an effect on the messages they receive and retransmit. A message-focused approach to counterterrorism is, therefore, naive because it ignores, or at least plays down, the whole meaning-cocreation process in publics. Counterterrorist communicators need this kind of more nuanced view in building relationships with terrorism's critical publics.

From the cocreational view, publics also do not simply accept what either terrorists or counterterrorists say, any more than they simply accept what a political candidate says. Instead they engage in meaning cocreation about acts of terrorism in the same way as they do in every instance of SC. Terrorist acts are no more a persuasive magic bullet than an advertisement for whiter teeth, or an anti-smoking campaign. For instance, Matusitz (2013) addresses the essence of the challenge terrorists face as strategic communicators, albeit somewhat narrowly, saying, "the potential targets ... construe the aims of the terrorist attack as a function of their [the victims'] distinctive attributes, such as race, religion or social identity" (p. 37). Construing the aims of terrorists is only one way that publics construct and attach meanings to the terrorist act, and any accompanying media coverage. Understanding terrorists based on their acts is a broader process based on many more factors, including analysis as to what ideas about cause and effect (theories) and worldviews (metatheories) drive the actions of terrorists. A given public might, for example, see a particular terrorist act as reflecting a metatheory that says fear, when extreme enough, can control all people. There are some publics terrorism may seek to control by other means, if possible. These are the sympathetic publics terrorists understand are critical for them to win over.

Strategic content in terrorist communication Terrorists have succeeded in using SC campaigns like the ones Razzaque (2013) refers to, telling mostly disaffected young males how important and unfairly treated they are to attract needed members and funding. One reason for such success becomes clear when the narrative described by Razzaque, and others similar to it, is analyzed for strategic content. Razzaque is only one of many voices that have touched on what, from the cocreational view, is the key issue in this chapter—the very different strategies terrorists and counterterrorists use in communicating with their publics.

Schmid (2015) identified, and sourced, 12 claims frequently made by ISIS. I reprint eight of these here as examples that might help readers identify terrorist narrative strategies.

Claim No. 1: ISIS claims that it stands for pure and unadulterated Islam.
Claim No. 2: ISIS claims that Muslims are persecuted and their rights violated all over the world and that the only solution to stop this is to fight back.
Claim No. 3: ISIS claims that true Islam can only be established by the sword. This means that members of other religions and sects, including the monotheist ones (e.g., Jews, Christians), can be subjugated, forced to convert or be killed.
Claim No. 4: According to some ISIS clerics, civil strife (fitna) is a positive thing because in its course the true believers (ISIS) come to the surface, distinguishing them from the heretics and hypocrites.
Claim No. 5: ISIS claims that a Muslim has to pass through the stage of violent jihad in order to enter paradise. Jihad is even a precondition for the establishment of the *ummah*, since otherwise no separation can take place between *mu'minin* (believers), *munafiqin* (hypocrites) and *kuffar* (unbelievers). The process of ruthless separation must be continued until the two camps are completely separated: the camp of *iman* (belief) vs. the camps of *nifaq* and *kufr*.
Claim No. 7: ISIS claims that, under present circumstances, Muslim unity becomes mandatory and that therefore it becomes a religious obligation to unify under a single leader.
Claim No. 9: ISIS claims that the IS-caliphate is the true land of Islam and emigration (*hjirah*) to the land of Islam is obligatory. Whoever joins ISIS will find great rewards in this world and in the hereafter.
Claim No. 12: ISIS claims that it is capable of hitting Western interests all over the world by means of its affiliates, with the number of highly motivated, dedicated followers growing by the day. (pp. 4–13)

Terrorists use far too many narratives and themes in their SC efforts to cover in this chapter, sometimes even couching promises of rewards intended to appeal to the basest wishes of even their basest sympathetic publics in the guise of religious laws. One particularly disturbing example that discussed terrorist ownership of sex slaves was reported by Reuters (Landay, Strobel and Stewart, 2015).

> Among the fatwa's junctions are bans on a father and son having sex with the same female slave; and the owner of a mother and daughter having sex with both. Joint owners of a female captive are similarly enjoined from intercourse because she is viewed as "part of a joint ownership." ...
>
> Far from trying to conceal the practice, Islamic State has boasted about it and established a department of "war spoils" to manage slavery. Reuters reported on the existence of the department on Monday.
>
> In an April report, Human Rights Watch interviewed 20 female escapees who recounted how Islamic State fighters separated young women and girls from men and boys and older women. They were moved "in an organized and methodical fashion to various places in Iraq and Syria." They were then sold or given as gifts and repeatedly raped or subjected to sexual violence.

Figure 4 defined strategy as "the campaign-level planning and decision-making involving maneuvering and arranging resources and arguments to carry out organizational grand strategies." Here, in the last chapter of this book, is an appropriate place to revisit the idea of strategy in SC by further exploring maybe the most important aspect of SC strategy, *what* points to make. For example, in a political campaign should the emphasis be on your candidate as more experienced than the opponent, or should the emphasis be on the claim that the other candidate is so bad your candidate must be voted for to avoid disaster? Or, should a particular public health practice be presented as necessary because the newest scientific data support that, or by heartfelt personal testimony from a famous athlete or show business personality, or both? Likewise, when arranging multiple arguments in a campaign should you follow the principle of primacy or of recency? Several other strategic approaches were presented and discussed in Chapter 6, and staged pseudo-events were discussed earlier in this chapter along with the publicity statements typically attached to these pseudo-events. The last page also reprinted several ISIS strategies. One key point of this chapter is how well terrorist communicators have learned to use narrative and framing as strategic tools, while counterterror communicators appear not to have been nearly as adept at using them. Thus, we pick up the discussion of narrative and apply it to counterterrorism SC.

Counterterrorism Strategic Communication

Introduction

Terrorism is the marriage of violence with strategic messaging, and has both strategic and tactical dimensions. Although it is an imperfect fit, terrorism can also be seen from the perspective of the Chapter 7 discussion of the content and relational aspects of communication in Watzlawick, Beavin-Bavelas and Jackson (2011), with terrorist acts seen as attempts to create a communicative relationship with publics that has both content and relational aspects—fear for some and shared pride for others—drawn from the same content. As discussed, terrorists have fairly sophisticated narratives with which to appeal to both fear and pride relationships out of the same content. When it comes to counterterror SC, it is not easy to equally identify the relational part of messages—although, as will be argued, one relational message does seem to come through to the sympathetic publics of counterterror messages, stay out of the way and let the experts handle this. Thus, it often appears that counterterror efforts make the mistake of engaging with only the tactical side of terrorism while failing to contest the strategic.

This can happen when, for example, personnel have little or no real training in communication and as a result a minimal understanding of the strategic part of SC, or when supervisors have only a tactical-level understanding and therefore assign only tactical-level tasks to communication practitioners. The effect of not understanding the strategic role of communication and seeing it as no more than a tool that can be wielded equally well by anyone assigned to use it is often to cede the whole domain of *strategic* communication to the terrorist opponents. Such tactical responses to strategic terror messaging can sometimes be recognized by just looking for the actual content of what terrorists are saying to their publics and then looking to see if the "response" also addresses the actual content of what the terrorists said. Publics cocreate new meanings based largely on their own experiences and values and partially on the contents of SC campaigns. If publics get only tactical-level messages from those opposing terrorism, and more sophisticated tactical *and* strategic messages from terrorists, counterterror efforts are left at a big disadvantage and so are publics.

Of course, many aspects of counterterror communication are not strategic per se but can be part of implementing a strategy. Examples would include one-on-one counterterror relationships and the peer-to-peer video sponsored by the US Department of State and Facebook (Sgro, 2016), which seems to focus mostly on building cross-cultural understanding among non-Muslim youth. Much preparedness communication also has to be at the tactical level, such as information on what supplies to stockpile, what evacuation routes to use and so on. Clearly, then, engaging in tactical communication practices is not at all wrong. The problem, as will be emphasized, occurs when tactical communication is the only response to terrorists' strategic communication.

This section of the chapter first extends the discussion of narrative to counterterror SC. Second, it looks at what may be the critical weakness in counterterror communication practices, an overreliance on military-legal-expert communication brought about by what has been called the law of the instrument. It then concludes with short discussions of the limitations of the mass media in counterterror communication, and a conclusion.

Narrative in Counterterror Strategic Communication

Pitafi (2014) and others have been cited in explaining what narrative is and how important it is in terrorist communication campaigns. But narrative, framing and storytelling are by no means limited to use by terrorists. Major religions, political campaigns, social organizations and others use narrative as a means of communicating with their publics. Maybe most importantly, publics who themselves practice what I call the SC from below of social cause and social movements have cocreated various meanings that they often use narratives to explain. Of course, this example also raises the question of whether a public that has become sufficiently organized to plan and conduct their own SC campaign continues to be a public, or whether they have become SC practitioners, or something else. A chicken versus egg discussion I resolve by returning to the cocreational definition of a public in Figure 10 that says, "a public is an interpretive community engaged in an ongoing process of developing a shared understanding of its relationship with a group or organization." This does not disqualify a group of people from being both a public and practicing SC at the same time.

Surprisingly, then, many authors have felt the need to address the underuse of narrative in counterterrorism communication, which, if true, would constitute ceding one of the most powerful of strategic tools to the exclusive use of terrorists. Among these authors have been Nemr's (2016) web post "Strategies to counter terrorist narratives are more confused than ever," Maan's (2015) book *Counter-Terrorism: Narrative Strategies*, and literally dozens of other good efforts about counterterrorist narratives. Leuprecht et al. (2009) also addressed the importance of developing counter-narratives:

> Since 9/11, intelligence and security services have become particularly concerned about radical ideologies and have looked for ways on how to counter them. One of the strategies has been to develop a counter-narrative. Some authors, including those of this article, are concerned that, in the marketplace of ideas, the West is losing market-share. Communication failures with the Muslim world were cited in a report by a U.S. Department of Defense Advisory Committee as early as 2004. The puzzle this article explores is why, having recognized the problem early on, the data suggest that further ground has since been lost. We posit the problem as having to shift the discourse from one focusing on a single counter-narrative to one of tailoring communications to target specific audiences. The article traces methodological and empirical shortcomings that are at the root of the problem and builds on these findings to develop a model to strategize about counter-narratives. (abstract)

Finally, authors have also addressed the issue of underuse of narrative from the other side of the equation, saying an overdependence on force in counterterrorism has led to communication problems. For example, Schmid (2015) says:

> The use of kinetic force against terrorists in the "war on terror" has, in more than a decade of counter-terrorism, in many cases been unproductive and downright counter-productive in other cases. It has been very costly in terms of lives and money lost. On the other hand, efforts to counter the ideology that drives terrorism have not made much progress in all these years, for lack of funding as well as for lack of development of effective and tested soft power instruments that target the hearts and minds of would-be jihadists. It is high time to invest more in developing better counter-messages and more persuasive counter-narratives which appeal to Muslims on both the emotional and the intellectual level.
>
> Since counter-narratives are only defensive, it is even more necessary to develop credible alternative narratives—narratives that can give a new sense of purpose, meaning and hope to those who feel that they have no future in their and our societies. (p. 15)

Narrative requires understanding *meanings* and how to share *meanings* so it requires fairly high-level communication or literature and is hard work. Municipalities, counties, states and nations targeted by terrorism typically define acts of terror as illegal or acts of war, thus deemphasizing the very large communication aspect of terrorism discussed earlier. So they often assign those with little experience or training in actual SC to lead, coordinate and speak for counterterrorism efforts. This brings the law of the instrument into play.

Law of the Instrument

In an apt analogy, Reardon (2014) said,

> To paraphrase Maslow's Law of the Instrument, "if your only tool is a hammer, you tend to see every problem as a nail." Unfortunately, this tends to be the rule when discussing counterterrorism strategies ... where all too often military or law enforcement approaches are the only instruments in the toolbox—the "hammers" so to speak—for most countries. The problem with a military approach is that it leads to a never-ending cycle of violence where the real victims are innocent civilians caught in the middle. And even though militant extremists may be killed or captured, there will always be more to take their place, much like a game of "whack-a-mole."
>
> While the law enforcement approach tends to be more focused on identifying and prosecuting terrorists ... the reality is all too often those investigations don't start until after a successful attack. Both options are essential tools in a country's overall counterterrorism strategy, but it's important to understand that neither addresses the underlying, root causes of radicalized extremism that created the problem in the first place. For that, you need a well-stocked toolbox that includes a workable and effective long-term programme for countering violent extremism (CVE).

The law of the instrument may help explain why those working at countering terrorism often turn to tools and practices they know, and not to SC. Developed countries are characterized in part by modern sophisticated military organizations, well-established and powerful legal systems, extensive

technical capabilities and a primarily instrumental view of communication that does not contribute meaningfully to combating terror communication. It is not surprising, then, that developed nations often turn to the military, legal and technical tools wielded by government, and the practices associated with them, to fight terrorism.

This largely instrumental response is typically government centered and leans toward the left side of Figure 8 so I call it the military-legal-expert approach to counterterrorist communication. In it, those in authority turn to trained and experienced experts to implement the same basic military, legal and expert response they use for internal criminal activity and external military threats. The problem with this simple transfer of resources from one fight (against domestic crime) to another is that the two do not present anywhere near the same strategic challenge. Terrorists commit acts of terrorism *in order to* communicate with the broadest audiences possible, while criminals seldom do so.

No horse in the race All too often such transfer of tactics happens without stopping to think that, in the cocreational view, the outcome of the new fight will be decided by publics who are neither criminal nor military at the time, so they do not perceive a role for themselves in military-legal-expert responses. This is only natural since, again from the cocreational view, the only role they can fill in such responses to terrorism is the very instrumental one of passive receiver of expert messages. For example, the United Nations, which as a meeting place of government representatives might be expected to turn to the military-legal-expert hammer by default, does not disappoint in that regard. The UN has a Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy that has four pillars, none of which mentions publics or communication campaigns except for the internet as two sub-subpoints.

Terrorists, on the other hand, involve their publics in their messages, even if only in the role of potential random targets. This does *not* mean to suggest that military, legal and expert responses to terrorism are wrong or not worthwhile. *They are very important tools in combating the non-communication aspects of terror.* The error is in bringing this same metaphoric hammer to all counterterrorism efforts, including those that are clearly SC situations requiring a different, publics-centered approach. Sometimes a hammer is called for, but sometimes a narrative is needed and hammers cannot replace narratives. For example, bringing legal resources to bear to find and arrest terrorists *after the act* is necessary, but it has no or very little impact on the terrorists' strategic goal of communicating with various publics, so terrorism's narratives are repeated again and again and go unchallenged every time.

