

**A QUALITATIVE CONTENT ANALYSIS OF NEGATIVE BIAS
FOUND IN INTRODUCTORY JOURNALISM, PUBLIC
RELATIONS AND MASS MEDIA TEXTBOOKS**

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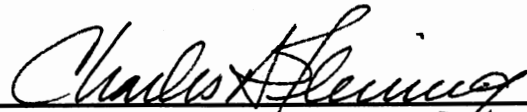
1990

**Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
May, 1992**

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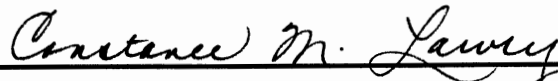
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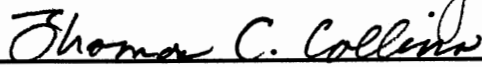
Thesis Approved:



Thesis Advisor







Dean of the Graduate College

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to extend my deepest appreciation to my thesis and graduate adviser, Dr. Charles A. Fleming, a man who has made teaching an art form. Thank you for your guidance throughout my graduate program and throughout this research.

I would also like to thank Dr. Marlan Nelson, Director of the OSU School of Journalism and Broadcasting and professor of my first undergraduate journalism course at OSU. Thank you for serving on my graduate committee and for challenging me from the beginning. You have been more of an inspiration than you'll ever know.

Thanks also to Dr. Constance Lawry for serving on my graduate committee and for advising me during my internship with Arts & Sciences Teleconferencing Service (ASTS). You've been more than just an adviser, you've been a friend.

It is with deep gratitude and love that I dedicate this research to my family, all of whom have played a special part in my life and college education.

- To my mother, Laneta McCoy, who has always believed I could do anything I set my mind to. You have always been there for me as both a mother and as a best friend. You've taught me to believe that everything happens for a reason and I believe that still holds true. I love you mom.

- To my big brother, a man whom I truly look up to and admire. Your humor and silliness has brightened my lowest days more than you'll ever know. I love you Mike. You too, Lisa. Thank you both for helping with all my moving!

- To my grandparents, George and Mildred Dollar, who have shown me what the word "family" is all about. Thanks Grandma and Papa for always being there when I needed you. I couldn't have made it without your love and support all these years. Thanks Grandma for always managing to make me laugh.

- To my grandparents, Lawrence and Viola Busbee, who have always encouraged me to do my best and have always believed in me. Thank you Grandma for all the letters -- you made being away from home a lot easier. Also, thank you both for showing me the power of prayer.

Finally, I would like to thank the wonderful people of the American Business Women's Association (ABWA) - Mistletoe Chapter, the OSU School of Journalism and Broadcasting and OSU Residential Life for the scholarships and work opportunities provided to me by these organizations. They have helped to make my undergraduate and graduate education a reality.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

General

By the time journalism or public relations students graduate from college, they have a clear knowledge of the tension that exists between the journalism and public relations professions. Although students are taught that this adversary relationship exists and some techniques for helping it are taught through media relations courses, students are not taught how it began or what it will take to resolve it.

This adversary relationship affects the success of any person practicing in either field. Since the two fields actually share a symbiotic relationship, the tension between them results in lower productivity levels and a constant battle for the upper hand. Journalists depend on public relations professionals for much of their news and emergency information while public relations professionals depend on journalists for the printing or broadcasting of press releases/information and for promotion of important events.

Background

Past research indicates that the adversary relationship started back in the late 1800's, the days of Ivy Lee and Edward Bernays, generally regarded as the two founders of modern public relations. Lee was a reporter turned public relations practitioner who believed his role was one of providing news - sometimes slanted news, but news all the same. Bernays on the other hand believed in propaganda, and proclaimed that, "Intelligent men must realize that propaganda is the modern instrument by which they can fight for productive ends and help bring order out of chaos."¹

Edward Bernay's idea of molding public opinion by manipulation was presented to the public in his 1923 book entitled Crystallizing Public Opinion. This action, often called propaganda, is associated with the public relations profession of today. He described the public relations practitioner as someone adept at "Manipulating Public Opinion" -- this was the title of an article Bernays wrote for The American Journal of Sociology in 1928 -- and argued that since "public opinion is slow and reactionary," those who use "the psychology of public persuasion...to bring about changes in public opinion" are performing a great service.²

Although some praised him for his knowledge in influencing the human mind, many criticized him for the possible effects this mass manipulation could have on society. In 1930, Editor and Publisher complained that Bernays'

method was "to manipulate mass psychology and influence trade by propaganda so artfully insinuated into public consciousness that the victim does not realize that an unseen hand is leading them by the nose."³

According to many journalists, a manipulation factor exists in the practice of public relations today. Although journalists make this complaint, their ancestors in journalism were actually the ones who perfected it, like Ivy Lee, who began his career as a journalist and ended it being known as the co-founder of public relations. Research suggests that this "sell out" from journalism to public relations is the basis for the adversary relationship that exists today.

Although much of the research available focuses on the manipulative tactics of public relations practitioners, there is a lot of research regarding the deceitful tactics of journalists.

Critics of journalism allege that journalists tend to cave in to advertisers, duck complicated and some sensitive issues, rely too much on official sources and fail to examine themselves under a hard light.⁴

Others complain that journalistic ethics are non-existent. Journalists are paid for giving speeches, give voice to anonymous sources and take sides on controversial issues. These were a few of the journalism ethical pitfalls addressed at the 1989 conference sponsored by the Washington Journalism Center.⁵

Statement of the Problem

The problem examined in this study was the adversary relationship between public relations professionals and journalists. An irony was presented through this study because both professions have a mutually beneficial relationship and each depends upon the other to exist. Because journalists do not have the resources to cover everything that is newsworthy, they depend upon PR practitioners to provide them with material not otherwise available. PR practitioners also depend on journalists to cover their promotions and print their press releases. In cases where the special interests of the journalist and PR professional do not clash, their working together provides the general public with more information than could have been managed by either group alone. The adversary relationship that exists today only stands to hurt both media and society by putting limits on information provided by both professions.⁶

In particular, this study examined college introductory textbooks in journalism, public relations and mass media as possible contributors to the adversary relationship. These textbooks were analyzed to see if negative bias was present toward either profession - - journalism or public relations. The study sought to find out if the college textbooks that journalists and public relations practitioners learn from are contributing to the negative, adversary feelings that exist today in both professions.

This adversary relationship not only affects those who practice in the

professions but also the students who plan to enter them. Since both of these fields are usually placed together within the same department in college, they are also discussed together in the same basic journalism and public relations courses. If introductory textbooks portray one of the professions negatively, then how do these students feel when their future profession is being criticized?

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this research was to identify a major contributing factor to the adversary relationship that exists between public relations practitioners and journalists. This research answers whether or not introductory college textbooks in journalism, public relations and/or mass media are major contributors to the adversary relationship existing between the two fields to the extent that they communicate negative images of either profession.

Research Objectives

In researching whether or not introductory journalism, public relations and/or mass media textbooks are contributing factors in the adversary relationship that exists between the two fields, the following research questions were answered. 1) Do introductory journalism textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the public relations profession? 2) Do introductory public relations textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the journalism

profession? 3) Do introductory mass media textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the journalism profession? 4) Do introductory mass media textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the public relations profession?

Methodology

This study included a content analysis of six college introductory journalism textbooks, six college introductory public relations textbooks and ten college introductory mass media textbooks. The content analyses determined whether the books showed negative or positive bias toward either profession.

A pretest was conducted to measure intercoder reliability.

After actual coding of the material, the measurements were added up and a qualitative analysis was made to determine if significant bias existed.

Significance of the Study

The findings from this study are valuable to many groups of people. The findings help identify a probable contributing factor to the adversary feelings existing between public relations professionals and journalists.

This study will be useful to those who practice in the two professions because it can help them realize that their college textbooks may be partly to blame for the way they feel about the other profession. With this information, PR

practitioners and journalists might be a little more open to accepting the other profession and maintaining a better relationship with those who practice in it.

This study is important also to instructors and students in these fields. If the instructors are aware of the bias in their textbooks, then they can point it out to their students and allow them to form their own opinion, thus eliminating the problem before it starts. This information can also be valuable to instructors in choosing textbooks for their courses. If they know ahead of time that a textbook is biased against the other profession, they might decide to choose a different textbook, one that presents both professions in a fair manner - with both good and bad information.

This research could also benefit the writers of these textbooks. If their particular textbook was found to be biased against a profession, they might reconsider their own adversary feelings against the other profession and be able to write a more objective textbook.

Overall, the findings from this study could be very useful and a positive step toward understanding and eliminating the adversary relationship that exists between the two professions today.

Study Limitations

The textbooks examined were ones that are currently offered for use in journalism schools today. A limitation lies in the fact that this adversary relationship has been built over time and textbooks from the past that may have contributed more to this negative attitude than today's textbooks were not

analyzed in this study.

Another limitation includes new textbooks that appear frequently causing this study to be outdated quickly. This study will need to be repeated in the future to keep track of the adversary relationship's existence in new textbooks.

One other limitation to this study is that even if a textbook was found to be positive, the instructor of that course can also communicate bias through his or her own teaching.

Outline of Study

The remainder of this study follows the general outline below.

Chapter II reviews past research pertaining to the adversary relationship including research on where it began and where it stands today and examples of what people in these professions have to say about the adversary relationship.

Chapter III gives an overview of the research methodology used in the study. It includes selection of coders, a listing of the books used in the analyses, pretesting procedures, the actual testing procedure and an explanation of the qualitative analyses made after obtaining results from the content analyses.

Chapter IV describes in detail the actual findings including the numbers tallied, some negative references made in each type of textbook, a qualitative analysis of each type of textbook and answers to each of the research questions.

Chapter V presents a summary, conclusions and recommendations reached after the testing was completed. It also includes suggestions to implement the findings and recommendations for further research.

Endnotes

¹Marvin N. Olasky, "Retrospective: Bernay's Doctrine of Public Opinion," Public Relations Review, Fall '84, p. 3.

²Marvin N. Olasky, *Ibid*, p. 3-4.

³Marvin N. Olasky, *Ibid*, p. 6.

⁴M.L. Stein, "Press Critics Criticize," Editor & Publisher, April 15, 1989, p. 14.

⁵Tess Chichioco, "Ethics and the Media," Editor & Publisher, October 14, 1989, p. 11.

⁶Ralph Benke and Phyllis Miller, "Public Relations and Journalism: A Contrast and Comparison," PR Review, Fall 1989, p. 53.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Beginning

From the beginning of journalism, negative images have followed the journalism profession and those professions evolving from journalism including the practice of public relations (PR). Public relations was a product of press agents and propagandists of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries including men like Edward Bernays and Ivy Lee. Lee was a journalist turned PR man. Bernays was a psychologist, not by education or profession, who was a master at manipulating the mass mind. Even though public relations tactics were known to be used before Bernays and Lee, these two men, one of whom was a journalist, are considered to have brought us what we currently know as public relations. They since have been known as the co-founders of the public relations profession.¹

In the days of propaganda and publicity campaigns, a certain amount of economic jealousy existed between the journalism and public relations professions. Newspapers prospered largely by selling advertising space, and there had long been concerns among publishers that the free publicity which

businesses might gain through public relations ingenuity would cut into revenues. These jealousies were blamed partly for the beginning of the adversary relationship between the two professions.²

One of the first steps in airing adversarial attitudes between these two professions came in the form of a modest bribe in the 1870's. Bribes included a payment of fees for favorable newspaper coverage or "puffery." They became so common that a Chicago reporter satirized the practice by publishing his rates:

For setting forth the virtues (actual or alleged) of presidents, general managers, or directors, \$2 per line...For complimentary notices of the wives and children of railroad officials, we demand \$1.50 per line...Poetry will be made to order at \$3 per inch of agate measures. We are prepared to supply a fine line of heptameter puffs, also a limited number of sonnets and triolets, in exchange for 1,000 mile tickets. Epic poems, containing descriptions of scenery, dining cars, etc., will be published at special rates.³

One of the more sophisticated methods of press agency involved what was termed as "deadheading," or the provision of free tickets and "passes" on the railroad. Norfolk and Western Vice President Frederick J. Kimball noted that "giving passes to newspapermen is about the cheapest form of advertising we can get." Kimball was so successful in this practice that he was commended by his superiors and, for this, made president of Norfolk and Western from 1883 through 1895. The public rationale he and others offered for this was that reporters had to be free to cover news wherever it happened, and that railroads

were acting in the public interest by providing transport. Publishers and their reporters knew what was going on, but they didn't seem to mind at the time.⁴

Bernays brought public relations into the journalism school by teaching the first PR course in 1923 at New York University, as a continuing education course. Most public relations practitioners entered into the field after having experience in journalism. The fact that these PR practitioners left the journalism field for higher pay and other reasons has been a source of negative feelings for many years.⁵

Criticisms of Journalism in the Journalism - Public Relations Relationship

From fabricating quotes to playing newspapers against each other, the media has been accused of it all. Many journalists will admit they have a lot of shortcomings.

We don't cover stories that are too hard...or complicated. We don't cover stories that are too close to home -- ourselves. We don't cover stories that will kill off our lifeline -- our sources -- and we don't cover stories that stray too far from the established prejudices of the day. It's not because the stories are too racy, but because they aren't racy enough.⁶

---Eleanor Randolph, Reporter
Washington Post's
"The News Business"

Five of the nation's leading media critics recently alleged there are gaps in news coverage wide enough to accommodate a circulation truck. New York Times press correspondent Albert Scardino said that newspapers, including his

own, are generally dancing to tunes played by advertisers. He attributed the development in recent years of newspaper food, business and special sections to a management drive for more ad revenue. Supermarkets have become their biggest advertisers so they have catered to them by creating food sections in order to increase advertising revenue.⁷

Washington Post Ombudsman Richard Harwood called the media hypocrites for imposing higher standards on those they cover than on themselves. Journalists get paid for speeches, give voice to anonymous sources and take sides on controversial issues such as political campaigns according to the attendees at a 1989 Washington Journalism Center conference.⁸

Many political figures have said that journalists respond to criticism by retreating behind the First Amendment. Sen. Alan K. Simpson (R-Wyo.) said, "The debate never gets to full honesty or candor because, somewhere along the line, up comes the First Amendment and the people's right to know." He accused the press of irresponsibility for using unnamed sources to tear down reputations: "I think your profession has become sloppy, it's become lazy."⁹

The late Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart, quoted by Fred Friendly, echoed the senator from Wyoming, "The trouble with you journalists is that you are all mixed up between what the Constitution gives you a right to publish and the right thing to do."¹⁰

Nat Hentoff, a journalist for the Village Voice, described a despised type of journalism that some reporters adhere to. He called it the "as-if school of

journalism." This type is when a reporter writes a story not quite in the way it really happened, but instead in the way it *could* have happened. "Each one of these stories is accurate. Each one is *not* complete. And finally each one is *not* true," Hentoff said. He said when a story is incomplete, it can't be true.¹¹

Many people complain about the journalist's hunger for quotes. Time Magazine essay writer Michael Kinsley knows first hand. During the last election Kinsley said a television journalist called him for an interview. Kinsley was puzzled because he didn't know much about politics, but he was flattered. The journalist came in, set up lights and camera, and asked, "Mike, would you say that..." Then he proceeded to recite some theory about the course of the campaign. Kinsley answered, "Good point. You're absolutely right about that. I never thought of it before." The journalist replied, "No. Would you say it?" Kinsley was shocked that the journalist wasn't interested in his wisdom. He wanted a soundbite. "Under the conventions of American journalism, his (the journalist) insight was worthless to him until he could get someone else to utter it, thus conferring on his nugget some spurious authority and relieving himself of any taint of opinion or bias," Kinsley said.¹²

Many critics of the press criticize the media's emphasis on prize-seeking. The disturbing episode of Washington Post reporter Janet Cooke falsifying a Pulitzer Prize-winning story and similar ensuing disclosures afflicting the press have focused public attention on prize-seeking in journalism.¹³

The few previous studies conducted on journalism prize-winning found awards are ways of "getting ahead" and concluded that they function as part of

the normative system of the press. Respondents in an Editor and Publisher study by David C. Coulson reported they had worked for newspapers or with reporters who had recently received journalism prizes. Most newspapers in the study had policies, usually informal, that encourage prize-seeking. Some critics believe the issue is out of hand.¹⁴

Journalists "have always ranked down there with dogcatchers and lawyers in the public's esteem," said journalist Janet Malcolm. The journalist, she said at the outset of a recent two-part essay in The New Yorker, is by nature "a kind of confidence man," who survives by gaining people's trust and "betraying them without remorse." The article set off a ruckus among journalists because it's an engrossing (if often muddled) tale that raises some wrenching questions about the ethics of the journalist.¹⁵

"Every journalist who is not too stupid or too full of himself to notice what is going on knows that what he does is morally indefensible," Malcolm said. "Like the credulous widow who wakes up one day to find the charming young man and all her savings gone, so the consenting subject of a piece of nonfiction writing learns - - when the article or book appears - - *his* hard lesson." Malcolm went on to say, "Journalists justify their treachery in various ways according to their temperments. The more pompous talk about freedom of speech and 'the public's right to know'; the least talented talk about Art; the seemliest murmur about earning a living," she said.¹⁶

What is ironic about Malcolm's quotes is that she has been the subject of a landmark case ruled upon by the United State Supreme Court in July 1991.

The Court unanimously overturned the decision of a federal court in California and ruled that the discomfiting case accusing Malcolm of libeling her subject by fabricating quotes, should go to trial.¹⁷

Malcolm did a two-part profile in The New Yorker about Jeffery Masson, a psychoanalyst who had recently lost his job as projects director of the Sigmund Freud Archives in New York City. Malcolm's profile apparently allowed Masson to destroy himself with his own words: his self description as "an intellectual gigolo," his plan to transform Anna Freud's house, after her death, into "a place of sex, women, fun" and his boast that he would be recognized as "after Freud, the greatest analyst who's ever lived."¹⁸

Masson sued for libel, claiming that he had never said any of these things and that other quotations had been distorted to make him look ridiculous. Malcolm, in a pretrial deposition, conceded that she had combined a number of Masson's comments over a period of months to suggest that they had all occurred during a single lunch at a restaurant in Berkeley. Her 40 or so hours of tapes and her notes of interviews with Masson do not contain the three quotations he claimed were fabricated.¹⁹

There has been many recent situations in which the journalist has been accused of wrong doing, and some argue this wrong doing is just plain unethical behavior.

The Yellow Jacket, the student newspaper of West Virginia State College, a historically black college, has brought the criticisms of editorials to the forefront. The college paper was recently labeled racist by a group of

African-American students.²⁰

The charge of racism was raised after the newspaper printed an editorial-opinion piece that compared South African black nationalist leader Nelson Mandela with Karl Marx and Judas Iscariot. The paper's staff believed in their right to print the editorial. The paper's editor-in-chief said the author provided balanced coverage of the opinion because the paper printed the upset student's response the next week.²¹

Another situation in 1990 involved New York Times AIDS reporter, Gina Kolata, who set off an avalanche of criticism from leading AIDS researchers as well as activists.²²

"Odd Surge in Deaths Found in Those Taking AIDS Drug" read her front-page headline. The story that followed was full of misinformation, yet it sent a shockwave across the country. Telephones rang continually from anxious investors and hysterical patients as other AIDS reporters scrambled to pick up the pieces.²³

This article was only one of many articles Kolata has received complaints about. Voice reporter, Robert Massa, writing about Kolata in 1990, said, "after months of stonewalling, her editors may be getting the message." The Times printed several retractions to her stories and limited her reporting over the next year.²⁴

Other areas of criticism against journalists include journalist's criticisms and investigations of public figures. "Veteran correspondents have quickly found a label to express their disgust: 'Kitty Kelley Journalism,'" said David

Gergan, a U.S. News & World Report reporter.²⁵

"No one is certain whether the recent disclosures - - from those in Kitty Kelley's book (about Nancy Reagan) straight through to those in an NBC expose about Senator Chuck Robb of Virginia - - have even as much truth to them as 'Citizen Kane,' a thinly veiled account of William Randolph Hearst's life," Gergan said.²⁶

The only certainty is that journalists are rushing out with sensational smear stories regardless of guilt. In NBC's accusations that Robb once attended drug parties and had an affair with a former beauty queen, there were no smoking guns, just smoke. In its defense, the network argued that since Robb *might* run for president someday, it had a responsibility to unveil his private life, Gergan said.²⁷

In line with the intense investigations of political figures, comes the highly publicized criticism of "tabloid newspapers" and "tabloid television." Both have drawn harsh reviews for their explicit use of sex, murder and sensationalism. The New York Times called one of Geraldo Rivera's specials "pornography masquerading as journalism."²⁸

There are numerous tabloid newspapers including The Enquirer, The Star and many more. The biggest recent surge in tabloid journalism though comes from television and it has taken on all kinds of explicit forms. From shows like A Current Affair and Hard Copy to the talk shows including Donahue, Geraldo and Sally Jesse Raphael, each covers stories like "The Blond Bunnies of Beverly Hills" and "The Death of a Salesman."