No wonder, then, that terrorist SC sometimes seems to be winning the battle for attention and acceptance from alienated youth and other disenchanted publics. The counterterror side often simply does not have a horse in the SC race, and stretching a metaphor a little bit, it is pretty obvious that you cannot hope to win a horse race if you do not even have a horse in that race. Shehadey (2013) directly addressed this gap between counterterror communicators and publics, saying,

> Three things could be improved to increase US homeland security and increases in domestic counterterrorism since these new public revelations: 1) Closing the widening gap between security professionals and the general public. 2) Increasing citizen awareness to new homeland threats. 3) Greater public participation in counterterrorism and emergency preparedness of the public ...
>
> Unfortunately, instead of cooperation with the public, the modus operandi from the government to the public has often been: "We know what we are doing, we are the professionals and whatever we decide to do will keep you safe."

Depending on a few hundred, to a few thousand, highly trained military-legal-expert specialists to counter what amounts to a full-blown social movement in some places has not worked well so far. One major reason is that an overreliance on military and legal experts, and national policies that largely ignore the meaning-cocreation function of publics, results in a lack of a sound theoretical or practical foundations.

Overdependence on military-legal-expert responses Developed nations may fail to directly challenge terrorism through SC in large part because they simply never think of their own publics as a powerful anti-terror force which, particularly in an SC contest, may have much more potential for defeating terrorism's communication strategies than any government. Interestingly, the Homeland Security Institute (2009), in a report for the US Department of Homeland Security, provided a summary of several aspects of the "public role and engagement in counterterrorism efforts" that seems to support this possibility, including the following points:

- Both the public and the government perceive counterterrorism primarily to be the responsibility of the government.
- In official emergency management and security/counterterrorism programs, the term "the public" appears to be frequently understood to mean only uniformed/official first responders. Thus, large parts of the public at large are excluded.
- The level of public participation in counterterrorism efforts and readiness programs for catastrophic incidents—both natural and manmade, including terrorism-related emergencies—is low.
- The current public apathy may be a result of the lack of effective/adequate programs for greater citizen involvement in counterterrorism practices.
- The number of and funding for effective programs for public education and training on terrorism-related issues is limited and reflects a lack of prioritization at the national level. (p. 3)
- U.S. public education programs on terrorism are often characterized by limited and superficial information on the issue (for example, information often omits the psychological ramifications of terrorism or the psychological warfare aspects of the phenomenon) and, due to a sensitivity lest they are perceived to be "fear mongering," most programs hesitate to speak openly with the public and children about terrorism ...
- American societal and political culture facilitates a greater reliance by the public on local/state/federal government for emergencies and offers limited incentives for motivated public engagement in education programs. (p. 43)
- There is a need for more systematic and comprehensive terrorism awareness and education programs in the United States. Such programs, however, must be structured and conducted to avoid being seen as "fear mongering" or as attempts to manipulate public opinion for other purposes. (p. 45)

Others have addressed this same issue. Another report to the US Department of Homeland Security (Weine et al., 2015) suggested that "although to date law enforcement has been the primary lead on efforts to address violent extremism, shortfalls in successfully engaging communities and providing pre-criminal prevention and intervention initiatives have seriously challenged this approach" (p. 1). While Schmid (2015) said, "In order to break the present momentum of ISIS, the use of military force in Iraq and Syria is not enough. What is needed is a counter-narrative that can seriously challenge and undermine the narrative of ISIS" (p. 2).

Zawahiri's statement, cited earlier, that more than half of this battle is taking place in the battlefield of the media, is somewhat reflected in the view of the US Department of State (2006):

> From the beginning, the War on Terror has been both a battle of arms and a battle of ideas—a fight against the terrorists and their murderous ideology. In the short run, the fight involves the application of all instruments of national power and influence to kill or capture the terrorists; deny them safe haven and control of any nation; prevent them from gaining access to WMD [weapons of mass destruction]; render potential terrorist targets less attractive by strengthening security; and cut off their sources of funding and other resources they need to operate and survive. In the long run, winning the War on Terror means winning the battle of ideas. (Strategic Vision section)

The surprising level of agreement between the head of al-Qaeda and the US Department of State illustrates the critical role of SC when it comes to communicating ideas and meanings.

In spite of what is probably a current overreliance on a military-legal-expert response, such means should not be abandoned, or even reduced. Instead, adding an SC counter-offensive based on careful study and understanding of terrorism's donors, recruits and other sympathetic publics is called for. Terrorists do not just attempt to communicate with, they also want to mobilize mass publics into various levels of active support for terrorism. Counterterrorism efforts, learning from this experience, need to include increasingly active roles for the much larger publics that oppose terrorism—without veering into vigilantism, religious bigotry or the like. Mushrooms may thrive when kept in the dark and fed a controlled diet; publics do not, at least from the cocreational perspective.

Others, including Schmitt (2015), agree that the surprising success of some terrorist appeals may result in large part from counterterror communication campaigns have to date relied too heavily on government responses. According to Schmitt, Nicholas Rasmussen, Director of the National Counterterrorism Center, told the Senate Intelligence Committee: "Unfortunately, as we all know, the government is probably not the best platform to try to communicate with the set of actors who are potentially vulnerable to this kind of propaganda and this kind of recruitment." He went on: "We try to find ways to stimulate this kind of counternarrative, this kind of countermessaging, without having a U.S. government hand in it" because, "people who are attracted to this don't go to the government for their guidance on what to do, not the U.S. government and certainly not their governments in the Middle East."

Clearly, terrorists do not rely on government specialists to communicate for them. They seek to recruit large numbers of surrogate bloggers, social media activists and the like to their goals. In short, they attempt to build a social movement primarily through SC. In most of the targeted countries, however, dealing with these social movements is primarily left to government and its military, legal and other experts, who seem to go to extremes to avoid having counter social movements emerge.

Finally, focusing too heavily on the military, legal and expert aspects of counterterrorism work can also lead to an imbalance in resource allocation as a matter of national policy. For example, the US Department of Homeland Security (2017a; 2017b) dedicates the whole Office for Interoperability and Compatibility to issues related to the expert aspects of communication, while a search of that Department's website found no similar division or area dedicated to communicating with the publics from which terrorism seeks to recruit both members and funds. This imbalance is also demonstrated in the numerous media reports and reports to Congress on counterterrorism communication plans that make no mention of SC campaigns, except to sometimes lament the lack of narrative content.

Mass Media Limitations in Counterterrorism

If an overreliance on military-legal-expert responses to terrorism is problematic, so is an overreliance on the mass media for counterterror communication, although there is not much use of the media for counterterror communication because there is not much counterterror communication to publicize. That is, unless continuous coverage hour after hour and day after day of those committing terrorist acts, and the drama of tracking them down, are counted as counterterror messages, when these actually may do more to meet the strategic needs of terrorists than to counter them.

We should remember that, from the cocreational perspective, it is the meanings that publics cocreate that we should focus on, not the good intentions or the economic interest of media companies. For example, extended coverage of the backgrounds of those committing terrorist acts may provide a narrative through which potential terrorists can identify with how common and unexceptional people can make themselves instantly important and famous with just one act. Such storytelling by the media might be particularly appealing to those disaffected people who already harbor self-destructive tendencies, because a terrorist act might seem to them to make their self-destruction into a meaningful and important event. This risk is not a minor one because there were 41,149 suicides in the US alone in 2013, while among students in grades 9–12 that year 17 percent considered attempting suicide, 13.6 percent made a plan to do so and 8 percent attempted suicide. Among all adults aged 18 or older, an estimated 9.3 million reported having suicidal thoughts and an estimated 2.7 million people made a plan (Centers for Disease Control, 2015).

Greenfeld (2016) extended this analysis to all mental illness, talking about the ideologies reflected in terrorism, and again emphasizing that terrorism is not a characteristic of religion in general or of any one religion in particular. She said,

> The great majority of "homegrown" or "lone-wolf" terror acts are committed by people with a known history of mental illness, most often depression, which counts social maladjustment and problematic sense of self among its core symptoms. Severely depressed people are often suicidal, they find life unlivable ... In a way, such ideologies serve for the mentally ill perpetrators as ready-made delusions, which, as we know also can inspire mass murders. Characteristically, the majority of mass murders, including lone-wolf terrorist acts, in Western countries are committed by people who are willing, in fact plan, to die while carrying them out. These acts offer them a spectacular, memorable, way out—a way of self-affirmation and suicide at once. An association with a great cause—and any ideology presents its cause as great—makes it all the more meaningful for them.

Some, or most, terrorist SC appeals appear to be strategically designed to appeal to mentally ill, anomic, or merely disaffected publics. On the other hand, counterterror appeals often reflect a military-legal-expert perspective and are delivered by specialists who make it a point to sound like experts on these aspects of terrorism, while still appealing to mass media audiences and keeping faith with those political and media authorities who certify them as expert or authorize them to speak. This is a complicated balancing act that they may see as more safely approached through tactical than strategic communication efforts. The resulting communication efforts will fairly consistently be accepted by many publics and rejected by certain smaller publics. Unfortunately, those small publics, even with the extremely low success rates terrorists have in appealing to them, are still the recruiting grounds terrorists need to survive and thrive, and counterterrorism often has no horse in that race.

From a legal perspective, free media can practice journalism as they see fit, even in the interest of profits for their owners if they wish. So free media cannot be, and should not be, legally

obligated to counter, or even to address, the SC part of terrorism. From the cocreational view, however, a free press is most valuable, and most ethical, when it provides what its readers, viewers and listeners need in order to cocreate meanings that will allow them to understand and operate in their world as they see fit. Given the large, and maybe unavoidable role of the mass media in meeting the SC needs of terrorism, it might not be a bad idea for the media to at least try to balance the books by voluntarily forewarning their publics about the possible results of their coverage, thus enabling those publics to make better informed decisions about what meanings they will cocreate using that coverage.

Conclusion

From the cocreational perspective, organized societies that are targeted by terrorism cannot afford to leave their publics out of the fight, or up for grabs. Terrorist SC is pretty consistently strategic in its orientation, while counterterror's SC is too often restricted to the tactical level. For example, terrorist SC, particularly that which is easily available on the internet, discussed in this chapter, often has substantial strategic content. Recall the Razzaque (2013) example cited above: "Yes, you are different ... But you are different for a reason. You are a chosen one. You will join the ranks of a hallowed few at the forefront of a cosmic struggle between good and evil." This is a strategic appeal possibly targeting the vulnerable youth just talked about. Thus, those seeking to use SC to counter terrorist SC will need to become more versatile in their thinking as well as their practices to meet the challenge. Doing so would require a new perspective on counterterror SC, one that focuses on publics and the versatile thinking required to meet the needs of different publics.

This means that, within the definitions discussed in Chapter 2 and elsewhere, much counterterror communication is not really strategic communication, because it is not part of a strategic plan. Recall also from Chapter 2 that the level of analysis in SC is the campaign, not the individual practitioner's workload. This is important because when practices are looked at from the perspective of the whole campaign, it becomes much easier to tell if strategies are parts of the plan, which is in turn important because if decisions are not related to the whole campaign they usually are not strategic, but rather constitute tactical busy work that may, or may not, help combat terrorist SC.

Because communication tactics typically exist to carry out someone's idea of a strategy they can be used to infer the strategy behind the tactical act. This kind of what might be called reverse engineering takes a lot of work, partially because observed tactics usually do not perfectly represent the strategies they are intended to serve. For example, terrorist SC campaigns no doubt have the same troubles with orphan tactics as other kinds of campaigns do. Nevertheless, some insight can be gained by observing communication tactics and then inferring information such as who terrorists see as their sympathetic, media or oppositional publics, and sometimes even what their underlying strategies actually are. For example, a few years ago I was a subinvestigator with several defense contractors on a pretty large grant application that sought to identify the memes (the key messages or images that are imitated or spread) by terrorists through the internet and social media (Tyler and Judd, 2011). This project sought to identify the kinds of messages terrorists used so the content of these could be countered.

As highly skilled, trained and dedicated as military-legal-expert specialists are, their efforts directly confront only one part of terrorism. The societies targeted by terrorism will need to develop a popular consciousness that is equivalent, and social movements to combat terrorism's work in mobilizing mass publics—and still avoid veering into the vigilantism or religious bigotry that are anathema to free societies of any kind.

When terrorists are more publics-centric than counterterrorists, they are likely to win over more publics than if they were being challenged on equal terms. This may be particularly true if counterterrorists are perceived to be offering their publics no more of a role than as auxiliaries to the main military-legal-expert strategic thrust, while terrorists offer publics the chance to see themselves as important, working to better the world and serving God—the "chosen ones," as Razzaque (2013) said. This may be part of why the US National Strategy for Combating Terrorism suggested:

> Not only do we employ military power, we use diplomatic, financial, intelligence, and law enforcement activities to protect the Homeland and extend our defenses, disrupt terrorist operations, and deprive our enemies of what they need to operate and survive. We have broken old orthodoxies that once confined our counterterrorism efforts primarily to the criminal justice domain. (US Department of State, 2006)

Of course, some counterterror strategies are much more publics focused than others. In Canada, for example,

> The *Prevent* element would focus on providing positive alternative narratives that emphasize the open, diverse and inclusive nature of Canadian society and seek to foster a greater sense of Canadian identity and belonging for all. Programs would be aimed at raising the public's awareness of the threat and at empowering individuals and communities to develop and deliver messages and viewpoints that resonate more strongly than terrorist propaganda. (Public Safety Canada, 2014)

In the cocreational model, the starting point for counterterror SC, as in all SC, is the meanings publics bring to the relationship. These meanings are the primary contributions (possibly on the order of 70–90 percent in many cases) to the new meanings publics will cocreate in Circle 6 of Figure 9. This analysis applies to both publics sympathetic to terrorism and those hostile to it. Different publics often cocreate very different meanings after exposure to an SC campaign because of the very different things they may bring to Circle 1 and the fact that these are vastly more predictive of what will happen in Circle 6 than anything in an SC campaign. This means, among other things, that searching for the one magic message that can be used with all publics through the mass media, or just "getting our story out," are destined to fail even though that story is a kind of narrative. Narrative in SC campaigns is subject to the same constraints as any other SC. What narratives should be shared, and how, has to be based on research and a very clear understanding that it is Circle 1, not the tactical skills of practitioners, that primarily determines the the results of any SC campaign. Note also that any SC campaign conducted without research and planning based on Circle 1 will involve a lot of, maybe primarily, orphan tactics within the meaning of those described in Chapter 1. Look, for example, at the various national and state counterterrorism plans and the reader will have to search, hard, for discussions of communication at the strategic rather than tactical level. Thus, probably the vast majority of counterterrorism communication tactics discussed are orphan tactics, because there are no communication strategies which they serve to implement, and terrorists' communication strategies are typically unchallenged.