Phillip Weiss, in a report for Columbia Journalism Review, claimed these

tabloid news programs swell statistical figures and use explicit sex scenes and horror scenes in an attempt to attract viewers. So far, the ratings seem to show it's working.²⁹

"In a hyped and bogus-sounding sex survey, A Current Affair once noted that 19 percent of its respondents watched X-rated video at home and that 20 percent made their own X-rated videos," Weiss said. "These figures are surely swollen, but they speak to the central challenge of the tabs, to intrigue households with something approaching the intimacy of the spontaneous, shaky, but indisputably authentic work of millions of amateur camera people."³⁰

Public relations practitioners also have their own complaints to make against the journalist and the journalism profession.

"Dealing with the media on a regular basis is an enterprise that can sometimes leave a public relations professional frustrated and bewildered," said Joel Pomerantz, a PR practitioner. "One appears to be doing all the right things, yet the outcome is hardly what is intended." Pomerantz listed the following cases:

- * You suggest a story idea to a reporter involving your client, provide him with a great deal of background material, and give the writer many leads to flesh out the piece. The article appears without any mention of your client.³¹
- * You go to great lengths to make the CEO of an important client available for an urgently solicited telephone interview that consumes nearly 45 minutes of his time. The piece runs,

incorporating many of his thoughts, but completely without attribution.³²

* You offer a story angle to a leading trade publication and arrange an interview with a senior executive of a client firm after briefing him. The reporter, who failed to do the necessary homework, devotes the interview to an entirely different subject, embarrassing you and unsettling your client.³³

* You propose a perishable story to an editor who expresses immediate interest. The editor sits on the proposal for weeks. Nothing happens. Meanwhile, it's too late to pitch it to anyone else.³⁴

* You set up a requested interview with a client. He is quoted accurately, but totally out of context, resulting in a damaging, unintended impression.³⁵

* You expend much time and effort putting together extensive, hard-to come-by background material for an editor. When you call, he promptly asks you to send it again without taking a moment to look for the original.³⁶

During an interview with Frederick Andrews, the business and finance editor of the New York Times, he said that "almost none" of the stories in the Times are PR generated. "We have so many ideas ourselves that we can't get to. We form our own agenda," Andrews said. "This kind of comment would be under debate by any PR practitioner whose dozens of stories have been printed

in the Times," Randall Poe, author of the article, said.³⁷

Today, journalism is the subject of many kinds of criticisms, mostly from the viewing and reading public, some from PR practitioners and some from journalists. Some articles written by public relations practitioners about journalists hint at the fact that journalists tend to play God with PR practitioner's lives. "Our relationship with the media is fraught with fear. We fear that a misspoken word may cost us our jobs," said Maynard Chapman, director of the Office of Public Information at the Colorado Department of Social Services in Denver. "We are afraid, very often with good reason, that our comments will be taken out of context. We are terrified that reporters will not accurately convey our meaning along with our words. Perhaps we will look foolish in the glaring lights of television or the stone-like quality of newsprint. Mistakes are easy to make and hard to correct," Chapman said.³⁸

Criticisms of Public Relations in the Journalism - Public Relations Relationship

On the other side of this issue is the public relations practitioners and their contributions to the adversary relationship studied in this research. The complaints by journalists about public relations practitioners are plentiful, in fact, *much* of the literature presenting the negative side of public relations was written by journalists.

Some PR practitioners attribute part of the profession's negative image to

the "complicated, troubled and unpredictable era for business which has caused public relations to proliferate simply because more public problems have to be handled," said Robert Dilenschneider, a public relations practitioner and firm owner. "Due to the increase in problems, the inferiority complex that has dogged PR people from the beginning is with us still." Dilenschneider said status continues to be a problem for PR practitioners.³⁹

"In public relations, it (the goal) may be too obscure. In journalism, balance is sought in reporting the pros and cons," said Dirk C. Gibson, an ex-reporter for a daily newspaper. "In public relations, the balance may be tilted -- the positive accentuated, the negative minimized if not ignored. In journalism, brevity is prized by all editors, except those serving publications of record. In public relations, detail is often insisted upon by the client or employer. In journalism, editorial comment in news stories is frowned upon. In public relations, it is often inserted in an effort to explain, clarify or 'add punch,'" Gibson said.⁴⁰

PR practitioner Joel Pomerantz said the very eagerness of public relations people to assist the media undermines the PR practitioner's respect and fosters negative perceptions. "Easy is rejected; hard-to-get is respected," he said. "Because so much, from so many sources, is available, the sheer glut of public relations-originated material tends to devalue everything."⁴¹

"There is a 'Public Relations Gresham's Law' at work here -- the bad driving out the good. That so much that is, in fact, neither relevant nor newsworthy bombards news and feature desks serves to confirm existing

biases and perceptions," Pomerantz said.⁴²

Pomerantz believes that PR practitioners are bringing suspicion on themselves by preparing so-called advertorials. PR practitioners are seen as devious attempts to encroach on newsmen's terrain by blunting the reader's ability to distinguish between bona fide editorial matter and a public relations message.⁴³

John S. Detweiler, APR, said that for Larry Speakes, who is chairman of the department of public relations at the University of Florida, the stage for trouble was set when Speakes told a Washington Press Club audience that he wanted his epitaph to read, "He told the truth...always." When he later admitted in his kiss-and-tell book that he had exercised his "PR man's license" in manufacturing a quote for President Reagan during the Geneva summit, the press couldn't resist delighting in Speakes' seeming hypocrisy. But the incident did more than cost Speakes dearly -- "It raised some serious problems about the ethics of public relations practice," Detweiler said.⁴⁴

Some criticism of public relations includes the amount of money PR practitioners make compared to journalists. Reed Trencher, president of his California firm, Primetime Publicity and Media Consulting, had the right idea when he started recruiting journalists out of the newsroom to work for him. With so many former journalists working for him, he is able to publish a lot of stories about his clients. So much so that Trencher started charging by the story.⁴⁵

According to a 1987 price tag list, Trencher was to get \$42,800 for placing a piece on 60 Minutes, \$21,135 for a story in People Magazine and

\$11,875 for an article in the New York Times.⁴⁶

Rick Goldberg, president of Center Stage Inc., a recording company in Houston, says Trencher assured him, "If it's not a feature, you don't have to pay for it." But Goldberg says he was billed \$1,000 for a one-line mention in a July issue of Wall Street Journal and \$14,089 for one paragraph in People Magazine. Trencher denies making that assurance, and the case is now in arbitration.⁴⁷

In May 1989, Joe Sciacca, city hall reporter for The Boston Herald, filed what he considered a routine Freedom of Information Act request with the Boston police commissioner, asking for a breakdown of the overtime paid to police officers in 1988. Sciacca had heard that some city cops were pulling in six-figure incomes, fattened by many hours of overtime.⁴⁸

He got an answer nine days later, but it wasn't from the police commissioner. Instead, he read it in The Boston Globe, in a story detailing how seven police officers had earned more than \$100,000 last year. Brian Mooney, the Globe's city hall bureau chief, said he made a verbal request for the information before Sciacca made his written request. When Sciacca complained, he got a letter from the police press (PR) officer apologizing and admitting that the situation was mishandled.⁴⁹

But Sciacca and other Boston journalists say it's just one more example of Mayor Raymond L. Flynn's somewhat devious idea of press relations: play papers against each other, punish reporters for critical stories and stall whenever possible. Sciacca said he believed city hall was paying him back for

a piece he wrote the same week he made the FOIA request. The story questioned the qualifications of a twenty-six-year-old former campaign aide to Mayor Flynn who now earns almost \$850 a week in a police administrative position -- a job for which there were apparently no other applicants. Sciacca made a clear point that the city of Boston's public and press relations were lacking.⁵⁰

Even in the Persian Gulf War, public relations received negative criticism by journalists. In the days leading up to the ground war, reporters were so frustrated by the military censorship that they jumped at the chance to cover rehearsals for a massive amphibious landing on the Kuwaiti coast. As the exercises carried on, press coverage mounted and anticipation grew. Only one problem: the landing never happened. The amphibious assault was a diversionary tactic intended to fool the Iraqis. And the press coverage, as General Norman Schwarzkopf said, "was a big help." Many journalists were upset and felt they had been routed nearly as decisively as the Iraqis.⁵¹

Journalist Andy Marken humorously tells PR professionals "Thirteen Ways to Make Enemies in the Press" in his article titled the same. They included:

- 1) Develop essential and non-essential media lists. Work only with target markets. Ignore inquiries from other publications.⁵²
- 2) Put up road blocks. Establish a priority list of editors that your boss will talk to and those that PR should handle. If a

reporter has a frivolous inquiry, have someone else in the organization handle it for you.⁵³

- 3) Return calls in due course. Regardless of whether the reporters are on deadline, make it obvious that their time and effort couldn't possibly be as important as yours.⁵⁴
- 4) Scream when a story isn't 100% positive. Regardless of whether you and your company are right or wrong, expect every article to be a glowing report of the company, its products and its people.⁵⁵
- 5) Strike back. In reference to #4, place an embargo on the guilty publication, don't respond to inquiries, and better yet, pull your advertising.⁵⁶
- 6) Use one syllable words with reporters. Make sure that the reporters know that you know more about your subject than they do. Talk down to them.⁵⁷
- 7) Pick and choose opportunities. If your organization is going to get some immediate coverage, then it is perfectly acceptable to work with and cooperate with the press.⁵⁸
- 8) Insist that everything be cleared. About half way through an interview, remind the editor or reporter that, naturally, everything you've said will have to be cleared through public relations manager, or better yet, through your legal department.⁵⁹

- 9) Have all queries and responses screened. PR people are paid good money to develop and protect images as well as to promote the company and its products. Make sure that all questions and all answers are cleared by this department.⁶⁰
- 10) Give multiple exclusives. If you've got some really hot company or product announcement to make, negotiate with the best publication that you can think of in order to get the maximum editorial coverage and treatment possible. After their firmly locked in, do the same thing with two or three other publications.⁶¹
- 11) Torpedo the energetic reporter. When a reporter wants to do a full blown piece over a press release you sent, then decide its too good of an idea for that reporter alone, so call some other reporters and give them the same information.⁶²
- 12) Tie client's weak stories to client's advertising budget. If the piece you want to place is very weak or just a puff-piece on the company, make it known to the reporter that you're a big advertiser with their publication.⁶³
- 13) Make certain that the press sends clippings. Every time you send a news release to editors or reporters, remind them that you need clippings of the article or piece when it is

finally printed.⁶⁴

From fabricating quotes to making reporters feel like their time isn't important, PR practitioners are able to stir up harsh criticism from journalists. Some criticisms are the same ones that PR practitioners have about journalists.

Interviews

In addition to the research summarized in this thesis over the adversary relationship that exists between journalists and public relations practitioners, interviews were conducted with a practicing journalist and a practicing public relations professional. A journalism professor and a public relations professor were also interviewed. The interviews were conducted to bring a personal and local view to the study.

While the opinion over the intensity of the current adversary relationship differed between interviews, all four agreed that an adversary relationship did exist and it served only to harm both professions.

Oklahoma State University's Assistant Professor of Journalism, Don Reed, said there has been an adversary relationship in the past, in the late 1960's, but both professions have helped to eliminate it today.⁶⁵

"Since a lot of people go back and forth between print and PR, we've cleaned up our act," Reed said. "I think Bernays and some of the early founders set the tone. It took a while for the fairness and accuracy to take effect but it takes an awful lot of work to explain to clients they must be up front and tell the truth." "We had to depend on these PR people and we prayed their stories were

true and accurate. They all have some drumbeat they're following but it can be done without manufacturing and hoaxes," he said.⁶⁶

Reed said the Tylenol poisoning cases in Chicago helped the PR profession. "Their PR people said they would be up front and tell everything they could to the media. It set the tone for the rest of the media and PR in particular."⁶⁷

"I'll admit we have a tendency to pick on each other. Although it is not good for journalism as a whole, you always have the poking at each other but there is an understanding of mutual benefit between the two professions," Reed said.⁶⁸

"Anyone is entitled to come into this business and do as they please, but more and more journalists and PR people are degreed and that has cut down on the negative feelings," he said.⁶⁹

On the subject of negative bias in textbooks, Reed said there is still some present today but the bias in textbooks is also improving.

OSU's Assistant Professor of Public Relations, Brooks Garner, believes that an adversarial relationship exists because the press' role in society is adversarial or to be the "watchdog" of society. "You always have a situation where the media is adversarial to organizations in our society. It's the nature of the news media - the role of the press," he said. "Since public relations people are advocates for organizations, you have a natural situation where the media have to depend on public relations people."⁷⁰

Garner said that PR people provide two kinds of news to the media - soft

news and hard news. Garner believes that when there is soft news involved there is no conflict with the media because they need this news for story ideas. "When you get into conflict kind of stories or hard news, this is where you find the adversarial relationship," he said. Garner said that sometimes there is a dispute with the media over what is the public's right to know and what is private. He said that some businesses try to keep information from the media for competitive reasons and the media feel they should have access to the information. "PR people are sometimes put in this gatekeeping position and this causes conflict between the professions," he said. "A situation can be made worse depending on the public relations people and how they treat the media."⁷¹

Garner also said that conflict arises when journalists aren't always accurate in reporting about their organizations. He said there was a trend back in the 1970's to stop using the media so much to tell organizational stories. "It's very frustrating to business people because the media is shallow in it's reporting, using superficial kinds of topics, and they are not particularly accurate and knowledgeable," he said. "To business people, the issues are complex sometimes and the media can't deal with complex issues very well, particularly television. It's an emotional medium and business doesn't provide much emotion."⁷²

On the subject of college textbooks being negative against the other profession, Garner believes that the public relations textbooks are mostly balanced and tell of both profession's misgivings, but he believes that

journalism textbooks are negative against PR.⁷³

"Part of the problem is that originally, public relations was a publicity thing and most of the people that went into it went from newspapers and they got paid more, so there's resentment when they had to deal with people that had sold out." Garner said that a lot of today's PR practitioners aren't coming from a newspaper background so the resentment is decreasing.⁷⁴

"There's resentment too, because newspapers use so much material that public relations produces," he said. This is actually opposite of what some editors say.⁷⁵

"Journalists aren't particularly respected in society. Journalists are called 'hacks', so they call public relations people 'flacks.' It's somebody they can take their anger out on, because society is always bashing the media," Garner said.⁷⁶

Garner said the adversary relationship affects the public's image and the credibility of both professions. "You always see politicians attack the media for their problems. It's an old thing called 'slay the messenger, if you don't like the message,'" he said. Garner said that society does not like conflict. "We would all like to wake up in the morning and hear nothing but messages that support what we believe, and that's why people are always going to bash and believe negative things about media or public relations people because they're in the business of communicating ideas," he said.⁷⁷

Educators in the journalism and public relations fields seem to differ over how prevalent the adversary relationship is between the professions today.

While the professor of journalism said he doesn't feel there is much of an adversary relationship existing today, the public relations professor feels the adversary relationship is very strong today but contributes it mostly to the adversary position of the media.

Cynthia Longley, president of Longley and Associates Public Relations in Oklahoma City, said she believes the adversary relationship exists but she doesn't experience it in working with her journalism contacts.⁷⁸

Prior to owning her own firm, Longley served as an editor for Oklahoma Monthly Magazine for ten years. "I haven't experienced the adversary relationship because I came from an editorial background and I understand what they want and how they need it to be done," she said.⁷⁹

"I think problems arise when PR practitioners are overly aggressive or adamant about things being handled their way," Longley said. "Although I don't experience it, I've seen that there is a certain snobbery on the part of the media. PR people are looked down upon as people who have sold out," she said.⁸⁰

Longley has heard the negatives from journalists. She said that her journalism contacts will complain to her about certain groups that are overly aggressive, mostly in-house institutions. Longley believes PR practitioners should make it as easy as possible for the media by giving them a lot of information, using a lot of statistics, being sensitive to deadlines and content, listening to what they need and encouraging their clients to be open.⁸¹

"Some journalists want to speak directly to the client, but most are very

professional and they understand the role of the PR practitioner," Longley said.⁸²

Longley believes the adversary relationship is bad for both professions saying "it hurts the ability to work with each other in order to get positive results." She said the adversary relationship is better today than it used to be and she feels it will continue to get better in the future as more people in the two fields receive degrees.⁸³

Mike Shannon, Assistant Managing Editor of the Daily Oklahoman in Oklahoma City, said the adversary relationship between journalism and public relations does exist to a point.⁸⁴

Shannon said the cause is PR people wanting everything they send in to be printed in the paper. "Our editors are paid to put in the things that are newsworthy and to cut out the fluff," he said. "Sometimes these two realms don't always go together."⁸⁵

"I think a certain undercurrent has been taught in the past that PR practitioners were to be watched closely, that their motives weren't always pure," Shannon said. "The relationship between the two is a symbiotic one where one helps the other but they don't always like it."⁸⁶

Shannon said the adversary relationship puts PR practitioners at a disadvantage due to the sins of others and that journalists may be biased in judging stories not strictly on content but instead on where the story is coming from.⁸⁷

Shannon said he believes there *is* a place for public relations. "They

make it a lot easier. We learn about things we wouldn't have known about without them," he said. "I would term them a 'necessary evil' but they can get in the way."⁸⁸

Past Studies of the Public Relations Profession

Most past studies of the public relations profession appear to focus on the images of public relations people and how the profession is portrayed. The studies also examine the products of public relations and how effective they are. Overall, the studies show public relations to have a negative image. The following is a chronological discussion of these studies.

A study conducted by Donald K. Wright examined the ethical and moral values of public relations practitioners. One of the premises of his research was that when people speak of ethics in public relations, they usually speak of the "lack of ethics."⁸⁹

The study revealed six factors clearly having impact on the moral values of public relations practitioners in the United States and Canada. The factors included socio-economic morality, religious morality, basic morality, puritanical morality, basic social responsibility morality and financial morality.⁹⁰

Carolyn Cline's analysis of 12 introductory mass communication textbooks in 1982 indicated there was a problem with the image of the public relations profession in these textbooks. She said the textbooks showed that journalists felt as though public relations professionals had "sold out" and went

on to better paying jobs. The study also reported that the anti-PR bias was perhaps inherited with public relations being equated with publicity and press agency. Cline's study reported that this anti-PR bias could be impacting the public relations profession in a negative way. The study showed that twenty percent of journalism students begin college to pursue a career in public relations but instead, due to changing of majors, only eleven percent actually graduate in the public relations major. Cline said this decrease could be due to PR students feeling they have "sold out" and therefore they decide to pursue a journalism/newswriting career.⁹¹

"Public relations practitioners are commonly known for hiding the truth or in some cases, lying," according to textbooks used in a 1983 study conducted by Hugh Culbertson. The study revealed that some public relations textbooks teach this to their readers. The author read six editions of texts in public relations principles for references to honesty and lying. The study determined few attempts were made to rule out cover-ups on theoretical or philosophical grounds. Also, it determined that the texts gave students the impression that practitioners are probably sometimes justified in "sitting on" a story when the release of information could lead to a firm's or agency's demise.⁹²

In an earlier mentioned article with the business editor of the New York Times, the editor said they used "almost none" of the releases sent to them by PR practitioners. Many research efforts provide evidence to the contrary. Judith VanSlyke Turk's 1986 study of Louisiana newspapers and how much of their stories were PR generated, revealed that out of 444 stories provided by public

relations practitioners, 225 or 51 percent were used in Louisiana newspapers.^{93,94}

A 1986 study conducted by Linda Morton showed that daily newspapers publish an average of 7.6 percent of all press releases sent to them. Weeklies publish nine percent and twice-weeklies publish 21.6 percent.⁹⁵

Another study conducted by Robert Bishop used an electronic content analysis of three American newspapers for the month of June 1987 to see what proportion of newspaper mentions of public relations activities were favorable and unfavorable. The study concluded that 52.9 percent of the mentions were actually favorable. As far as the sample went, Bishop said that public relations was equated solely with publicity without mention of the planning, research, evaluation, counselling or the many other tasks practiced by public relations professionals.⁹⁶

A 1989 study by Larry Judd examined the credibility of public relations practitioners coupled with their multiple responsibilities to both their employer/client and to the society. The study surveyed 100 active members of the 1986-87 Register of the Public Relations Journal and asked them four questions. They are as follows:

- 1) "Which, in your opinion, should be most important in public relations--responsibility to the (employer/client), or responsibility to society?"
- 2) "In your opinion, who would the general public believe to be the most credible source of information about (your/an)

organization? The chief executive, a spokesperson from public relations, or a journalist or reporter?"

3) "I am going to read you a short list of occupations. Please tell me how you believe the majority of Americans would rate the honesty and ethical standards of people in these different fields on a scale of--very high, high, average, low, or very low." Then, the respondents rated "clergymen, car salesmen, advertising practitioners, business executives, journalists, public relations practitioners and TV reporters or commentators."

4) "In your opinion, what one thing could public relations practitioners do that would most improve their credibility?"⁹⁷

Answers were as follows:

1) Sixty-five percent responded that responsibility to the society as most important, with 35 percent choosing responsibility to their employer/client.