Finally, there are several theories that might usefully inform strategy in counterterrorism work. For example, as the title of his posting "Attribution error, actor-observer bias, correspondence bias, and counter-terrorism" suggests, Palin (2012) applies important concepts from attribution theory in ways that have implications for counterterrorism work. Recall that attribution theory was recommended as a core SC theory in Chapter 6 and that both fundamental attribution error and actor-observer bias

were explained there. Fundamental attribution error, in particular, is at work in limiting the ability of both sides in the terrorism and counterterrorism matchup to understand the other, and this plays into what Reardon (2014) describes as:

> the Achilles' heel of any strategy against terrorism has been the often-repeated failure to counter the very narratives used by extremist groups to recruit ... First, there is no cookie cutter approach to countering the narratives of extremism. What works in one country or against one group may not work elsewhere. Extremists base their narratives on what appeals to their recruiting pool. Those narratives can centre on economic factors, poor governance, religion, alienation from mainstream society or a host of other local grievances.

When counterterrorism SC practitioners come to understand terrorism's publics as well as terrorists do, work to gain equal access to those publics, and design SC campaigns with those publics in mind, they will have the greatest likelihood of matching or beating terrorism at this critical strategic level.

References and Further Reading

Ajieh, P. C., and Uzokwe, U. N. (2014). Effective application of the coorientation communication model in disseminating agricultural information: A review. *Asian Journal of Agricultural Extensions, Economics and Sociology, 3*(3), 217–223. http://www.academia.edu/8398998/Effective_Application_of_the_Coorientation_Communication_Model_in_Disseminating_Agricultural_Information_A_Review

Alberta Emergency Management Agency (2013). Basic emergency management. http://www.aema.alberta.ca/documents/2013bemstudenthandou72704.pdf

Alexander, D. (2002). *Principles of emergency planning and management.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Alexander, H. (2006). Terrorism. Formerly at http://www.ccds.charlotte.nc.us/History/MidEast/04/alexander/alexander.htm

Alexander, L., and Moore, M. (2015). Deontological ethics. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy.* http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/spr2015/entries/ethics-deontological/

Allport, F. (1924). *Social psychology.* Boston: Houghton-Mifflin.

Allport, F. (1937). *Personality: A psychological interpretation.* New York: Holt.

Altman, R. (2008). *A theory of narrative.* New York: Columbia University Press.

American Bar Association (2012). Mandatory CLE. https://www.americanbar.org/cle/mandatory_cle.html

American Marketing Association (2017). Statement of ethics. https://www.ama.org/AboutAMA/Pages/Statement-of-Ethics.aspx

American Medical Association (2012). *State medical licensure requirements and statistics, 2012.* Chicago: American Medical Association.

Andreasen, A. (1995). *Marketing social change: Changing behavior to promote health, social development, and the environment.* San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

Anthony, P. (1998). Management education: Ethics versus morality. In M. Parke (Ed.), *Ethics and organizations* (pp. 269–281). London: Sage.

Arbitron (2012, September 27). About Arbitron. http://www.arbitron.com/about/home.htm

Armstrong, M. (2008, September 28). Principles of strategic communication (updated). http://mountainrunner.us/2008/09/principles_of_strategic_communication/#.T985QytYtgL

Armstrong, M. (2012, May 17). Smith-Mundt Modernization Act of 2012 introduced in the House. https://mountainrunner.us/2012/05/smith-mundt-modernization-ac/

Arrington, C. B. Jr., and Sawaya, R. N. (1984). Issues management in an uncertain environment. *Long Range Planning, 17,* 17–24.

Aurifeille, J.-M. (1998). A bio-mimetic clusterwise regression algorithm for consumer segmentation. In J. Aurifeille and C. Deissenberg (Eds.), *Bio-mimetic approaches in management science*. New York: Springer. doi:10.1007/978-1-4757-2821-7

Austin, E. W., and Pinkleton, B. E. (2008). *Strategic public relations management: Planning and managing effective communication programs* (2nd ed.). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Baalbaki, I. B., and Malhotra, N. K. (1993). Marketing management bases for international market segmentation: An alternate look at the standardization/customization debate. *International Marketing Review, 10*(1).

Baker, S., and Martinson, D. L. (2001). The TARES test: Five principles for ethical persuasion. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 16*(2–3), 148–175.

Bal, M. (2009). *Narratology: Introduction to the theory of narrative* (3rd ed.). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

Ball, D. L., and Bass, H. (2002). Toward a practice-based theory of mathematical knowledge for teaching. In E. Simmit and B. Davis (Eds.), *Canadian mathematical education study group: Proceedings/Actes 2002 annual meeting* (pp. 3–14). Edmonton: CMESG/GCEDM.

Ball, D. L., Hill, H., Bass, H., Sleep, L., Goffney, I. M., and Thames, M. (2005). *Developing a practice-based theory of mathematical knowledge for teaching*. Anaheim, CA: National Council of Teachers of Mathematics.

Bandura, A. (1986). *Social foundations of thought and action: A social cognitive theory*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Barber, B. (1963). Some problems in the sociology of the professions. *Daedalus, 92*(4), 669–688.

Bardhan, N. (2002). Accounts from the field: A public relations perspective on global AIDS/HIV. *Journal of Health Communication, 7*, 221–244. doi:10.1080/10810730290088102

Bardhan, N., and Patwardhan, P. (2004). Multinational corporations and public relations in a historically resistant host culture. *Journal of Communication Management, 8*(3), 246–263. doi:10.1108/13632540410807673

Barnard, C. (1938). *The function of the executive*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Bates, M. J. (2005). An introduction to metatheories, theories and models. In K. Fisher, S. Erdelez, and L. McKechnie (Eds.), *Theories of information behavior: A researcher's guide* (pp. 1–24). Medford, NJ: Information Today.

Bauman, Z. (1993). *Postmodern Ethics*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Bentham, J. (1962). *The works of Jeremy Bentham*. (J. Browning, Ed.). New York: Russell.

Berger, P., and Luckman, T. (1966). *The social construction of reality: A treatise on the sociology of knowledge*. Garden City, NY: Doubleday.

Bertrand, J. T., Merritt, A. P., and Saffitz, G. (2011). Health communication: A catalyst to behaviour change. In R. Parker and M. Sommer (Eds.), *Routledge handbook of global public health* (pp. 313–325). New York: Routledge.

Beutel, A., and Perez, P. (2016, June 1). *From WWI to ISIS, using shame and masculinity in recruitment narratives*. START: National Consortium for the Study of Terrorism and Responses to Terrorism, University of Maryland. https://www.start.umd.edu/news/wwi-isis-using-shame-and-masculinity-recruitment-narratives

Bhala, G. (2010). *Collaboration and co-creation: New platforms for marketing and innovation*. New York: Springer.

Bhattacharya, U. (1997). Communication costs, information acquisition, and voting decisions in proxy contests. *Review of Financial Studies, 10*(4), 1065–1097.

Bhattacherjee, A. (2002). Individual trust in online firms: Scale development and initial test. *Journal of Management Information Systems, 19*(1), 211–241.

Bivins, T. (2009). *Mixed media: Moral distinctions in advertising, public relations and journalism* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.

Blumer, H. (1946). Collective behavior. In A. M. Lee (Ed.), *New outlines of the principle of sociology* (pp. 167–222). New York: Barnes & Noble.

Bly, R. W. (1998, June). Avoid these technical writing mistakes. *Chemical Engineering Progress.* American Institute of Chemical Engineers. http://www.d.umn.edu/~dlong/writetips.pdf

Bonoma, T. V., and Shapiro, B. P. (1983). *Segmenting the industrial market.* Lexington, MA: Lexington Books.

Bormann, E. (1985). Symbolic convergence theory: A communication formulation. *Journal of Communication, 35,* 128–138.

Botan, C. H. (1990). Industrial relations communication. In D. O'Hair and G. Kreps (Eds.), *Handbook of applied communication research.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Botan, C. H. (1991, November). A comparative study of public relations in developed and third world countries. Paper presented at the Conference of the Association for Advancement of Policy, Research and Development in the Third World.

Botan, C. H. (1992a). International public relations: Critique and reformulation. *Public Relations Review, 18,* 149–159.

Botan, C. H. (1992b). Is public relations a science? Implications of cultural differences and international events. In H. Avenarius and W. Armbrecht (Eds.), *Public Relations als Wissenschaft. Grundlagen und interdisziplinäre Ansätz* (pp. 17–31). Wiesbaden: Westdeutsche.

Botan, C. H. (1992c). The role of image and its ethical dimensions in international public relations. Paper presented to the Conference on Image in Public Relations, Berlin.

Botan, C. H. (1993a). Introduction to the paradigm struggle in public relations. *Public Relations Review, 19,* 107–110.

Botan, C. H. (1993b). A human nature approach to images and ethics in international public relations. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 5,* 71–81.

Botan, C. (1993c). Public relations in society: A liberal arts perspective and integrative standard. In W. Armbrecht and U. Zabel (Eds.), *Normative Aspekte der Public Relations. Grundlegende Fragan und Perspektiven. Eine Einführung* (pp. 159–170). Wiesbaden: Springer.

Botan, C. H. (1993d). Image and ethics in international public relations. In W. Armbrecht, H. Avenarius, and U. Zabel (Eds.), *Image und PR. Kann Image Gegenstand einer Public Relations-Wissenschaft sein?* Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher. [Based on Botan, 1993b.]

Botan, C. H. (1996). Strategic business communication ethics: New approaches for public relations. Paper presented to the Speech Communication Association conference, San Diego.

Botan, C. H. (1997). Ethics in strategic communication campaigns: The case for a new approach to public relations. *Journal of Business Communication, 34,* 188–202.

Botan, C. H. (2005). Grand strategy, strategy and tactics in public relations. Paper presented to the Conference of the National Communication Association.

Botan, C. H. (2006). Grand strategy, strategy and tactics in public relations. In C. H. Botan and V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public relations theory II* (pp. 223–247). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Botan, C. H., Ferguson, D., and Sintay, G. S. (1996). Humanism as a basis for socially responsible public relations. Paper presented to the International Communication Association conference, Chicago.

Botan, C. H., and Frey, L. R. (1983). Do workers trust labor unions and their messages? *Communication Monographs, 50,* 223–245.

Botan, C., and Hazleton, V. (Eds.) (1989). *Public relations theory.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Botan, C. H., and Hazleton, V. (Eds.) (2006). *Public relations theory II.* Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Botan, C., and McCreadie, M. (1993). Communication, information, and surveillance: Separation and control in organizations. In J. Schement and B. Ruben (Eds.), *Information and behavior* (vol. 4, pp. 385–397). New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction.

Botan, C. H., and Penchalapadu, P. (2009). Using sense-making and coorientation to rank strategic public communication in state emergency operations plans (EOPs). *International Journal of Strategic Communication, 3*, 199–216.

Botan, C. H., Silva, C. L., Jenkins-Smith, H. C., Thompson, K. M., Zevitas, Z., Ropeik, D., and Spengler, J. D. (2001). Social factors in the adoption, use and acceptance of environmental risk technologies. Component of grant application submitted to the United States Department of Energy.

Botan, C., and Soto, F. (1998). A semiotic approach to the internal functioning of publics: Implications for strategic communication and public relations. *Public Relations Review, 24*, 21–44.

Botan, C. H., and Taylor, M. (2004). Public relations: The state of the field. *Journal of Communication, 54*(4), 645–661.

Botan, C. H., and Taylor, M. (2005). The role of trust in channels of strategic communication for building civil society. *Journal of Communication, 55*(4), 685–702.

Boulding, K. E. (1973). *The image: Knowledge in life and society*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

Bowen, S. A. (2004). Expansion of ethics as the tenth generic principle of public relations excellence: A Kantian theory and model for managing ethical issues. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 16*, 65–92. doi:10.1207/s1532754xjprr1601_3

Bowes, J. E. (1997). Communication and community development for health information: Constructs and models for evaluation. Review prepared for the National Network of Libraries of Medicine.

Boyd, D. (2014). *It's complicated*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

Bradac, J. J., Mulac, A., and Thompson, S. A. (1995). Men's and women's use of intensifiers and hedges in problem-solving interaction: Molar and molecular analysis. *Research on Language and Social Interaction, 28*(2), 93–116. doi:10.1207/s15327973rlsi2802_1

Brock, B. L., Botan, C. H., and Frey, L. R. (1985). The rhetoric of union busting: Analysis of a management manual for union decertification campaigns. *Michigan Association of Speech Communication Journal, 20*(1), 5163.

Broom, G. M., Casey, S., and Ritchey, J. (1997). Toward a concept and theory of organization–public relationships. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 9*(2), 83–98.

Brow, M. (2009). The response rates of personalized cross-media marketing campaigns. MindFireInc. http://www.121communication.com/resources/pdf/responserates.pdf

Brown, J. R. (1991). *The laboratory of the mind: Thought experiments in the natural sciences*. London: Routledge.

Brown, J. R., and Fehige, Y. (2011). Thought experiments. In E. N. Zalta (Ed.), *The Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy*. http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2011/entries/thought-experiment/

Bruner, J., and Haste, H. (Eds.) (1987). *Making sense: The child's construction of the world*. London: Methuen.

Bryce, J. (1888). *The American commonwealth*. New York: Macmillan.

Burgess, M. (2014, November). Modern marketing equals social engagement. American Marketing Association. https://www.ama.org/publications/MarketingNews/Pages/modern-marketing-equals-social-engagement.aspx

Burke, K. (1966). *Language as symbolic action*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Caldwell, N., and Freire, J. R. (2004). The differences between branding a country, a region and a city: Applying the brand box model. *Journal of Brand Management, 12*, 50–61. doi:10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540201

Caldwell, R. L. (2009). *Paradigms—the big changes and shifts in society*. University of Arizona. http://ag.arizona.edu/futures/era/paradigmsmain.html

Camillus, J. C., and Datta, D. (1991). Managing strategic issues in a turbulent environment. *Long Range Planning, 24*(2), 67–74.