2) Fifty-five percent responded that the chief executive would be the most credible, 40 percent chose the journalist or reporter as most credible and only five percent chose the public relations spokesperson as most credible.

3) Ratings of the honesty and ethical standards for public relations practitioners were interesting. None rated them as very high, five percent rated them as high, 63 percent as average, 28 percent as low and 4 percent as very low.

4) The most frequent (33 percent) recommendations made about the PR profession regarded the ethics of the practice. Comments given include: "No gimmicks," "Level with the public and tell them the whole story," "Learn more about and how their business works." Thirteen percent listed professionalism and nine percent listed accreditation.⁹⁸

Past Studies of the Journalism Profession

Past studies of the journalism profession appear to focus on the ethics of journalists. The studies also examine journalism bias and how journalists decide what is "news." Overall, the studies show the journalism profession has a negative image. The following is a chronological discussion of these studies.

Vicki Hesterman, in a 1988 study of city and regional magazines, concluded that in magazine journalism, few ethical standards exist. The study showed that nearly 75 percent of the editors and publishers report that pressure from advertisers and the advertising or business office influence editorial decisions. More than 80 percent allow participation or have no policies governing political or civic leadership activities. Potential conflicts of interest are not restricted by formal policies at most magazines. More than 75 percent say advertisers usually find out when a relevant story is scheduled. Respondents did not concur that magazine journalists should not accept free gifts, tickets and trips; most allow "freebies" or have no policy concerning them.

The study also showed that many of the managers interviewed do not believe their purposes or ethical standards should be the same as those of more news-oriented media.⁹⁹

In 1988 a study was conducted to examine bias for or against the pro-life movement. The study examined seven newspapers from October 2 to October 9, 1988, when Operation Rescue members were blocking entrances of several abortion clinics in Atlanta. The study found that there was bias in the stories. Most newspapers showed bias against the pro-life movement while several showed some bias for it.¹⁰⁰

In a study of political campaign coverage, Carmen Miller found that media pay more attention to candidates on the basis of their campaign's financial advantage, campaigning strategy and the candidate's personal attributes. It also concluded that media play an even greater role in the political process by affecting the kinds of political opportunities and rewards candidates receive during the campaigning period.¹⁰¹

In a 1990 study conducted by Robert Steele, a focus group of journalists showed that they held strong ethical beliefs that were the product of their developmental years and their life experiences. By observing the journalists at work, listening to their voices as they reflected on their personal and professional values, and examining the organizational culture of the newsroom, it was possible to consider the nature of ethical intention and ethical capacity. The study also showed that the journalists still were willing to yield to organizational pressures and professional values that conflicted with their

personal beliefs. This yielding was particularly applicable to photojournalists.¹⁰²

A case study conducted by Machel Bush in 1990 showed that journalists believe that the use of misrepresentation and techniques of undercover journalism are permissible in some circumstances, wherein the information cannot be obtained by any other method and the expected outcome of the story will contribute to the overall good of society.¹⁰³

In the last 15 years, there has been awareness of press ethics as an issue that has bearing on the way the public perceives media. A 1991 study by Jo-Ann Cruz describes how awareness of press ethics influences the way today's journalists work. Interviews with 30 reporters from 15 newspapers in Southern California described how exposure to ethics activities and experiences resolving ethical dilemma influenced their subsequent behavior.¹⁰⁴

Responses showed a narrow margin between those who believed exposure to ethics influenced their behavior (13) and those who claimed no changes in their conduct had resulted (17). All respondents said they had been involved in at least one ethical dilemma and adhered to a specific ethical principle. A majority believed press ethics are underplayed and should be accorded more importance.¹⁰⁵

The past research and current interviews discussed in this chapter serve to confirm that the adversary relationship is alive and well and currently affecting the attitudes of those practicing in both fields. This study will attempt to

identify a contributing factor to the negative feelings existing today.

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CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This study used content analysis as a means of examining the content of college introductory journalism, public relations and mass media textbooks. Examination included determining whether these textbooks showed negative, positive or neutral bias towards the professions of journalism and public relations.

Content analysis was selected as the research technique in this study because it is a "research technique for the objective, systematic and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication."¹

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to answer the following questions about the content of six college introductory journalism textbooks, six college introductory public relations textbooks and ten college introductory mass media textbooks.

- 1) Do introductory public relations textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the journalism profession?

- 2) Do introductory journalism textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the public relations profession?
- 3) Do introductory mass media textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the journalism profession?
- 4) Do introductory mass media textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the public relations profession?

Sampling Plan

For the purpose of this study, a sample of six college introductory journalism textbooks, six public relations textbooks and ten mass media textbooks were selected for analysis. The textbooks selected were not a random sample of all books published, but instead they were a cross-section of books in print today. This study was not intended to be of a sample of the whole population. The textbooks selected were as follows:

Journalism:

- 1) Brooks, Brian S., George Kennedy, Daryl R. Moen and Don Ranly. NewsReporting and Writing, St. Martin's Press, 1980.
- 2) Harriss, Julian, Kelly Leiter and Stanley Johnson. The Complete Reporter - Fundamentals of News Gathering, Writing and Editing, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992.
- 3) Itule, Bruce D. and Douglas A. Anderson. Newswriting and Reporting for Today's Media, Random House, 1987.
- 4) Killenberg, George M. Public Affairs Reporting, St. Martin's Press, 1992.
- 5) Melcher, Melvin. News Reporting and Writing, Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1984.

- 6) Ward, Hiley H. Reporting In Depth, Mayfield Publishing Company, 1991.

Public Relations:

- 1) Baskin, Otis and Craig Aronoff. Public Relations - The Profession and the Practice, Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1988.
- 2) Cutlip, Scott M., Allen H. Center and Glen M. Broom. Effective Public Relations, Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1985.
- 3) Hiebert, Ray Eldon. Precision Public Relations, Longman Inc., 1988.
- 4) Newsom, Doug, Alan Scott and Judy Vanslyke Turk. This Is PR - The Realities of Public Relations, Wadsworth, Inc., 1989.
- 5) Seitel, Fraser P. The Practice of Public Relations, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992.
- 6) Wilcox, Dennis L., Phillip H. Ault and Warren K. Agee. Public Relations - Strategies and Tactics, Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1989.

Mass Media:

- 1) Biagi, Shirley. Media/Impact, Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1990.
- 2) Black, Jay and Jennings Bryant. Introduction to Mass Communication, Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1992.
- 3) DeFleur, Melvin L. and Everette Dennis. Understanding Mass Communication, Houghton-Mifflin Co., 1991.
- 4) Dominick, Joseph R. The Dynamics of Mass Communication, McGraw-Hill Publishing Co., 1990.
- 5) Harless, James D. Mass Communication- An Introductory Survey, Wm. C. Brown Publishers, 1990.
- 6) Hiebert, Ray Eldon, Donald F. Ungurait and Thomas W. Bohn. Mass Media VI, Longman Publishing Group, 1991.
- 7) Nelson, Marlan and George Rhoades. Basics of Writing for the Mass Media, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1986.

- 8) Pember, Don R. Mass Media In America, Macmillan Publishing Company, 1992.
- 9) Rodman, George. Mass Media Issues, Kendall/Hunt Publishing Co., 1989.
- 10) Whetmore, Edward J. Mediamerica, Wadsworth Publishing Co., 1991.

Unit of Analysis

The unit of analysis used for the study of each journalism, public relations or mass media textbook was as follows:

Journalism Textbooks - each sentence of the public relations chapter in each textbook or sections covering public relations or its practices to identify type of bias or what is it the textbooks say about the public relations profession.

Public Relations Textbooks - each sentence of the media relations or journalism chapter in each textbook or sections covering the news media or its practices to identify type of bias or what is it the textbooks say about the journalism profession.

Mass Media Textbooks - (1) each sentence of the public relations chapter in each textbook or sections covering public relations or its practices to identify type of bias or what is it the textbooks say about the public relations profession; and (2) each sentence of the media or journalism chapter in each textbook or sections covering the news media or its practices to identify type of bias or what is it the books say about the journalism profession.

Categories of Content

This study used two categories for each textbook in order to determine whether bias existed toward either profession. Each sentence was coded as either negative or positive depending on its content. The categories are operationally defined as follows:

Negative Bias - The expression of a point of view that denies or refuses a positive or acceptable characteristic of either profession (journalism or public relations). (i.e., "Public-Relations practitioners are presented as ever-smiling, glad-handling, image makers working secretly behind the scenes, except in time of crisis when they are called upon to perform their magic tricks in public.")²

Positive Bias - The expression of a point of view that praises or adds credibility to a characteristic of either profession (journalism or public relations). (i.e., "Often described as 'the oil that makes democracy run,' public-relations techniques play an important role in influencing public opinion.")³

Quantification System

Sentences analyzed were counted and listed as either negative or positive. All collected data were recorded with a nominal or frequency count. A qualitative analysis was also done for each textbook using the quantitative data.

Coding

Coding was conducted by a panel of three judges. Judges ranged from

age 24 to age 51 and none of the three have ever practiced the professions of journalism or public relations. The coding procedures were discussed and reviewed prior to actual coding. An inter-coder reliability test was conducted using some the selected textbook's pages not used in this study.

Endnotes

¹Bernard Berelson, "Content Analysis in Communication Research," New York, The Free Press, 1952, p. 18.

²Hiebert, Ray Eldon, Donald F. Ungurait and Thomas W. Bohn. Mass Media VI, Longman Publishing Group, 1991, p. 149.

³Hiebert, Ray Eldon, Donald F. Ungurait and Thomas W. Bohn. Mass Media VI, Longman Publishing Group, 1991, p. 151.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Data Collection

The central question prompting this study was whether there is negative bias in public relations, journalism and mass media college introductory textbooks. The answer could indicate whether these textbooks, through negative bias, are contributing to the adversary relationship now existing between public relations practitioners and journalists. The research questions guiding the study focused on whether there was a predominant negative or positive bias in each of 22 currently-used textbooks. The study included six college introductory public relations textbooks, six college introductory journalism textbooks and 10 college introductory mass media textbooks.

Three coders were used to classify the negative and positive bias in each textbook. For the purpose of checking intercoder reliability in categorizing, an intercoder reliability test was conducted using the following equation:

$$R = 3M/N1 + N2 + N3$$

where reliability, "R," is expressed in terms of percentage of agreement between coders; "M," is the number of coding decisions on which the three coders

agree; "N1," is the total decisions by coder #1; "N2," is the total decisions by coder #2; and "N3," is the total decisions by coder #3. Reliability in the results of the coding process was determined to be .96. On a scale of 0 to 1.0, where 1.0 is perfect reliability or agreement, .96 indicates a very strong reliability between coder decisions.