Campbell, P. (1972). *Rhetoric-ritual: A study of the communicative and aesthetic dimensions of language.* Belmont, CA: Dickenson Press.

Castellano, M. R. (2004, January). Ethics of Aboriginal research. *Journal of Aboriginal Health.* http://www.nvit.ca/docs/ethics%20of%20aboriginal%20research.pdf

Center on Public Diplomacy (2017). *A brief history of public diplomacy*. University of Southern California. http://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/page/what-pd

Center for Public Health Readiness and Communication (2016). Drexel University Dornsife School of Public Health. http://drexel.edu/dornsife/research/research-centers/center-for-public-health-readiness-communication/

Center for Research on Globalization (2013). Non-Muslims carried out more than 90% of all terrorist attacks in America. Washington's Blog and Global Research. http://www.globalresearch.ca/non-muslims-carried-out-more-than-90-of-all-terrorist-attacks-in-america/5333619

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2014, November 14). Top 10 Ebola response planning tips: Ebola readiness self-assessment for state and local public health officials. http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/outbreaks/preparedness/planning-tips-top10.html

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2015). Suicide: Facts at a glance 2015. http://www.cdc.gov/violenceprevention/pdf/suicide-datasheet-a.PDF

Chenoweth, E. (2012). Is terrorism still a democratic phenomenon? *Uluslararası İlişkiler, 8*(22), 85–99. https://www.ciaonet.org/attachments/21123/uploads

Cherry, K. (2016). *Major schools of thought in psychology*. Verywell.com: Psychology. https://www.verywell.com/psychology-schools-of-thought-2795247

Cherry, K. (2017). What is the actor observer bias? Verywell.com: Psychology. https://www.verywell.com/what-is-the-actor-observer-bias-2794813

Cialdini, R. B. (2001). Harnessing the science of persuasion. *Harvard Business Review, 79*(9), 72–81.

Clancy, K. J., and Krieg, P. C. (2000). *Counterintuitive marketing*. New York: Free Press.

Clark, J. (2006). The role of language and gender in the naming and framing of HIV/AIDS in the South African context. *Southern African Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, 24*(4), 461–471.

Coates, G. (2009). *Notes on communication*. Wanterfall eBooks. http://www.wanterfall.com/Communication-Contents-Page.htm

Cohen-Almagor, R. (2005). Media coverage and acts of terrorism: Troubling episodes and suggested guidelines. *Canadian Journal of Communication, 30*(3). http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/1579/1734

Cohnitz, D. (2006). Poor thought experiments? A comment on Peijnenburg and Atkinson. *Journal for General Philosophy of Science, 37*, 373–392.

Cohrssen, J. J., and Covello, V. T. (1989). *Risk analysis: A guide to principles and methods for analyzing health and environmental risks*. United States Council on Environmental Quality, Executive Office of the President. Springfield, VA: National Technical Information Service.

Connor, K. R. (1991). A historical comparison of resource-based theory and five schools of thought within industrial economics: Do we have a new theory of the firm? *Journal of Management, 17*(1), 121–154. doi:10.1177/014920639101700109

Coombs, W. T. (2007). Attribution theory as a guide for post-crisis communication research. *Public Relations Review, 33*(2), 135–139.

Copernicus, N. (1543). *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*. http://ads.harvard.edu/books/1543droc.book/

Covello, V., and Milligan, P. A. (2010). *RIC 2010: Risk communication—principles, tools, and techniques*. United States Nuclear Regulatory Commission. http://www.nrc.gov/public-involve/conference-symposia/ric/past/2010/slides/th39covellovpv.pdf

Crable, R. E., and Vibbert, S. L. (1985). Managing issues and influencing public policy. *Public Relations Review, 11*, 3–16.

Crable, R. E., and Vibbert, S. L. (1986). *Public relations as communication management*. Edina, MN: Bellwether Press.

Craig, T. (2016, June 11). A young man is skinned alive: A sign of new Taliban brutality? *Washington Post*. https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/asia_pacific/a-young-man-was-skinned-alive-in-afghanistan-a-sign-of-new-taliban-brutality/2016/06/10/6b7592fa-2e8a-11e6-b9d5-3c3063f8332c_story.html?utm_term=.0ff291573a7c

Curtin, P., and Gaither, T. K. (2007). *International public relations: Negotiating culture, identity and power*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cutlip, S. M. (1994). *The unseen power: Public relations: A history*. New York: Routledge.

Daft, R., and Lengel, R. (1986). Organizational information requirements, media richness and structural design. *Management Science, 32*, 554–571.

Danner, B. (2006). *The state of theory building in public relations ethics: A critical examination*. Master's thesis, University of Florida. http://ufdcimages.uflib.ufl.edu/UF/E0/01/39/20/00001/danner_b.pdf

Darley, W., and Luethge, D. (2003). Cross-cultural communications and promotion. In R. Rugimbana and S. Nwankwo (Eds.), *Crosscultural marketing* (pp. 141–160). London: Thomson Learning.

Dasgupta, P. (1988). Trust as a commodity. In D. Gambetta (Ed.), *Trust: Making and breaking cooperative relations* (pp. 49–72). Oxford: Blackwell.

Decker, W., and Rainey, D. (1980). Terrorism as communication. Paper presented to Speech Communication Association conference, New York City. http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED196091.pdf

Deetz, S.A. (1992). *Democracy in an age of corporate colonization*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.

DeJoy, D. M. (1994). Managing safety in the workplace: An attribution theory analysis and model. *Journal of Safety Research, 25*(1), 3–17.

della Porta, D. (2006). *Social movements, political violence, and the state: A comparative analysis of Italy and Germany*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Denning, D. E. (2000). Cyberterrorism. Testimony before the Special Oversight Panel on Terrorism, Committee on Armed Services, US House of Representatives. https://pdfs.semanticscholar.org/7fdd/ae586b6d2167919abba17eb90e5219b7835b.pdf

Dervin, B. (1989). Audience as listener and learner, teacher and confidante: The sense-making approach. In R. E. Rice and C. K. Atkin (Eds.), *Public communication campaigns* (2nd ed., pp. 67–86). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Dervin, B. (1992). From the mind's eye of the user: The sense-making qualitative-quantitative methodology. In J. Glazer and R. Powell (Eds.), *Qualitative research in information management* (61–84). Englewood, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

Dervin, B. (1998). Sense-making theory and practice: An overview of user interests in knowledge seeking and use. *Journal of Knowledge Management, 2*(2), 36–46.

Dervin, B., and Frenette, M. (2001) Sense-Making methodology: Communicating communicatively with campaign audiences. In R. Rice and C. Atkin (Eds.), *Public communication campaigns* (3rd ed., pp. 69–80). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Dervojeda, K., Verzijl, D., Nagtegaal, F., Lengton, M., Rouwmaat, Monfardini, E., and Frideres, L. (2014, February). Design for innovation: Co-creation design as a new way of value creation. Case study 14. Business Innovation Observatory, European Union.

de Santillana, G. (1955). *The crime of Galileo*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Deutsch, K. W. (1966). *Nationalism and social communication: An inquiry into the foundations of nationality*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Dewey, J. (1927). *The public and its problems*. New York: Henry Holt.

DiStasio, M., Stacks, D., and Botan, C. (2009). State of public relations education in the United States: 2006 report on a national survey of executives and academics. *Public Relations Review, 35*, 254–269.

Ditchey, R. L. II (2011). Ethics in military media relations. Thesis. http://hdl.handle.net/10822/558092

Doward, J. (2015, August 1). Media coverage of terrorism "leads to further violence." *The Guardian*. https://www.theguardian.com/media/2015/aug/01/media-coverage-terrorism-further-violence

Dozier, D., and Ehling, W. (1992). Evaluation of public relations programs. What the literature tells us about their effects. In J. Grunig et al. (Eds.), *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Drumwright, M. E., and Murphy, P. E. (2004). How advertising practitioners view ethics: Moral muteness, moral myopia, and moral imagination. *Journal of Advertising, 33*, 7–24.

Duncan, T., and Caywood, C. (1996). The concept, process and evolution of integrated marketing communication. In E. Thorson and J. Moore (Eds.), *Integrated communication* (pp. 13–31). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Duval, T. S., and Silvia, P. J. (2002). Self-awareness, probability of improvement, and the self-serving bias. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 82*(1), 49–61. doi:10.1037/0022-3514.82.1.49

Edelman (2012). 2012 Edelman Trust Barometer: Global results. http://trust.edelman.com/trust-download/global-results/

Edelman (2016). 2016 Edelman Trust Barometer: Global report. http://www.edelman.com/insights/intellectual-property/2016-edelman-trust-barometer/global-results/

Edvardsson, B., Tronvoll, B., and Gruber, T. (2011). Expanding understanding of service exchange and value co-creation: A social construction approach. *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 39*(2), 327–339.

Edwards, A., Hood, K., Matthews, E., Russell, D., Russell, I., Barker, J., and Stott, N. (2000). The effectiveness of one-to-one risk-communication interventions in health care. *Medical Decision Making, 20*, 290–297. doi:10.1177/0272989X0002000305

Elg, M., Engström, J., Witell, L., and Poksinska, B. (2012). Co-creation and learning in health-care service development. *Journal of Service Management, 23*(3), 328–343.

Emerson, R. W. (1908). *Self-Reliance*. East Aurora, NY: Roycroft Shop. https://archive.org/details/selfrelianceessay00emerrich (Original work 1841)

Enderle, G. (1999). Business ethics in the intercultural and global context: A conceptual framework. http://www.zfwu.de/fileadmin/pdf/3_2000/Georges_Enderle.pdf

Environmental Working Group (2012). Tobacco subsidies in the United States. http://farm.ewg.org/progdetail.php?fips=00000andprogcode=tobacco

Ferguson, M. A. (1984, August). Building theory in public relations: Interorganizational relationships as public relations paradigm. Paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication annual conference, Gainesville, Florida.

Festinger, L. (1957). *A theory of cognitive dissonance*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Fiedler, K., Semin, G. R., Finkenauer, C., and Berkel, I. (1995). Actor-observer bias in close relationships: The role of self-knowledge and self-related language. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 21*(5), 525–538. doi:10.1177/0146167295215010

Fiorino, D. (1990). Citizen participation and environmental risk: A survey of institutional mechanisms. *Science, Technology and Human Values, 15*(2), 226–243.

Firat, A. F., and Schultz, C. J. II (1997). From segmentation to fragmentation: Markets and marketing strategy in the postmodern era. *European Journal of Marketing, 31*(3/4), 183–207.

Fischer, J. (2004). Social responsibility and ethics: Clarifying the concepts. *Journal of Business Ethics, 52*, 381–390. doi:10.1007/s10551-004-2545-y

Fischhoff, B. (2011). Communicating about the risks of terrorism (or anything else). *American Psychologist, 66*, 520–531. doi:10.1037/a0024570

Fish, S. (1980). *Is there a text in this class? The authority of interpretive communities.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Fisher, W. R. (1984). Narration as human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument. *Communication Monographs. 51*, 1–22. doi:10.1080/03637758409390180

Fisher, W. R. (1985). The narrative paradigm: An elaboration. *Communication Monographs, 52*, 347–367. doi:10.1080/03637758509376117

Fisk, R. (1993, February 8). Bosnia war crimes. *The Independent.* http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/bosnia-war-crimes-the-rapes-went-on-day-and-night-robert-fisk-in-mostar-gathers-detailed-evidence-of-the-systematic-sexual-assaults-on-muslim-women-by-serbian-white-eagle-gunmen-1471656.html

Fitzpatrick, K., and Bronstein, C. (Eds.) (2006). *Ethics in public relations: Responsible advocacy.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Fitzpatrick, K., and Gauthier, C. (2001). Toward a professional responsibility theory of public relations ethics. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 16*(2), 193–212.

Flodgren, G., Parmelli, E., Doumit, G., Gattellari, M., O'Brien, M. A., Grimshaw, J., and Eccles, M. P. (2011). Local opinion leaders: Effects on professional practice and health care outcomes (Review). *Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews.* doi:10.1002/14651858.CD000125.pub4/full

Frandsen, F., and Johansen, W. (2012). The cocreational perspective in public relations: Time for a revisit? Paper presented to the 15th Annual International Public Relations Research Conference in Miami.

Freeman, R. E. (1984). *Strategic Management: A Stakeholder Approach.* Boston: Pitman.

Frewer, L. J., Howard, C., Hedderley, D., and Shepherd, R. (1996). What determines trust in information about food-related risks? Underlying psychological constructs. *Risk Analysis, 16*(4), 473–486. doi:10.1111/j.1539-6924.1996.tb01094.x

Frey, L. R., Botan, C. H., Friedman, P. G., and Kreps, G. L. (1992). *Interpreting communication research: A case study approach.* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall.

Frey, L., Botan, C., and Kreps, G. (2000). *Investigating communication* (2nd ed.). Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Friedman, F. (1996). *The Bosnian Muslims: Denial of a nation.* New Boulder, CO: Westview.

Friesner, T. (2014a, May 8). Introduction to marketing communications: What are marketing communications? http://www.marketingteacher.com/introduction-to-marketing-communications/

Friesner, T. (2014b, May 8). What is international marketing? http://www.marketingteacher.com/what-is-international-marketing/

Gabriel, R. (2011). A practice-based theory of professional education. *Urban Education, 46*, 975–986.

Gandy, O. (1992). Public relations and public policy: The structuration of dominance in the information age. In E. Toth and R. Heath (Eds.), *Rhetorical and critical approaches to public relations* (pp. 131–163). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Garrett, T. (1961). *An introduction to some ethical problems of modern advertising.* Rome: Georgia University Press.

Gaudino, J. L., Fritsch, J., and Haynes, B. (1989). "If you knew what I knew, you'd make the same decision": A common misperception underlying public relations campaigns. In C. Botan and V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public relations theory* (pp. 299–321). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Gendler, T. S. (2004). Thought experiments rethought—and reperceived. *Philosophy of Science, 71*, 1152–1164.

Gergen, K. (1985). The social constructionist movement in modern psychology. *American Psychologist, 40*, 266–275.

Gherardi, S. (2000). Practice-based theorizing on learning and knowing in organizations, *Organization, 7*, 2211–2223. doi:10.1177/135050840072001

Gherardi, S. (2001). From organizational learning to practice-based knowing. *Human Relations, 54*(1), 131–139. doi:10.1177/0018726701541016

Giddens, A. (1977). *Studies in social and political theory*. New York: Basic Books.