Results indicate in the 22 textbooks examined in this study, a total of 1,153 negative references (74%) were made and a total of 402 positive references (26%) were made.

Table I illustrates the differences in total negative and positive references of the four categories of textbooks.

TABLE I
CONTENT ANALYSIS TOTALS OF POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE BIAS

Type of Reference	NEGATIVE	POSITIVE	TOTAL
PR Texts Examining Journalism (6)	72% (273)	28% (106)	100% (379)
Journalism Texts Examining PR (6)	77% (106)	23% (32)	100% (138)
Mass Media Texts Examining Journalism (10)	77% (478)	23% (139)	100% (617)
Mass Media Texts Examining PR (10)	70% (296)	30% (125)	100% (421)
TOTALS	74% (1153)	26% (402)	100% (1555)

As Table I indicates, there was a larger number of negative references recorded for all four categories of textbooks. The overall total showed that negative references were made toward the professions almost three to one over positive references. The percentages were 74% negative references and 26% positive references.

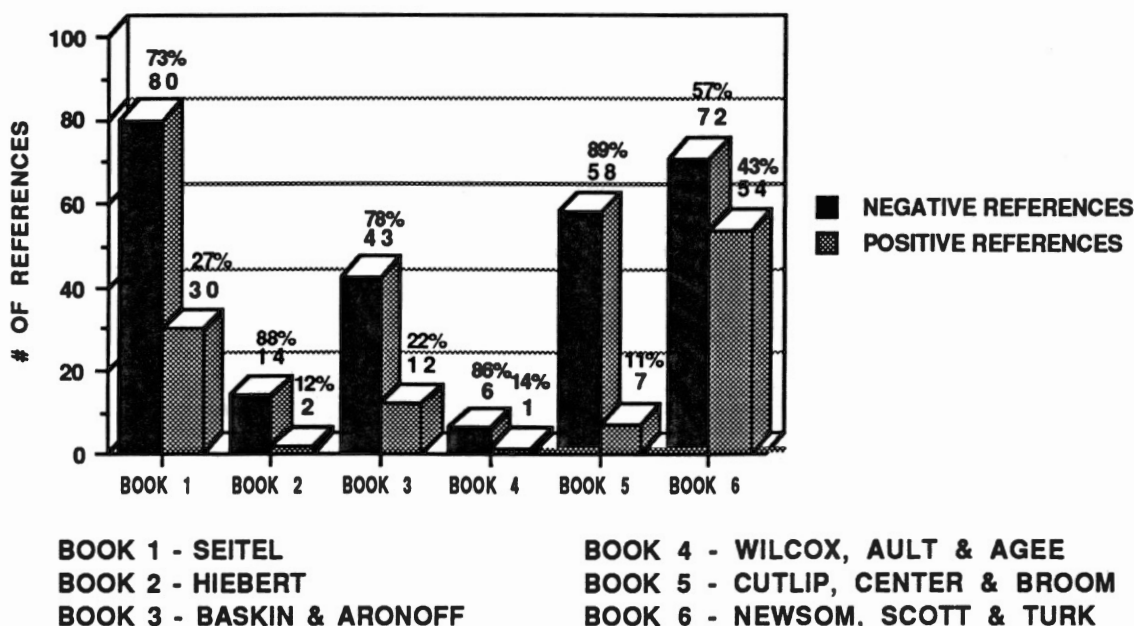
Public Relations Textbooks Examining Journalism

All six of the public relations textbooks examined were found to contain negative bias against the journalism profession. All textbooks, except Wilcox, Ault & Agee's textbook, had a specific chapter addressing the media or media relations which was used in the analysis. For the Wilcox, Ault & Agee textbook, smaller specific sections were used including "How Public Relations Differs From Journalism," "Ethical Dealings with News Media" and "The Business-Media Relationship."

Figure 1 (page 61) illustrates the proportion of negative and positive references made in each textbook. As Figure 1 indicates, the textbook by Seitel contained the largest number of negative references, with 80. The Wilcox, Ault & Agee textbook, taking into consideration that it was not a full chapter, had the fewest negative references with 6. The Seitel and Cutlip, Center & Broom textbooks had the greatest difference between negative and positive references. The Seitel textbook had 80 negative references to only 30 positive references with a difference of 50. The Cutlip, Center & Broom textbook had 58 negative references to 7 positive references with a difference of 51.

FIGURE 1

PUBLIC RELATIONS TEXTBOOKS - REFERENCES TO JOURNALISM



The Wilcox, Ault & Agee textbook cited a research study by the American Management Association which commissioned David Finn, a public relations counselor, to conduct the study. "AMA's surveys of *public relations executives* found that 73 percent believe reporters don't accurately research their topics, 62 percent believe reporters play on public emotion, and 72 percent see anti-business feelings and public sentiment as being on the side of the media." Also listed are the results of AMA's companion survey of *journalists* finding, "64 percent agreed that reporters don't accurately research their subjects, 58 percent attributed inaccuracies to sloppiness rather than bias, and 58 percent volunteered that media presentation is more important than factual reporting.¹

The coders found that the PR textbooks contained many complaints

about how journalists look down on the public relations profession. The coders also found criticism of how journalists believe they have to rewrite much of the public relations material when there is not always a need to do so.

Although the textbook by Newsom, Scott & Turk had a large number of negative references, the textbook also told the PR practitioner to think "like a reporter." The textbook told the practitioner to, "Be prepared to pay for whatever you ask for. If you ask for videotape to be prepared at a station or for illustrations to be handled by a newspaper's art department -- whether simply photo retouching or designing the cover for a special section -- get your checkbook out. They cannot make money on gratuities."²

The Newsom, Scott & Turk textbook gave practitioners hints on how to set up a newsroom for a special event. They said that providing food is a must. "Food is worth the cost because reporters expect it, and it keeps them from wandering away from the meeting."³

The same textbook told PR practitioners how they must watch out for journalists. "Sometimes a writer has a malicious intent, but an experienced PR person can take the offensive to advantage. The key here is to anticipate how the truth might be used against you." This textbook also told the PR practitioner to be pleasant even when the reporter is hostile. "Answer the question, then shut up. Dead air isn't your problem."⁴

The Newsom, Scott & Turk textbook did give a reporter a whole page in the chapter to give PR practitioners a view of what a reporter has to deal with daily. The coders found this to be a positive step toward understanding each

other's profession. This textbook, along with Seitel's textbook, were the only ones giving the reporter a chance to make such suggestions.

The Cutlip, Center and Broom textbook began its "Media Relations" chapter with a full-page ad printed by Mobil with the headline "A Code that Needs Enforcement" above a reprint of the Sigma Delta Chi Code of Ethics. In four paragraphs written by Mobil, the textbook addressed the lack of ethics in journalism today and urged the readers to make their feelings known to journalists.⁵

"The ideal of objective reporting has gone out the window in far too many cases," stated the Cutlip, Center & Broom textbook. The authors claimed if you are not on the same side of the fence as the editorial page, your chances of being heard are minimal.⁶

The Baskin & Aronoff textbook demonstrated negative bias against journalists in the short preview of their "Media Relations" chapter. "Journalists have mixed feelings toward public relations practitioners -- suspecting them of manipulation, while depending on them for information."⁷

Overall, the coders found Seitel's textbook to be the most negative toward journalism. After what the coders termed "a very negative chapter," Seitel gave a reporter a chance to give his view of PR practitioners -- on the last page of the chapter. In the first few pages of the chapter Seitel warned PR practitioners to beware of the media stating that public relations people in 1989 were reported to be "minimizing" face-to-face contact with the media because, according to one reporter, "No one knows or trusts anyone anymore."⁸

Seitel's textbook gave numerous instances of how the press had attacked the government and hurt people by blowing certain details of their life out of proportion. The most recent example given was Reagan's Supreme Court nomination of Judge Robert Bork. The textbook also criticized journalistic attacks on the Carter and Ford administrations.⁹

The Seitel textbook gave journalists a chance to criticize their own profession through Dan Rather's (CBS-TV's "60 Minutes") statement, "We make mistakes so often, violating the basics of accuracy, clarity, or fairness, that sometimes it shatters me." The textbook also used a special section to tell when Mike Wallace, also of CBS-TV's "60 Minutes," made embarrassing racial remarks when in a California bank interviewing a vice-president about the plight of low-income Californians. The bank cameras recorded Wallace's comments about the complex lien-sale contracts as "You bet your ***** they are hard to read, if you're reading them over the watermelon or over the tacos!"¹⁰

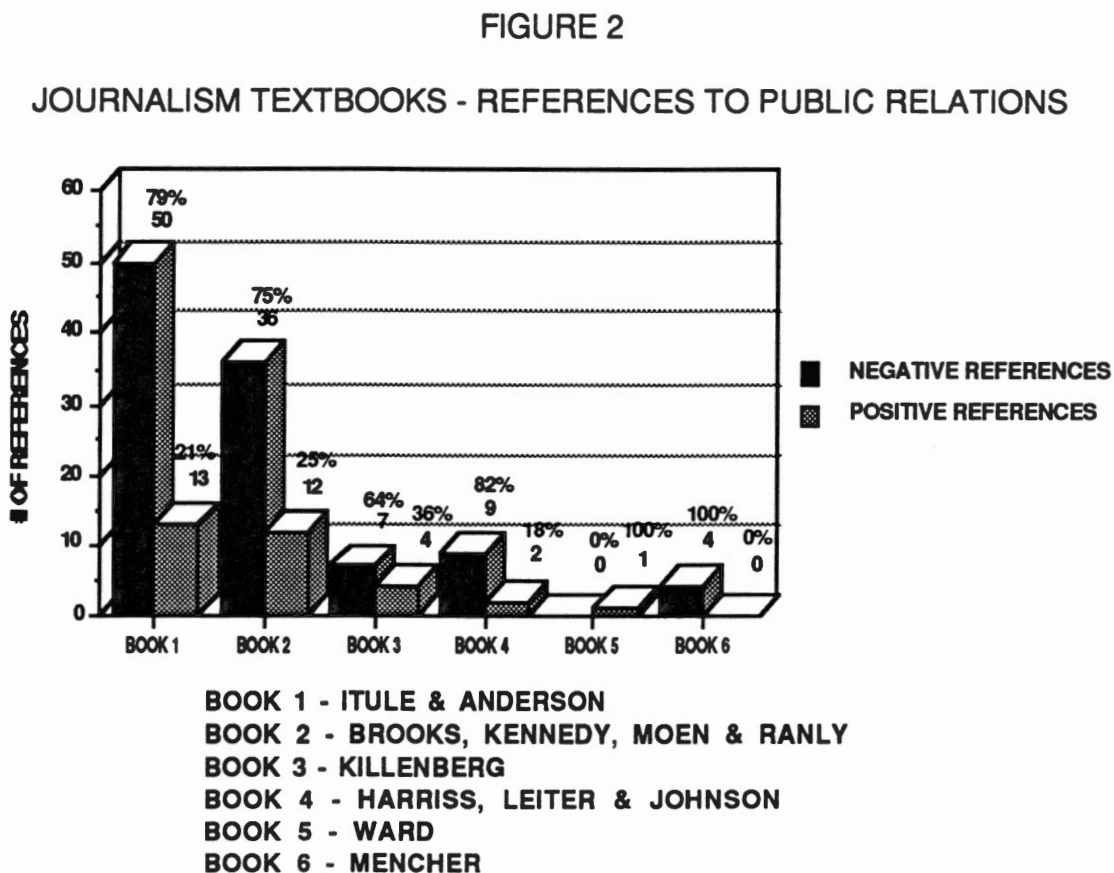
Overall, coders found that the public relations textbooks examined were very negative toward the journalism profession and they definitely contributed to the adversary relationship existing between the two professions. The research question, "Do introductory public relations textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the journalism profession?" was answered. These textbooks showed a *negative* bias toward the journalism profession.