Giffin, K. (1967a). The contribution of studies of source credibility to a theory of interpersonal trust in the communication process. *Psychological Bulletin, 68*, 104–120.

Giffin, K. (1967b). Interpersonal trust in small group communication. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 53*, 224–234.

Giffin, K. (1968). *The trust differential*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press.

Giffin, K. (1969). *The conceptualization and measurement of interpersonal trust*. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press.

Giffin, K., and Patton, B. (1971). Personal trust in human interaction. In K. Giffin and B. Patton (Eds.), *Basic readings in interpersonal communication* (pp. 375–394). New York: Harper & Row.

Glaser, B. G. (2007). Doing formal theory. In A. Bryant and K. Charmaz (Eds.), *The Sage handbook of grounded theory research: Methods and practices* (pp. 97–113). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Golesworthy, T. (2013). Social media—a paradigm change—thinking small to grow. Customer Respect Group. http://customerrespect.com/blog/social-media-a-paradigm-change-thinking-small-to-grow/

Gomez, B. T., and Wilson, J. M. (2001). Political sophistication and economic voting in the American electorate: A theory of heterogeneous attribution. *American Journal of Political Science, 45*, 899–914.

Greenfeld, L. (2016, July 15). To combat terrorism, combat mental illness. *New York Times*. http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2016/07/15/can-we-just-live-with-terrorism/to-combat-terrorism-tackle-mental-illness

Groom, S. A. (2008). Integrated marketing communication. *Communication Research Trends, 27*(4), 1–43.

Grunig, J. E. (1984). Organizations, environments and models of public relations. *Public Relations Research and Education, 1*(1), 6–29.

Grunig, J. E. (1989). Symmetrical presupposition as a framework for public relations theory. In C. Botan and V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public relations theory*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Grunig, J. E., and Grunig, L. A. (1992). Models of public relations and communication. In J. E. Grunig et al. (Eds.), *Excellence in public relations and communication management* (pp. 285–326). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Grunig, J. E., and Repper, F. (1992). Strategic management, publics and issues. In J. E. Grunig et al. (Eds.), *Excellence in public relations and communication management* (pp. 117–157). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Grunig, J. E., et al. (Eds.) (1992). *Excellence in public relations and communication management*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Gulati, R. (1995). Does familiarity breed trust? The implications for repeated ties for contractual choices in alliances. *Academy of Management Journal, 38*(1), 85–112.

Guttman, N. (2000). *Public health communication interventions: Values and ethical dilemmas.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action, Vol. 1: Reason and the rationalization of society* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston: Beacon Press.

Halkes, A. R. J. (2014, May). "Co-creation" and "experience co-creation" in health care: Introduction. Health Business Consult. PowerPoints. http://www.slideshare.net/ARJHalk/cocreation-and-experience-cocreation-in-care

Hall, M. A., Zheng, B., Dugan, E., Camacho, F., Kidd, K. E., Mishra, K. E., and Balkrishnan R. (2002). Measuring patients' trust in their primary care providers. *Medical Care Research and Review, 59*(3), 293–318. doi:10.1177/1077558702059003004

Hankinson, G. (2001). Location branding: A study of the branding practices of 12 English cities. *Journal of Brand Management, 9*, 127–142. doi:10.1057/palgrave.bm.2540060

Hart, B. H. (1954). *Strategy.* Westport, CN: Praeger.

Hartel, J. (2012, August/September). Metatheoretical snowmen: A pedagogical *Gedankenexperiment* in information metatheory. *Bulletin of the American Society for Information Science and Technology.* http://www.asis.org/Bulletin/Aug-12/AugSep12_Hartel.html

Hawes, L. C. (1975). *Pragmatics of analoguing: Theory and model construction in communication.* Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Hazleton, V., and Botan, C. (1989). The role of theory in public relations. In C. Botan and V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public relations theory* (pp. 3–15). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Hazleton, V., and Cupach, W. (1986). An exploration of ontological knowledge: Communication competence as a function of the ability to describe, predict, and explain. *Western Journal of Speech Communication, 50*, 119–132.

Heath, R. L. (1992). Wrangle in the marketplace. In E. L. Toth and R. L. Heath (Eds.), *Rhetorical and critical approaches to public relations* (pp. 17–36). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Heath, R. L. (1995). 'A rhetorical rationale for public relations: The good organization speaking well.' Paper presented to the Conference of the Speech Communication Association, San Antonio, Texas.

Heath, R. L. (1997). *Strategic issues management: Organizations and public policy challenges.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Heath, R. L. (Ed.) (2001). *Handbook of public relations.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Heath, R. L., and Nelson, R. A. (1986). *Issues management: Corporate public policy making in an information society.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Heath, R. L., and Palenchar, M. J. (2008). *Strategic issues management: Organizations and public policy challenges* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Heider, F. (1946). Attitudes and cognitive organization. *Journal of Psychology, 21*, 107–122.

Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations.* New York: Wiley.

Hendrickx, L., Vlek, C., and Oppewal, H. (1989). Relative importance of scenario information and frequency information in the judgment of risk. *Acta Psychologica, 72*(1), 41–63.

Hermann, C. (1963). Some consequences of crisis which limit the viability of organizations. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 8*, 61–82.

Hjørland, B. (2005). Library and information science and the philosophy of science. *Journal of Documentation, 61*(1), 5–10.

Hodgson, R. W. (2007). Emotions and sense-making in disturbance: Community adaptation to dangerous environments. *Human Ecology Review, 14*(2), 233–242.

Homan, J. (2003). The social construction of natural disaster: Egypt and the UK. In M. Pelling (Ed.), *Natural disasters and development in a globalizing world.* London: Routledge.

Homeland Security Institute (2009). Public role and engagement in counterterrorism efforts: Implications of Israeli Practices for the U.S. Report prepared for US Department of Homeland Security. http://www.hstoday.us/images/public_role_in_ct_israeli_practices_task_08-22.pdf

Hoover, J., and Garmon, C. (1990). Multinational corporate apologia: The complication of cultural values differences. Paper presented to the Speech Communication Association conference, Chicago.

Huang, Y. H. (2001). OPRA: A cross-cultural, multiple-item scale for measuring organization–public relationships. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 13,* 61–90.

Huff, L., and Kelley, L. (2003). Levels of organizational trust in individualist versus collectivist societies: A seven-nation study. *Organization Science, 14*(1), 81–90. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3086035

Huffington Post (2014, December 12). The U.S. illiteracy rate hasn't changed in 10 years. http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2013/09/06/illiteracy-rate_n_3880355.html

Huselid, M. A., and Becker, B. E. (2011). Bridging micro and macro domains: Workforce differentiation and strategic human resource management. *Journal of Management, 37*(2), 421–428. doi:10.1177/0149206310373400

Hymas, J. (2001). Online marketing: Segmentation and targeted customer strategies for the web. *Journal of Financial Services Marketing, 5*(4), 326–331.

IABC (International Association of Business Communicators) (2017a). Communication Management Professional certification. https://www.iabc.com/professional-development/certification/communication-management-professional-certification

IABC (International Association of Business Communicators) (2017b). IABC code of ethics for professional communicators. https://www.iabc.com/about-us/governance/code-of-ethics/

IBISWorld (2012, April). Advertising agencies in the US: Market research report. https://www.ibisworld.com/industry/default.aspx?indid=1433

Iconic Photos (2009). Vulture stalking a child. https://iconicphotos.wordpress.com/2009/08/12/vulture-stalking-a-child/

Indeed.com (2015, August 4). Job title: Strategic communication. http://www.indeed.com/q-Strategic-Communication-jobs.html

Infosec Institute (2012, December). Cyberterrorism defined (as distinct from "cybercrime"). http://resources.infosecinstitute.com/cyberterrorism-distinct-from-cybercrime/

Institute for Public Relations (2017). IPR mission. http://www.instituteforpr.org/about/

International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences (2008). Lay theories. http://www.encyclopedia.com/social-sciences/applied-and-social-sciences-magazines/lay-theories

Internet Society (2012, October 11). Combating spam: Policy, technical and industry approaches. http://www.internetsociety.org/doc/combating-spam-policy-technical-and-industry-approaches

IPRA (International Public Relations Association) (2017). IPRA code of conduct. https://www.ipra.org/member-services/code-of-conduct

Issue Management Council (2017). Clarification of terms. http://issuemanagement.org/learnmore/clarification-of-terms/

Jin, Y., and Liu, B. F. (2010). The blog-mediated crisis communication model: Recommendations for responding to influential external blogs. *Public Relations Research, 22,* 429–455.

Johannesen, R. (1990). *Ethics in human communication* (3rd ed.). Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press.

Johannesen, R. (1996). *Ethics in human communication* (4th ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Johannesen, R., Valde, K., and Whedbee, K. (2008). *Ethics in human communication* (6th ed.). Long Grove, IL: Waveland Press.

Johnson, A. (2013, December 17). More people believe moon landing was a hoax than that Obamacare will lower healthcare costs. National Review Online. http://www.nationalreview.com/corner/366566/more-people-believe-moon-landing-was-hoax-obamacare-will-lower-healthcare-costs-andrew

Johnson, D. J. (1989). The coorientation model and consultant roles. In C. Botan and V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public relations theory* (pp. 243–263). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Jones, B., and Chase, W. (1979). Managing public policy issues. *Public Relations Review, 2*, 3–23.

Josten, R. (2006, Summer). Strategic communication: Key enabler for elements of national power. http://www.au.af.mil/info-ops/iosphere/iosphere_summer06_josten.pdf

Kaminski, J. (2011). Diffusion of innovation theory. *Canadian Journal of Nursing Informatics, 6*(2). http://tinyurl.com/9tv8exa

Kaplan, A. (1964). *The conduct of inquiry: Methodology for behavioral science.* New York: Harper and Row.

Kay, J., McKiernan, P., and Faulkner, D. (2003). The history of strategy and some thoughts about the future. In D. O. Faulkner and K. Campbell (Eds.), *The Oxford handbook of strategy* (pp. 27–52). New York: Oxford University Press.

Kelley, H. H. (1967). Attribution theory in social psychology. *Nebraska symposium on motivation, 15*, 192–238.

Kelley, H. H. (1973). The processes of causal attribution. *American Psychologist, 28*(2), 107–128. doi:10.1037/H0034225

Kent, M. L. (2010). *Public relations writing.* New York: Allyn & Bacon.

Kent, M. L., and Taylor, M. (1998). Building dialogic relationships through the World Wide Web. *Public Relations Review, 24*, 321–334.

Kent, M. L., and Taylor, M. (2002). Toward a dialogic theory of public relations. *Public Relations Review, 28*, 21–37.

Kerlinger, F. (1986). *Foundations of behavioral research.* New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

Keselman, A., Slaughter, L., and Patel, V. L. (2005). Toward a framework for understanding lay public's comprehension of disaster and bioterrorism information. *Journal of Biomedical Informatics, 38*, 331–344.

Kiambi, D. (2010). Public relations in Kenya: An exploration of public relations models and cultural influences. Thesis. https://etd.ohiolink.edu/

Kietzmann, J. H., Hermkens, K., McCarthy, I. P., and Silvestre, B. S. (2011). Social media? Get serious! Understanding the functional building blocks of social media. *Business Horizons, 54*, 241–251. doi:10.1016/j.bushor.2011.01.005

Kinzer, H. J., and Bohn, E. (1985). Public relations challenges of multinational corporations. Paper presented to the International Communication Association conference, Honolulu.

Kirsch, A. D., and Banks, S. (1962). Program types defined by factor-analysis. *Journal of Advertising Research, 2*(3), 29–31.

Kitchen, P. J., Brignell, J., Li, T., and Spickett-Jones, G. (2004). The emergence of IMC: A theoretical perspective. *Journal of Advertising Research, 44*(1), 19–30.

Kitchen, P. J., and Burgmann, I. (2010). Integrated marketing communication. In J. N. Sheth and N. K. Malhotra (Eds.), *Wiley international encyclopedia of marketing.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons. doi:10.1002/9781444316568.wiem04001

Klesges, R. C., Eck, L. H., Mellon, M. W., Fulliton, W., Somes, G. W., and Hanson, C. L. (1990). The accuracy of self-reports of physical activity. *Medicine and Science in Sports and Exercise, 22*(5), 690–697.

Kline, K. (1996). Reading and reforming breast self-examination discourse: Claiming missed opportunities for empowerment. *Journal of Health Communication, 4*(2), 119–141.

Korzybski, A. (1994). *Science and sanity: An introduction to non-Aristotelian systems and general semantics* (5th ed.). Englewood, NJ: Institute of General Semantics.

Kotler, P. (1972). A generic concept of marketing. *Journal of Marketing, 36*, 46–54.

Kramer, R. M., and Tyler, T. R. (1996). *Trust in organizations: Frontiers of theory and research.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kraut, R. (2008). Aristotle's ethics. *Stanford encyclopedia of philosophy.* http://philpapers.org/rec/KRAAE

Kreps, G. L. (Ed.) (2010). *Health communication* (5-vol. set). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Kruckeberg, D., and Starck, K. (1988). *Public relations and community: A reconstituted theory.* New York: Praeger.

Kuhn, T. S. (1970). *The structure of scientific revolutions.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Kunczik, M. (1990). *Images of nations and international public relations.* Bonn: Friedrich-Ebert Stiftung.

Laczniak, R. N., DeCarlo, T. E., and Ramaswami, S. N. (2001). Consumers' responses to negative word-of-mouth communication: An attribution theory perspective. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 11*(1), 57–73. doi:10.1207/S15327663JCP1101_5

La Ganga, M. L., and Essoyan, S. (2001, February 11). Sub hit boat during emergency drill. *Los Angeles Times.* http://articles.latimes.com/2001/feb/11/news/mn-24042

Landay, J., Strobel, W., and Stewart, P. (2015, December 30). Exclusive: Islamic State ruling aims to settle who can have sex with female slaves. Reuters. http://uk.reuters.com/article/us-usa-islamic-state-sexslaves-exclusive-idUKKBN0UC0AO20151230

Langer, E. J., and Abelson, R. P. (1974). A patient by any other name ...: Clinician group difference in labeling bias. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology, 42*(1), 4–9. doi:10.1037/h0036054

Langer, S. (1948). *Philosophy in a new key: A study in the symbolism of reason, rite, and art.* New York: New American Library.