Journalism Textbooks Examining Public Relations

For the purpose of examining journalism textbooks, all six of the

journalism textbooks focused on newswriting and newsreporting. None of the six textbooks had a specific chapter set aside addressing public relations, so all references to public relations, mainly sections on press releases, were used in the analysis. All six of the journalism textbooks examined were found to contain negative bias toward the public relations profession.

Figure 2 illustrates the number of negative and positive references made in each textbook.



As Figure 2 indicates, the textbook by Itule & Anderson contained the largest number of negative references, with 50. The Ward textbook, taking into

consideration that it only had two pages to analyze, had no negative references. In examining the difference between the number of positive and negative references, the Itule & Anderson textbook had the greatest difference of 50 negative references to only 13 positive references with a difference of 37.

Although the page-long section on public relations in the Itule & Anderson textbook gave many positive points about the PR profession, the chapter on press releases presented a different opinion. The coders felt like Itule & Anderson's book along with the other five assumed that all public relations material must always be re-written. An example is presented in the Itule & Anderson textbook in its introduction to press releases. The textbook said, "It is up to the journalist opening the release to decide if it has any reader, viewer or listener interest, if it has news value or if it is nothing more than an attempt to gain free publicity." The chapter also introduced the reader to the term "cut the fluff."¹¹

The Itule and Anderson textbook gave reporters several criteria to determine whether a press release should be "used or tossed in the wastebasket." They include the following:

1) *Does it have news value?* If yes, the reporter was told it should be edited and/or rewritten to conform to print style and to eliminate the overuse of the name of the person or company.

2) *Is it trying to gain free publicity for a person, company or group?* If so, the reporter was told to toss it in the wastebasket and to tell the PR person to check with the advertising department.

3) *Is it worth following up, perhaps as a photograph or a story at a later time?*

4) *Can it be trusted?* Here, the reporter was told always to be leery of press releases because they may have been written by a person with little or no journalism training or by someone who does not have the same standards as a professional journalist.¹²

In the Brooks, Kennedy, Moen & Ranly textbook, the first paragraph of the press release chapter said, "The people who write them call their stories press releases; other journalists are more apt to call them handouts." The textbook also said that press releases are even a hindrance because they sometimes contain incomplete or even incorrect information.¹³

In Killenberg's textbook there were only two pages addressing public relations. In these two pages there were seven negative references made about the PR profession. Killenberg said, "To some reporters, public relations is practiced by unprincipled hacks; they are 'hired guns.'" He also made the point that many people in public relations came from "respectable" careers in journalism. This textbook indicated that people were in journalism were "respectable" while those in public relations were "unprincipled."¹⁴

The Harriss, Leiter & Johnson textbook in its "Rewrites and Follow-Ups" chapter assumed that most, if not all press releases must be re-written. The coders said this assumption was negative toward the public relations profession. This textbook only had nine negative references on a total of eleven pages compared with Killenberg's seven negative references on two pages.¹⁵

Ward's textbook had few mentions of public relations. The small section discussing press conferences was analyzed for this study. There were no negative references found. One positive reference was made stating "press conferences are worth attending."¹⁶

Melcher's textbook had a small section on news conferences and press releases. In regard to a district attorney calling a press conference, the Melcher textbook said, "Although all of this could have been announced in a press release, a news conference was called so that the district attorney could play midwife in the delivery of the tablet (an Israeli treasure) to an Israeli representative."¹⁷

Overall, coders said that the journalism textbooks examined were negative toward the public relations profession. The research question, "Do introductory journalism textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the public relations profession?" was answered. They showed a *negative* bias toward the public relations profession.

Mass Media Textbooks Examining Journalism

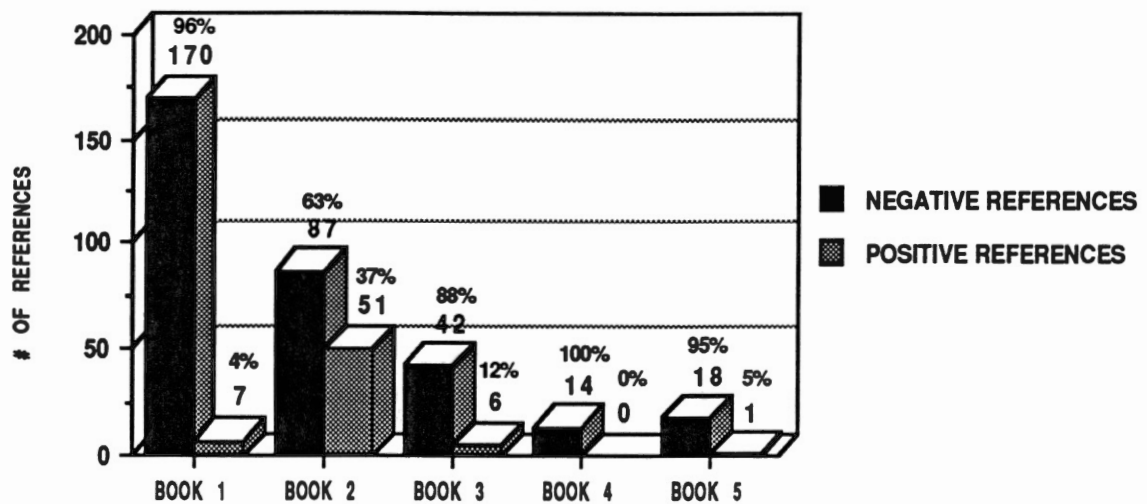
For the purpose of analyzing a journalism chapter in each of the ten mass media textbooks, the table of contents of each book was examined to find the chapter with the most references to journalism. If there were no references, then the chapter identifying closest with journalism was chosen. Eight of the ten mass media textbooks examined were found to contain negative bias against the journalism profession. The only textbooks found not to have an overall

negative bias were the Nelson & Rhoades textbook and the Dominick textbook. These two textbooks had more positive comments than negative comments.

Figures 3 & 4 illustrate the number of negative and positive references made in each textbook.

FIGURE 3

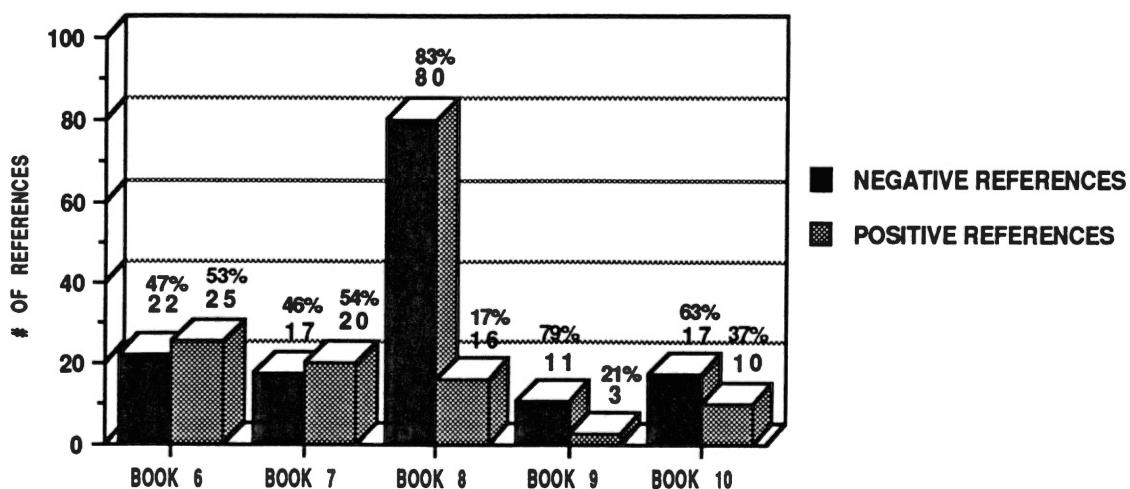
MASS MEDIA TEXTBOOKS - REFERENCES TO JOURNALISM



BOOK 1 - RODMAN
 BOOK 2 - DEFLEUR & DENNIS
 BOOK 3 - BLACK & BRYANT
 BOOK 4 - PEMBER
 BOOK 5 - BIAGI

FIGURE 4

MASS MEDIA TEXTBOOKS - REFERENCES TO JOURNALISM



BOOK 6 - NELSON & RHOADES
 BOOK 7 - DOMINICK
 BOOK 8 - WHETMORE
 BOOK 9 - HARLESS
 BOOK 10 - HIEBERT, UNGURAIT & BOHN

As Figures 3 & 4 indicate, the textbook by Rodman contained the largest number of negative references, with 170. The Harless textbook had the smallest number of negative references with 11. In examining the difference between the number of positive and negative references, the Rodman textbook had the greatest difference of 170 negative references to only 7 positive references with a difference of 163.