Laqueur, W. (1999). *New terrorism.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Larwood, L., and Whittaker, W. (1977). Managerial myopia: Self-serving biases in organizational planning. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 62*(2), 194–198. doi:10.1037/0021-9010.62.2.194

Lazarsfeld, P., Berelson, B., and Gaudet, H. (1948). *The people's choice: How the voter makes up his mind in a presidential campaign.* New York: Columbia University Press.

Ledingham, J. A., and Bruning, S. D. (1998). Relationship management in public relations: Dimensions of an organization–public relationship. *Public Relations Review, 24,* 55–65.

Ledingham. J. A., and Bruning, S. D. (Eds.) (2000). *Public relations as relationship management: A relational approach to the study and practice of public relations.* Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Lee, F. L. F. (2007). Strategic interaction, cultural co-orientation, and press freedom in Hong Kong. *Asian Journal of Communication, 17*(2), 134–147.

Leiby, R. (2013, January 1). A conspiracy theory with devastating effects. *Washington Post, A6.*

Lewis, S., Pea, R., and Rosen, J. (2010). Beyond participation to co-creation of meaning: Mobile social media in generative learning communities. *Social Science Information, 49*(3), 1–19. doi:10.1177/0539018410370726

Li, C., and Tsai, W.-H. S. (2015). Social media usage and acculturation: A test with Hispanics in the U.S. *Computers in Human Behavior, 45,* 204–212. doi:10.1016/j.chb.2014.12.018

Lickel, B., Hamilton, D., and Sherman, S. (2001). Elements of lay theory in groups: Types of groups, relational styles and perceptions of group entitativity. *Personality and Psychological Review, 5,* 129–140.

Limaye, M. R., and Victor, D. A. (1991). Cross-cultural business communication research: State of the art and hypotheses for the 1990s. *Journal of Business Communication, 28,* 277–299.

Lippmann, W. (1922). *Public opinion.* New York: Harcourt, Brace.

Lippmann, W. (1925). *The phantom public.* New York: Harcourt, Brace.

Littlejohn, S. W., and Foss, K. A. (2008). *Theories of human communication* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Thomson.

Liu, B. F., Jin, Y., Briones, R., and Kuch, B. (2012). Managing turbulence in the blogosphere: Evaluating the blog-mediated crisis communication model with the American Red Cross. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 24*, 353–370.

Lohrey, J. (2015, February 17). Average success rate of direct marketing. *Houston Chronicle.* http://smallbusiness.chron.com/average-success-rate-direct-marketing-73648.html

Luck, D. J. (1969). Marketing notes and communications: Broadening the concept of marketing—too far. *Journal of Marketing, 33*, 53–55.

Leuprecht, C., Hataley, T., Moskalenko, S., and McCauley, C. (2009). Winning the battle but losing the war? Narrative and counter-narratives strategy. *Perspectives on Terrorism, 3*(2). http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/68/html

Maan, A. (2015). *Counter-terrorism: Narrative strategies.* Lanham, MD: University Press of America.

Maheswaran, D., and Meyers-Levy, J. (1990). The influence of message framing and issue involvement. *Journal of Marketing Research, 27*, 361–367.

Mahon, J. F., and Waddock, S. (1992). Strategic issues management: An integration of issue life cycle perspectives. *Business and Society, 31*, 19–32.

Maitlis, S. (2005). The social processes of organizational sensemaking. *Academy of Management Journal, 48*(1), 21–49.

Malle, B. F. (2006). The actor-observer asymmetry in attribution: A (surprising) meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin, 132*(6), 895–919.

Markowitz, E. (2010, September 15). How to write an executive summary. *Inc. magazine.* http://www.inc.com/guides/2010/09/how-to-write-an-executive-summary.html

MaRS (2013). What is marketing communication (MarCom)? http://www.marsdd.com/mars-library/what-is-marketing-communication-marcom/

Marsh, C. (2001). PR ethics: Contrasting models of Plato, Aristotle, and Isocrates. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 16*(2/3), 78–98.

Marshall, N. (2007). Cognitive and practice-based theories of organizational knowledge and learning: Incompatible or complementary? Proceedings of Organizational Learning, Knowledge and Capabilities conference 2007. http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/wbs/conf/olkc/archive/olkc2/papers/marshall.pdf

Martínez, L. M., and Monserrat, J. (2010). Heuristic evaluation of optical and optometry franchise websites. *Revista Latina de Comunicación Social, 65*, 71–88. http://www.revistalatinacs.org/10/art/884_UA/06_Martinez_y_MonserratEN.html

Martinko, M. J., Harvey, P., and Douglas, S. C. (2007). The role, function and contribution of attribution theory to leadership: A review. *Leadership Quarterly, 18*(6), 561–585. doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2007.09.004

Maslow, A. H. (1966). *The psychology of science.* New York: Joanna Cotler Books.

Masterman, M. (1970). The nature of paradigms. In I. Lakatos and A. Musgrave (Eds.), *Criticism and the growth of knowledge* (pp. 61–65). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Matchette, D. R. (2006). *Marketing as an element of strategic communications.* Student academic research paper, US Army War College, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania. http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/army-usawc/marketing_stratcomm.pdf

Matthews, J. (1947). The effect of loaded language on audience comprehension of speeches. *Speech Monographs, 14*(1–2), 176–186.

Matusitz, J. (2013). *Terrorism and communication: A critical introduction.* Los Angeles: Sage.

Mayer, R. (1989). Systematic thinking fostered by illustrations in scientific text. *Journal of Educational Psychology, 81*, 240–246.

Mayer, R., Bove, W., Bryman, A., Mars, R., and Tapangco, L. (1996). When less is more: Meaningful learning from visual and verbal summaries of science textbook lessons. *Journal of Education Psychology, 8*(1), 64–73.

Mazzoleni, G., H., Penchalapadu, P., and Botan, C. H. (2006). *Cyber terrorism.* Paper presented to the International Communication Association conference, Dresden.

McCauley, C., and Moskalenko, S. (2011). *Friction: How radicalization happens to them and us.* New York: Oxford University Press.

McColl-Kennedy, J. R., Vargo, S. L., Danaher, T. S., Sweeney, J. C., and van Kasteren, Y. (2012). Health care customer value cocreation practice styles. *Journal of Service Research, 15*(4), 370–389.

McCombs, M., and Shaw, D. (1972). The agenda-setting function of mass media. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 36,* 176–187.

McDougall, W. (1920). *The group mind.* London: Cambridge University Press.

McLeod, J., and Chaffee, S. (1973). Coorientation and interpersonal perception. *American Behavioral Scientist, 16,* 469–499.

McLoughlin, D. (1985). A framework for integrated emergency management. *Public Administration Review, 45,* 165–172.

McLuhan, M. (1964): *Understanding media.* New York: Mentor.

Meeske, M. D. (2008). *Copywriting for the electronic media: A practical guide* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Mezulis, A., Abramson, L. Y., Hyde, J. S., and Hankin, B. J. (2004). Is there a universal positivity bias in attributions? A meta-analytic review of individual, developmental, and cultural differences in the self-serving attributional bias. *Psychological Bulletin, 130*(5), 711–747. doi:10.1037/0033-2909.130.5.711

Michman, R. D. (1983). *Marketing to changing consumer markets: Environmental scanning.* New York: Praeger.

Mileti, D. S., and Sorenson, J. H. (1990, January). *Communication of emergency public warnings: A social science perspective and state-of-the-art assessment.* Oak Ridge National Laboratory. https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/11286534

Millar, B. (2012, July 17). Why branding is an artifact of the past. https://www.fastcodesign.com/1670201/why-branding-is-an-artifact-of-the-past

Miller, G. (1989). Persuasion and public relations: Two "P's" in a pod. In C. Botan and V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public relations theory* (pp. 45–66). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Miller, G., and Mekhennet, S. (2015, November 20). Inside the surreal world of the Islamic State's propaganda machine. *Washington Post.* https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/national-security/inside-the-islamic-states-propaganda-machine/2015/11/20/051e997a-8ce6-11e5-acff-673ae92ddd2b_story.html?tid=a_inl

Mishra, A. K. (1996). Organizational responses to crisis: The centrality of trust. In R. M. Kramer and T. Thomas (Eds.), *Trust in organizations* (pp. 261–287). Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Misztal, B. A. (1996). *Trust in modern societies: The search for the basis of social order.* Cambridge: Polity Press.

Mitchell, G. (2007, September 7). Charmaine Neville's New Orleans story: Horror and heroism. *Editor and Publisher.* http://www.editorandpublisher.com/news/charmaine-neville-s-new-orleans-story-horror-and-heroism/

Molleda, J. C., and Laskin, A. (2005). *Global, international, comparative and regional public relations knowledge.* Miami: Institute for Public Relations.

Moon, Y. (2003). Don't blame the computer: When self-disclosure moderates the self-serving bias. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 13*(1), 125–137.

Moore, S. (2010). The origins of strategic communication: Precedents and parallels in ancient states. *Atlantic Journal of Communication, 18*, 227–240.

Morgan, R. M., and Hunt, S. D. (1994). The commitment-trust theory of relationship marketing. *Journal of Marketing, 58*, 20–38.

Morsing, M., and Schultz, M. (2006). Corporate social responsibility communication: Stakeholder information, response and involvement strategies. *Business Ethics: A European View, 15*, 323–338. doi:10.1111/j.1467-8608.2006.00460.x

Murphy, D. M. (2008). Strategic communication: Wielding the information element of power. In J. B. Bartholomees, Jr., *Guide to national security issues, Vol. 1: Theory of war and strategy* (pp. 175–188). Carlisle, PA: Strategic Studies Institute. http://marshallcenterciss.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p16378coll5/id/337

Murphy, J. T. (2002). Networks, trust and innovation in Tanzania's manufacturing sector. *World Development, 30*(4), 591–619.

Murphy, P. (1989). Game theory as a paradigm for the public relations process. In C. Botan and V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public relations theory* (pp. 173–192). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Murphy, R. (2004). Disaster or sustainability: The dance of human agents with nature's actants. *Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 41*(3), 249–266.

Nambisan, P., and Nambisan, S. (2009). Models of consumer value cocreation in health care. *Health Care Management Review, 34*(4), 344–354. doi:10.1097/HMR.0b013e3181abd528

National Center for Educational Statistics (2003). National Assessment of Adult Literacy (NAAL). https://nces.ed.gov/naal/kf_demographics.asp

Nemr, C. (2016, March 15). Strategies to counter terrorist narratives are more confused than ever. War on the Rocks. https://warontherocks.com/2016/03/strategies-to-counter-terrorist-narratives-are-more-confused-than-ever/

Newcomb, T. M. (1953). An approach to the study of communicative acts. *Psychology Review, 60*(6), 393–404.

Newsom, D., and Haynes, J. (2010). *Public relations writing: Form and style* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Newsom, D., Turk, J., and Kruckeberg, D. (1996). *This is PR: The realities of public relations.* Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Noar, S. (2006). A 10-year retrospective of research in health mass media campaigns: Where do we go from here? *Journal of Health Communications, 11*(1): 21–42. doi:10.1080/10810730500461059

Nobelprize.org (2012, June 26). Pavlov's dog. http://www.nobelprize.org/educational/medicine/pavlov/readmore.html

Noble, G. I., and Camit, M. (2005). Social marketing communication in a multicultural environment: Practical issues and theoretical contributions from cross-cultural marketing. *Prism, 3*(2), 1–13.

Norris, P., Kern, M., and Just, M. (2013). *Framing terrorism: The news media, the government, and the public.* New York: Routledge.

North, D. W. (1995). Limitations, definitions, principles and methods of risk analysis. *Revue Scientifique et Technique, 14*(4), 913–923. International Office of Epizootics. http://www.warnernorth.com/limitations.pdf

Novelli, W. D. (1989). One-stop shopping: Some thoughts on integrated marketing communications. *Public Relations Quarterly, 34*(4), 7–10.

Obermiller, C., and Spangenberg, E. R. (1998). Development of a scale to measure consumer skepticism toward advertising. *Journal of Consumer Psychology, 7*, 159–186.

Ohio Emergency Management Agency (2006). Ohio emergency operations plan. http://ema.ohio.gov/EOP_Overview.aspx

Olins, W. (2002). Branding the nation: The historical context. *Journal of Brand Management, 9*, 241–248.
OpenLearn (2014). Marketing communications as a strategic function. Open University. http://www.open.edu/openlearn/money-management/management/business-studies/marketing-communications-strategic-function/content-section-0
OpenSecrets.org (2014, September 24). Methodology. Center for Responsive Politics. https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/methodology.php
OpenSecrets.org (2016). Lobbying database. Center for Responsive Politics. https://www.opensecrets.org/lobby/index.php
Palin, P. J. (2012). Attribution error, actor-observer bias, correspondence bias, and counter-terrorism. Homeland Security Watch. http://www.hlswatch.com/2012/03/22/attribution-error-actor-observer-bias-correspondence-bias-and-counter-terrorism/
Palmer, R., Lindgreen, A., and Vanhamme, J. (2005). Relationship marketing: Schools of thought and future research directions. *Marketing Intelligence and Planning, 23*(3), 313–330. doi:10.1108/02634500510597337
Parrott, R. (2009). *Talking about health: Why communication matters*. Oxford: Blackwell.
Pavlov, I. P. (1927). *Conditioned reflexes: An investigation of the physiological activity of the cerebral cortex* (G. V. Anrep, Ed. and Trans.). London: Oxford University Press.
Payne, A. F., Storbacka, K., and Frow, P. (2006). Managing the co-creation of value. *Journal of Academic Marketing Science, 36*, 83–96.
Pearson, R. (1989a). Albert J. Sullivan's theory of public relations ethics. *Public Relations Review, 15*, 52–62.
Pearson, R. (1989b). Beyond ethical relativism in public relations: Coorientation, rules and the idea of communication symmetry. Paper presented to the International Communication Association conference, New Orleans.
Pearson, R. (1989c). Beyond ethical relativism in public relations: Coorientation, rules, and the idea of communication symmetry. In J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (Eds.), *Public relations research annual* (Vol. 1). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Pearson, R. (1989d). Business ethics as communication ethics: Public relations practice and the idea of dialogue. In C. Botan and V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public relations theory* (pp. 111–131). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Peden, A. R. (1998). The evolution of an intervention: The use of Peplau's process of practice-based theory development. *Journal of Psychiatric and Mental Health Nursing, 5*, 173–178. doi:10.1046/j.1365-2850.1998.00127.x
Peirce, C. S. (1960). *Collected papers of Charles Sanders Peirce* (C. Hartshorne and P. Weiss, Eds.). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
Peritz, A., and Simcox, R. (2014, November 30). Why is Islamic State so intent on provoking the West? *Washington Post*, p. B1.
Perl, R. F. (1997, October 22). Terrorism, the media, and the government: Perspectives, trends, and options for policymakers. Congressional Research Service Report. http://www.au.af.mil/au/awc/awcgate/state/crs-terror-media.htm
Perry, R. W., and Lindell, M. K. (2003). Preparedness for emergency response: Guidelines for the emergency planning process. *Disasters, 27*(4), 336–350.
Pew Research Center (2013). *The state of the news media 2013: An annual report on American journalism*. Pew Research Center's Project for Excellence in Journalism. http://stateofthemedia.org/2013/overview-5/
Pfau, M., and Wan, H. (2005). Persuasion: An intrinsic function of public relations. In C. Botan and V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public relations theory II* (pp. 101–136). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

PHDengineer.com (2017). State requirements. http://www.pdhengineer.com/state-requirement/

Piirto, R. (1991). *Beyond mind games: The marketing power of psychographics.* Amer Demographics Books.

Pitafi, F. K. (2014, December 27). The real war is the war of narrative. *Dawn.* https://www.dawn.com/news/1153475

Pontifical Council for Social Communications (1997). Ethics in advertising. http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/pontifical_councils/pccs/documents/rc_pc_pccs_doc_22021997_ethics-in-ad_en.html

Popper, K. (1959). *The logic of scientific discovery.* London: Hutchinson.

Prahalad, C. K., and Ramaswamy, W. (2004a). Co-creating unique value with customers. *Strategy and Leadership, 32*(3), 4–9. doi:10.1108/10878570410699249

Prahalad, C. K., and Ramaswamy, W. (2004b). *The future of competition: Co-creating unique value with customers.* Boston: Harvard Business School Press.

Pratt, C. B. (1985a). The African context. *Public Relations Journal, 41,* 11–16.

Pratt, C. B. (1985b). Professionalism in Nigerian public relations. *Public Relations Review, 11,* 27–40.

Pratt, C., and Ugboajah, R. O. (1985, August). Social responsibility: A comparison of Nigerian public relations with public relations in other countries. Paper presented to the Association for Education in Journalism and Mass Communication conference, Memphis.

PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) (1995a). *Public Relations Strategist,* 1.

PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) (1995b, August). Turning down the account. *Public Relations Tactics.*

PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) (2000). PRSA Member Code of Ethics. http://apps.prsa.org/AboutPRSA/Ethics/documents/Code%20of%20Ethics.pdf

PRSA (Public Relations Society of America) (2015). Social media and PR: Shift from a tactical to a strategic approach. Webinar announcement. http://apps.prsa.org/Learning/Calendar/display/5668/Social_Media_and_PR#.WM6f9_nyiUk

Ptolemy Project (2017). *Claudius Ptolemaeus.* University of California at Berkeley. http://ptolemy.eecs.berkeley.edu/people/ptolemy.htm

Public Safety Canada (2014, October 31). Building resilience against terrorism: Canada's counter-terrorism strategy. http://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrcs/pblctns/rslnc-gnst-trrrsm/index-eng.aspx#s6

Quarantelli, E. (1960). Images of withdrawal behaviour in disasters: Some basic misconceptions. *Social Problems, 9,* 68–79.

Quiggin, T. (2009). Understanding al-Qaeda's ideology for counter narrative work. *Perspectives on terrorism, 3*(2), 18–24. Terrorism Research Initiative, Universiteit Leiden, Netherlands. http://www.terrorismanalysts.com/pt/index.php/pot/article/view/67/html

Rakow, L. F. (1989). Information and power: Toward a critical theory of information campaigns. In C. T. Salmon (Ed.), *Information campaigns: Balancing social values and social change* (pp. 164–184). Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Rather, D. (2012, September 11). Media's balancing act with terrorism. CNN Opinion. http://www.cnn.com/2012/09/11/opinion/rather-media-and-terrorism/

Raucher, A. (1968). *Public relations and business, 1900–1929.* Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

Razzaque, R. (2013, April 25). How teens become terrorists. *USA Today,* p. 10A.

Ready.gov (2014, January 29). Make a plan. http://www.ready.gov/make-a-plan

Reardon, M. (2014, October 28). Big rethink for counterterrorism. Aljazeera. http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2014/10/big-rethink-counterterrorism-20141026123363867 39.html

Resnick, P., and Zeckhauser, R. (2002). Trust among strangers in internet transactions: Empirical analysis of eBay's reputation system. In M. R. Baye (Ed.), *The economics of the internet and e-commerce* (pp. 127–157). Bingley, UK: Emerald Group. doi:10.1016/S0278-0984(02)11030-3

Reynolds, T., and Herman-Kinney, N. J. (Eds.) (2003). *Handbook of symbolic interactionism.* Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.

Rich, C. (2009). *Writing and reporting news: A coaching method* (6th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

Richards, I. A. (1965). *The philosophy of rhetoric.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Richardson, J. E. (1987). *Marketing 87/88.* New York: McGraw-Hill Education.

Ridings, C. M., Gefen, D., and Arinze, B. (2002). Some antecedents and effect of trust in virtual communities. *Journal of Strategic Information Systems, 11*(3–4), 271–295. doi:10.1016/S0963-8687(02)00021-5

Riffkin, R. (2015, September 28). Americans' trust in media remains at historical low. Gallup. http://www.gallup.com/poll/185927/americans-trust-media-remains-historical-low.aspx

Riley, M. (1991). *Indigenous resources in a Ghanaian town: Potential for health education.* Paper presented to International Communication Association conference, Chicago.

Ritzer, G. (1975). *Sociology: A multiple paradigm science.* Boston: Allyn & Bacon.

Ritzer, G. (2014). Metatheory. In *The Blackwell encyclopedia of sociology*, online. http://www.blackwellreference.com/public/beos_metatheory

Rød, S. K., Botan, C. H., and Holen, A. (2011). Communicating risk to parents and those living in areas with a disaster history. *Public Relations Review, 37*, 354–359.

Rød, S. K., Botan, C. H., and Holen, A. (2012a). Risk communication and the willingness to follow evacuation instructions in a natural disaster. *Health, Risk and Society, 14*(1) 87–99.

Rød, S. K., Botan C. H., and Holen, A. (2012b). Risk communication and worried publics in an imminent rockslide and tsunami situation. *Journal of Risk Research, 15*(6), 645–654. doi:10.1080/13669877.2011.652650

Rogers, E. M. (1995). *Diffusion of innovations* (4th ed.). New York: Free Press.

Rogers, E. M. (2006). Diffusion of innovations. In A. Singhal and J. Dearing (Eds.), *Communication of innovation: A journey with Ev Rogers.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Rossiter, J. R., and Bellman, S. (2005). *Marketing communications: Theory and applications.* Sydney: Pearson Education.

Röttger, U. (2001). *Issues management: Theoretische Konzepte und praktische Umsetzung. Eine Bestandsaufnahme.* Wiesbaden: Westdeutscher.

Rousseau, J.-J. (1979). *Emile, or On education* (Allan Bloom, Trans.). New York: Basic Books. (Original work 1762)

Rowan, K. (2003). Informing and explaining skills: Theory and research on informative communication. In J. O. Greene and B. R. Burleson (Eds.), *The handbook of communication and social interaction skills* (pp. 403–438). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Rowan, K., Botan, C., Kreps, G., Samoilenko, S., and Farnsworth, K. (2009). Risk communication education for local emergency managers: Using the CAUSE Model for research, education, and outreach. In R. L. Heath and D. O'Hair (Eds.), *Handbook of risk and crisis communication* (pp. 168–191). New York: Routledge.

Russell, B. (1966). *Philosophical essays.* New York: Touchstone.

Russell, J., and Rafiq, H. (2016). *Countering Islamist extremist narratives: A strategic briefing.* London: Quilliam.

Ryan, M., and Martinson, D. (1984). Ethical values, the flow of journalistic information, and public relations persons. *Journalism Quarterly, 61*, 27–34.

Salmon, C. T. (Ed.) (1989). *Information campaigns: Balancing social values and social change.* Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Sammut, J. (2008, May 9). Proof of the pudding: Health campaigns do not work. Drum TV (ABC1). http://www.abc.net.au/news/2008-05-09/proof-of-the-pudding-health-campaigns-dont-work/2430400

Sandman, P. (1993a). *Responding to community outrage: Strategies for effective risk communication.* Fairfax, VA: American Industrial Hygiene Association.

Sandman, P. (1993b). Agency communication, community outrage and perception of risk: Three simulation experiments. *Risk Analysis, 13,* 585–598.

Sandman, P. (1998). Hazard versus outrage in the public perception of risk. In V. T. Covello, D. B. McCallum, and M. T. Pavlova (Eds.), *Effective risk communication* (pp. 45–49). New York: Plenum.

Sandman, P. (2002). Terrorism, transparency, and employee sabotage: Harvey Chartrand interviews "outrage expert" Dr. Peter M. Sandman. Canadian Chemical Producers' Association. http://www.petersandman.com/articles/ccpa2.htm

Sands, S. (1979). Can you standardize international marketing strategy? *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science, 7*(1), 117–143. doi:10.1177/009207037900700112

Sargeaunt, H. A., and West, G. (1941). *Grand strategy.* New York: Thomas Y. Crowell.

Sattler, J. E. (1981). Public relations in Africa: Impressive strides. *Public Relations Journal, 37,* 28–29, 39.

Saussure, F. de (1959). *Course in general linguistics* (W. Baskin, Trans.). New York: Philosophical Library.

Savolainen, R. (1993). The sense-making theory: Reviewing the interests of a user-centered approach to information seeking and use. *Information Processing and Management, 29*(1), 13–28.

Savolainen, R. (2006). Information use as gap-bridging: The viewpoint of sense-making methodology. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology, 57*(8), 1116–1125.

Schaffner, B. F., and Sellers, P. J. (Eds.) 2010. *Winning with words: The origins and impact of political framing.* New York: Routledge.

Scheff, T. J. (1967). Toward a sociological model of consensus. *American Sociological Review, 32*(1), 32–46.

Scheffler, S. (1992). *Human morality.* New York: Oxford University Press.

Schmid, A. P. (2015). Challenging the narrative of the "Islamic State." Research paper, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism, The Hague. https://www.icct.nl/wp-content/uploads/2015/06/ICCT-Schmid-Challenging-the-Narrative-of-the-Islamic-State-June2015.pdf

Schmid, A. P., and Jongman, A. J. (2005). *Political terrorism: A new guide to actors, authors, concepts, data bases, theories, and literature.* Piscataway, NJ: Transaction.

Schmidt, J. A. (2008, November). What is a profession? *Structure.* http://www.structuremag.org/?p=5313

Schmitt, E. (2015, February 16). U.S. intensifies effort to blunt ISIS' message. *New York Times.* https://www.nytimes.com/2015/02/17/world/middleeast/us-intensifies-effort-to-blunt-isis-message.html

Scott, D. M. (2010). *The new rules of marketing and PR.* Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons.

Scott, J. III, and O'Hair, D. (1989). Expanding psychographic concepts in public relations: The composite audience profile. In C. Botan and V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public relations theory* (pp. 203–219). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Seeger, M. W., Sellnow, T. L., and Ulmer, R. R. (2003). *Communication and organizational crisis.* Westport, CN: Praeger.

Seib, P. (2006). The ethics of public diplomacy. In K. Fitzpatrick and C. Bronstein (Eds.), *Ethics in public relations: Responsible advocacy.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Sethuraman, R., and Tellis, G. J. (1991). An analysis of the tradeoff between advertising and price discounting. *Journal of Marketing Research, 28*(2), 160–174.

Settle, R. B., and Golden, L. L. (1974). Attribution theory and advertiser credibility. *Journal of Marketing Research, 11*(2), 181–185.

Sgro, T. (2016, March 31). *Peer to Peer: Challenging Extremism.* Video. https://video.search.yahoo.com/search/video;ylt=AwrBTzeyL_YIsgAkL1XNyoA;ylu=X3oDMTEzMXBobHNmBGN vbG8DYmYxBHBvcwMxBHZ0aWQDVUkwMkM0XzEEc2VjA3Nj?p=u.s+state+dept+peer-to-peer&fr=yset_chr_syc_

oracle#id=2&vid=a411c63f80e06b8d3a6 75d549319e424&action=view. And from https://eca.state.gov/video/p2p-challenging-extremism

Shannon, C., and Weaver, W. (1998). *The mathematical theory of communication*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press. (Original work published 1949)

Shehadey, B. R. (2013). Increasing public awareness and participation in counterterrorism. In Homeland Security (blog). http://inhomelandsecurity.com/increasing-public-awareness/

Sichtmann, C. (2007). An analysis of antecedents and consequences of trust in a corporate brand. *European Journal of Marketing, 41*, 999–1015. doi:10.1108/03090560710773318

Sirdeshmukh, D., Singh, J., and Sabol, B. (2002). Consumer trust, value, and loyalty in relational exchanges. *Journal of Marketing, 66*(1), 15–37. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3203367

Sjovall, A. M., and Talk, A. C. (2004). From actions to impressions: Cognitive attribution theory and the formation of corporate reputation. *Corporate Reputation Review, 7*(3), 269–281. doi:10.1057/palgrave.crr.1540225

Sloutsky, V., and Spino, M. (2004). Naïve theory and transfer of learning: When less is more and more is less. *Psychonomic Bulletin and Review, 11*, 528–535.

Slovic, P., Finucane, M. L., Peters, E., and MacGregor, D. G. (2004). Risk as analysis and risk as feelings: Some thoughts about affect, reason, risk, and rationality. *Risk Analysis, 24*(2), 311–322.

Slovic, S., and Slovic, P. (2004). Numbers and nerves: Toward an affective apprehension of environmental risk. *Whole Terrain, 13*, 14–18.

Smart, N. (1996). *Dimensions of the sacred. An anatomy of the world's beliefs*. Oakland: University of California Press.

SMEI (Sales and Marketing Executives International) (2017). Sales and marketing creed: The international code of ethics for sales and marketing. https://www.smei.org/?16

Smith, R. D. (2013). *Strategic planning for public relations*. New York: Routledge.

Smith, W. R. (1956). Product differentiation and market segmentation as alternative marketing strategies. *Journal of Marketing, 21*(1), 3–8.

Snyder, L. B. (2007). Health communication campaigns and their impact on behaviour. *Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior, 39*, s32–40.

Snyder, L. B., Hamilton, M. A., Mitchell, E. W., Kiwanuka-Tondo, J., Fleming-Milici, F., and Proctor, D. (2004). A meta-analysis of the effect of mediated health communication campaigns on behaviour change in the United States. *Journal of Health Communication, 9*(s1), 71–96. doi:10.1080/10810730490271548

Sparks, L., Kreps, G. L., Botan, C., and Rowan, K. E. (2005). Responding to terrorism: Translating communication research into practice. *Communication Research Reports, 22*(1), 1–5.

Spence, P. R., Lachlan, K., Burke, J., and Seeger, M. W. (2007). Media use and information needs of the disabled during a natural disaster. *Journal of Health Care for the Poor and Underserved, 18*, 394–404.

Sriramesh, K. and Verčič, D. (Eds.) (2003). *The global public relations handbook*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Stadler, S. (2013). Speaker or listener or speaker and listener: Why intercultural interaction demands a dual role-relationship. *Language and Dialogue, 3*(2), 167–185. doi:10.1075/ld.3.2.02sta

Steelwater, E. (2001). Philosophy of humanism. In G. B. Gupta and S. K. Banerji (Eds.), *Humanisation of the world religions* (pp. 59–78). Delhi: Global Vision.

Stout, D. A., and Buddenbaum, J. M. (2003). Framing religion in the news. *Journal of Media and Religion, 2*(1), 1–72 (special issue).

Sullivan, A. J. (1965). Toward a philosophy of public relations images. In O. Lerbeinger and A. Sullivan (Eds.), *Information, influence and communication: A reader in public relations* (pp. 240–249). New York: Basic Books.

Sun Tzu (1963). *The art of war* (S. B. Griffith, Trans.). London: Oxford University Press. (Original work 5th century BCE)

Szymanski, D. M., Bharadwaj, S. G., and Varadarajan, P. R. (1993). Standardization versus adaptation of international marketing strategy: An empirical investigation. *Journal of Marketing, 57*(4), 1–17. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1252215

Tarde, Gabriel (1903). *The laws of imitation* (E. C. Parsons, Trans.). New York: Henry Holt.

Taylor, D. M., and Doria, J. R. (1981). Self-serving and group-serving bias in attribution. *Journal of Social Psychology, 113*(2), 201–211.

Taylor, M., and Botan, C. H. (1996). Strategic public education campaigns for national development: Public relations in the building of nations. Paper presented to the Association for the Advancement of Policy, Research, and Development in the Third World conference, Cancun, Mexico.

Taylor, M., and Botan, C. H. (1997). Public relations campaigns for national development in the Pacific Rim: The case of public education in Malaysia. *Australian Journal of Communication, 24*, 115–130.

Taylor, M., and Botan, C. H. (2005, March). What's a practitioner to do when everything is broken? Choosing among strategic communication channels for rebuilding civil society. Paper presented to the Eighth Annual International Public Relations Conference, Miami, Florida.

Taylor, M., and Botan, C. (2006, March). Global public relations: Application of a cocreational approach. In M. Watson (Ed.), *9th International Public Relations Research Conference Proceedings: Changing Roles and Functions in Public Relations* (pp. 484–491). Miami: University of Miami Institute for Public Relations. http://www.instituteforpr.org/wp-content/uploads/9th_IPRRC_Proceedings.pdf

Taylor, M., and Botan, C. (2009). Does a cocreational approach move our understanding of publics and public relations forward? Paper presented to the National Communication Association conference, Chicago.

Terry, K. E. (1989). Educator and practitioner differences on the role of theory in public relations. In C. H. Botan and V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public relations theory*. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Tetlock, P. E. (1985). Accountability: A social check on the fundamental attribution error. *Social Psychology Quarterly, 48*(3), 227–236.

Thackeray, R., Neiger, L., Smith, A. K., and Van Wagenen, S. B. (2012). Adoption and use of social media among public health departments. *BMC Public Health, 12*, 242. doi:10.1186/1471-2458-12-242

Thapar, R. (1996). The theory of Aryan race and India: History and politics. *Social Scientist, 24*, 3–29. http://www.jstor.org/stable/3520116

Thompson, T. L., Parrott, R., and Nussbaum, J. F. (2011). *Routledge handbook of health communication*. New York: Routledge.

Tierney, K., Lindell, M., and Perry, R. (2001). *Facing the unexpected: Disaster preparedness and response in the United States*. Washington, DC: Joseph Henry Press.

Tilley, E. (2005). The ethics pyramid: Making ethics unavoidable in the public relations process. *Journal of Mass Media Ethics, 20*, 305–320.

Tonkiss, F., Passey, A., Fenton, N., and Hems, L. C. (2000). *Trust and civil society*. London: Macmillan.

Toppo, G. (2014, December 11). Growing up "post-racial," teens suddenly find a world that isn't. *USA Today*. https://www.usatoday.com/story/news/nation/2014/12/10/teen-attitudes-race-diversity-america/19749199/

Toth, E. L. (1986). Broadening research in public affairs. *Public Relations Review, 12*(2), 27–36.

Toth, E. (2006). Building public affairs theory. In C. Botan and V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public Relations Theory II* (pp. 499–522). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Trevino, L. K. (1986). Ethical decision making in organizations: A person–situation interactionist model. *Academy of Management Review, 11*, 601–617. doi:10.5465/AMR.1986.4306235

Tuominen, K., Talja, S., and Savolainen, R. (2002). Discourse, cognition and reality: Towards a social constructionist metatheory for library and information science. In H. Bruce, R. Fidel, P. Ingwersen, and P. Vakkari (Eds.), *Emerging frameworks and methods: Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference on Conceptions of Library and Information Science (CoLIS4)* (pp. 271–283). Greenwood Village, CO: Libraries Unlimited.

Turney, M. (2009). Government public relations. http://www.nku.edu/~turney/prclass/readings/government.html

Tversky, A., and Kahneman, D. (1981). The framing of decisions and the psychology of choice. *Science, n.s., 211*(4481), 453–458. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1685855

Tyler, J., and Judd, B. (2011). Meme wars. Grant application to Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency in response to DARPA-BAA-11-64. Social media in strategic communication (SMISC).

United Nations Secretariat (2007). United Nations system-wide application of ethics: Separately administered organs and programmes. Document No. ST/SGB/2007/11. http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=ST/SGB/2007/11

University of Manitoba (2006). *First Nations code of ethics*. Pamphlet #2. Aboriginal Information Series, University of Manitoba.

Untangle (2017). Spam blocker. https://www.untangle.com/shop/Spam-Blocker/

US Bureau of Labor Statistics (2016–17). *Occupational outlook handbook, 2016–17*. Public relations managers and specialists. https://www.bls.gov/ooh/media-and-communication/public-relations-specialists.htm

US Department of Defense (2004). *Report of the Defense Science Board Task Force on Strategic Communication*. Washington, DC: Office of the Under Secretary of Defense for Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics. https://fas.org/irp/agency/dod/dsb/commun.pdf

US Department of Homeland Security (2017a). Science and Technology. Office for Interoperability and Compatibility. http://www.dhs.gov/st-oic

US Department of Homeland Security (2017b). Preventing terrorism and enhancing security. http://www.dhs.gov/preventing-terrorism-and-enhancing-security

US Department of State (2006). Overview of America's national strategy for combating terrorism. http://2001-2009.state.gov/s/ct/rls/wh/71803.htm

US Federal Communications Commission (2016). Emergency communications. http://www.fcc.gov/guides/emergency-communications

US White House (2011, June). *National strategy for counterterrorism*. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/counterterrorism_strategy.pdf

Valenti, T. (1993). Diffusion of innovations and policy decision-making. *Journal of Communication, 43*, 30–45.

Value Based Management.net (2014, April 24). Summary of Rogers' innovation adoption curve. http://www.valuebasedmanagement.net/methods_rogers_innovation_adoption_curve.html

Vargo, S. L., Maglio, P. P., and Akaka, M. A. (2008). On value and value co-creation: A service systems and service logic perspective, *European Management Journal, 26*(3), 145–152.

Vasquez, G. M. (1993). A homo narrans paradigm for public relations research: Combining Bormann's symbolic convergence theory and Grunig's situational theory of publics. *Journal of Public Relations Research, 5*(3), 201–216.

Vasquez, G. (1995). *Negotiating public relationships: The co-creation of issues*. Doctoral dissertation, Purdue University, West Lafayette, Indiana.

Verčič, D., and Verčič, A. T. (2007). A use of second-order co-orientation model in international public relations. *Public Relations Review, 33*(4), 407–505.

Vibbert, S. L. (1987, May). Corporate communication and the management of issues. Paper presented at the International Communication Association meeting, Montreal.

Walker, G. (2006). Sense-making methodology: A theory of method for public relations. In C. Botan and V. Hazleton (Eds.), *Public relations theory II* (pp. 281–298). Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Wallace, L., M., Turner, A., Kosmala-Anderson, J., Sharma, S., Jesuthasan, J, Bourne, C., and Realpe, A. (2012). *Co-creating health: Evaluation of the first phase.* London: Health Foundation.

Wartick, S. L., and Cochran, P. L. (1985). The evolution of the corporate social performance model. *Academy of Management Review, 10,* 758–769. doi:10.5465/AMR.1985.4279099

Washington Post (2016, August 10). Report: Islamic state terrorists attacks responsible for 33,000 deaths, 41,000 wounded over 13 years. Reproduced by *Denver Post.* http://www.denverpost.com/2016/08/10/report-islamic-state-terrorist-attacks-responsible-for-33000-deaths-41000-wounded-over-13-years/

Watzlawick, P., Beavin-Bavelas, J., and Jackson, D. (2011). Some tentative axioms of communication. In *Pragmatics of human communication: A study of interactional patterns, pathologies and paradoxes* (pp. 29–52). New York: Norton. (Original work published 1967)

Waymer, D. (2012). *Culture, social class, and race in public relations: Perspectives and applications.* New York: Lexington Books.

Weathers, M., Baldwin, P., Botan, C., Graf, J., Maibach, E., Rolfe-Redding, J., Thaker, J., and Tichnor, K. (2011). *Development of an instrument to assess organization's use of strategic communication.* Paper presented to the International Communication Association conference, Boston.

Wedel, M., and Kamakura, W. (2000). *Marketing segmentation: Conceptual and methodological foundations* (2nd ed.). Dordrecht: Kluwer.

Weeks, C. (2010, February 3). Study that linked autism and vaccinations retracted. *Globe and Mail.* http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/health-and-fitness/health/conditions/study-that-linked-autism-and-vaccinations-retracted/article572684/

Weick, K. E. (1979). *The social psychology of organizing* (2nd ed.). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley.

Weick, K. E. (1988). Enacted sensemaking in crisis situations. *Journal of Management Studies, 25*(4), 305–317.

Weick, K. E. (1995). *Sensemaking in organizations.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Weick, K. E., Sutcliffe, K. M., and Obstfeld, D. (2005). Organizing and the process of sensemaking. *Organization Science, 16*(4), 409–421.

Weimann, G. (2006). *Terror on the internet.* Washington, DC: US Institute of Peace.

Weimann, G. (2008). The psychology of mass-mediated terrorism. *American Behavioral Scientist, 52,* 69–86.

Weimann, G., Tustin, D. H., Van Vuuren, D., and Joubert, J. P. (2007). Looking for opinion leaders: Traditional vs. modern measures in traditional societies. *International Journal of Public Opinion Research, 19*(2), 173–190. doi:10.1093/ijpor/edm005

Weine, S. M., Ellis, B. H., Haddad, R., Miller, A. B., Lowenhaupt, R., and Polutnik, C. (2015). *Lessons learned from mental health and education: Identifying best practices for addressing violent extremism.* Final Report to the Office of University Programs, Science and Technology Directorate, US Department of Homeland Security. College Park, MD: START. http://www.start.umd.edu/pubs/START_LessonsLearnedfromMentalHealthAndEducation_FullReport_Oct2015.pdf

Weiner, B. (1992). *Human motivation: Metaphors, theories and research.* Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Weiner, B. (2004). Attribution theory revisited: Transforming cultural plurality into theoretical unity. In D. McInerney and S. Van Etten (Eds.), *Big theories revisited* (pp. 13–30). Greenwich, CN: Information Age.

Weinreich, N. (2010). What is social marketing? Weinreich Communications. http://www.social-marketing.com/Whatis.html

Wellman, H. M., and Lagattuta, K. H. (2004). Theory of mind for learning and teaching: The nature and role of explanation. *Cognitive Development, 19*, 479–497. doi:10.1016/j.cogdev.2004.09.003

Whitcomb, D. (1976). A general paradigm for public relations research. Paper presented at the 59th Annual Meeting of Association of Education in Journalism, College Park, MD.

White, G. (2009, December 9). When does a person become a brand? Pacific Crest Marketing. http://www.pacificcrestmarketing.com/blog/when-does-a-person-become-a-brand/

Wiebe, G. D. (1951). Merchandising commodities and citizenship on television. *Public Opinion Quarterly, 15*(4), 679–691. doi:10.1086/266353

Wieman, H. N., and Walters, O. M. (1957). Toward an analysis of ethics for rhetoric. *Quarterly Journal of Speech, 43*, 266–270.

Wilcox, D. L., Ault, P. H., and Agee, W. K. (1995). *Public relations strategy and tactics* (4th ed.). New York: Harper & Row.

Williams, F., Rice, R. E., and Rogers, E. M. (1988). *Research methods and the new media*. New York: Free Press.

Yamagishi, T. (2011). *Trust: The evolutionary game of mind and society*. Tokyo: Springer.

Zapotosky, M. (2014, November 18). Virginia woman accused of trying to aid Islamic State. *Washington Post*.

Zarate, J. C. (2013, April 21). When to call it "terrorism"? *Washington Post*, B5.

Zikmund, W., and d'Amico, M. (1986). *Marketing* (2nd ed.). New York: Wiley.

Zufall, N. A. (2014). Reputation threats in social media: An integrative approach to prevent crisis situations. http://purl.utwente.nl/essays/65314

Index

Strategic Communication Theory and Practice: The Cocreational Model, First Edition. Carl H. Botan.

n

Cover Design: Wiley
Cover Image: © arthobbit/Gettyimages

WILEY Blackwell

ISBN 978-0-470-6745
9 780470 6745