The coders found the Rodman textbook criticized both the journalism and public relations fields in the "Newspapers" chapter. Rodman focused on how journalism has changed to a marketing mentality in order to make more money. In a section written by Doug Underwood, a faculty member in the Department of

Journalism at the University of Washington, entitled "When MBAs Rule the Newsroom," Underwood made a point that managerial leadership in newsrooms is leaning toward "value profits over good journalism."¹⁸

The Rodman textbook noted that five of the Times's top executives -- the company president, the controller, the treasurer, the vice-president in charge of circulation and the executive editor -- have MBAs. "The effect on (newsroom) morale was to realize we weren't part of an art or a sacred responsibility but a business to put out a package that was attractive to the market segment. If most journalists realized they were going into that, they'd go into real estate."¹⁹

Walker Lundy, executive editor of the Tallahassee Democrat, in Rodman's textbook, pointed out that many of the newspapers are corporate owned. "People tend to distrust monopolies and big businesses." The textbook stated that "freedom of the press belongs to the man who owns one."²⁰

Lundy also said he believes people have lost faith in their local newspapers because the papers make too many errors, they employ mostly young liberal reporters and editors, their operating procedures are mysterious, and if they're aggressive they simply tend not to be likable.²¹

The Rodman textbook, along with Whetmore's textbook discussed USA Today, stating that some of its staff members refer to news meetings as marketing meetings. Rodman also called the paper the "quintessential corporately planned and packaged, market-driven newspaper."²²

Defleur and Dennis's textbook pointed out that journalism cannot truly be objective because a reporter selects what he believes to be important, followed

by the changes made by the editor. In addition, they wrote, even the person writing the headline decides what is the most important. "The end result of this process of manufacturing and refinement is that the news stories present versions of reality to the public that are still further removed from the actual events that happened in the real world." The coders said this was a negative comment regarding the accuracy of journalism.²³

Many of the textbook's negative references were found in descriptions of journalism's past including Biagi's, Whetmore's, Hiebert, Ungurait & Bohn's and Pember's textbooks. This included yellow journalism, muckraking and sensationalism. "It (sensationalism) stressed shocking details, bizarre events, and sometimes appalling transgressions of the social norms." Muckraking in journalism history "thrived on implications of scandal and sin in high places."²⁴

Black & Bryant's, Harless's and Dominick's textbooks addressed the decline in readership of newspapers. The Black & Bryant textbook cited national studies showing a decline, not only in readership, but in the credibility of newspapers. One 1990 Times Mirror survey indicated that 44 percent of Americans felt press reports were inaccurate and 68 percent said they thought news organizations tend to favor one side of a political or social issue.²⁵

Nelson and Rhoades textbook addressed the adversary relationship that exists between print journalists and broadcast journalists stating, "Many print people look down their noses at broadcasters believing broadcasters in general and television news people in particular tend toward sensational, superficial coverage. Many broadcast people look down their noses at the print industry

perceiving it as anachronistic and dull."²⁶

Overall, coders said that the mass media textbooks examined were negative toward the journalism profession. The research question, "Do introductory mass media textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the journalism profession?" was answered. Overall, they showed a *negative* bias toward the journalism profession.

Mass Media Textbooks Examining Public Relations

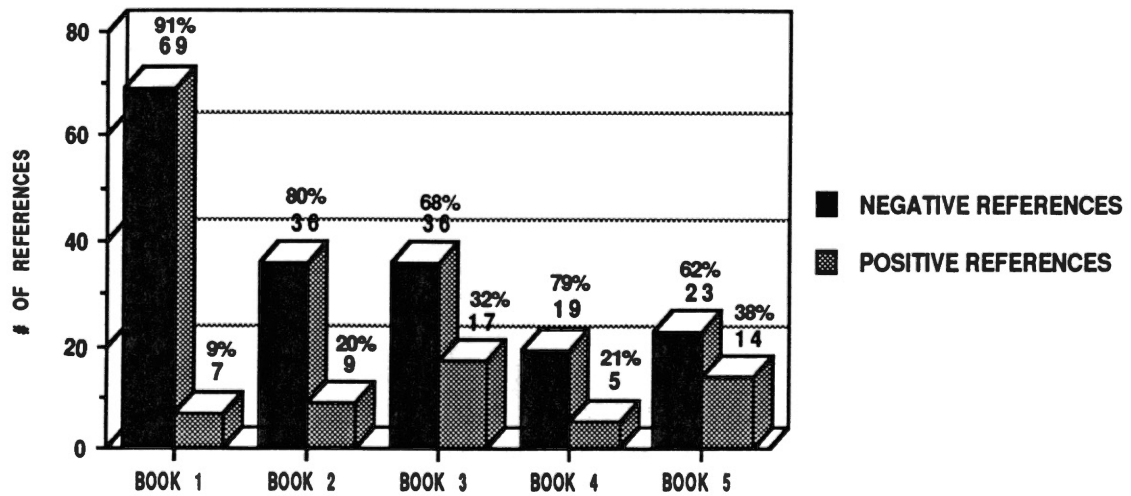
For the purpose of analyzing a public relations chapter in each of the ten mass media textbooks, the table of contents of each book was examined to find the chapter relating to public relations. All ten of the mass media textbooks had a chapter dedicated to public relations, although Whetmore's book grouped it with advertising instead of separating the two as in the other nine textbooks. Eight of the ten mass media textbooks examined were found to contain negative bias against the public relations profession.

The only textbooks found not to have an overall negative bias were the Nelson & Rhoades textbook and the Dominick textbook. These two textbooks had more positive comments than negative comments. It might be noted that these were the only two books that also presented more positive information about the journalism profession. The Harless textbook also came close to being equal in its references with a difference of 5 between negative and positive.

Figures 5 & 6 illustrate the number of negative and positive references made in each textbook.

FIGURE 5

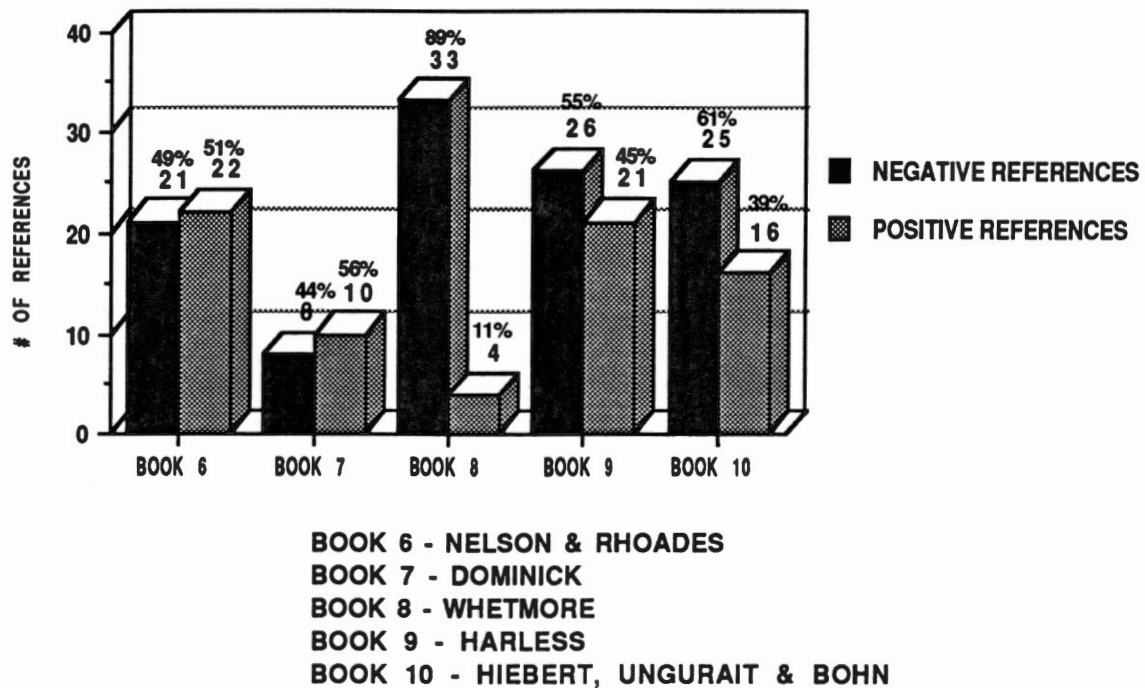
MASS MEDIA TEXTBOOKS - REFERENCES TO PUBLIC RELATIONS



BOOK 1 - RODMAN
 BOOK 2 - DEFLEUR & DENNIS
 BOOK 3 - BLACK & BRYANT
 BOOK 4 - PEMBER
 BOOK 5 - BIAGI

FIGURE 6

MASS MEDIA TEXTBOOKS - REFERENCES TO PUBLIC RELATIONS



As Figures 5 & 6 indicate, the textbook by Rodman contained the largest number of negative references about the public relations profession with 69. Rodman's textbook also had the highest number of negative references about the journalism profession. The Dominick textbook had the smallest number of negative references with 8. In examining the difference between the number of positive and negative references, the Rodman textbook had the greatest difference with 69 negative references to only 7 positive references with a difference of 62.

Rodman's textbook said, "It's ironic that the public relations profession, which is devoted to the formation of positive images, is viewed negatively by

many. When you hear people say, 'that's just public relations,' you have the feeling that their image is of public relations as organizational lying."²⁷

The textbook showed how the Tobacco Institute of America, on behalf of the cigarette industry, has argued that research linking smoking to cancer is incomplete, inconclusive and uncertain. Rodman said, "Who really believes that? Such communication activity has served only to provide an excuse to those whose self-interest benefits by perpetuating smoking."²⁸

Rodman's textbook also addressed the subject of "canned news" generated by public relations practitioners. "Passing off corporate handouts as news is nothing new: It's gone on for as long as there have been public relations firms -- and lazy journalists. When some news reports are really ads in disguise, it casts doubt on everything presented as news."²⁹

Defleur & Dennis's textbook equated public relations with publicity, persuasion and propaganda. They said that the term public relations also has strong negative connotations in many people's minds. Defleur and Dennis said that President Nixon during Watergate often spoke of "finding a public relations solution in order to get the press off his back."³⁰

Black & Bryant said, "The irony of PR is that the industry devoted to improving images has an image problem of its own." This textbook warned its readers to treat manipulative public relations "with extreme caution." "There must be a limit to how much of this image manipulation the public can take."³¹

Black & Bryant's textbook along with Dominick's textbook also related PR to press agency and publicity. The textbook wrote, "press agency developed by

Barnum is pure one-way persuasion, refined and updated by Bernays and very much with us yet."³²

While Pember's textbook also related public relations to press agency, he told readers to, "Remember, much (maybe most) of the material generated by public relations practitioners is self-serving drivel, not worthy of anyone's attention."³³

Biagi's textbook said the line is blurry between publicity and propaganda, both of which were associated with public relations. Biagi cited James K. Gentry from the Washington Journalism Review stating comments gathered from editors about what makes a bad PR operation. They included 1) companies that think they can hide the truth from the public or believe it's none of the public's business, 2) a PR person intercepting calls to a news source but then isn't capable of answering the questions, 3) PR operations who hire an outside PR firm to handle the job, 4) the "no-comment" attitude and 5) PR people who get in the way of doing the editor's job, complain too much and are no help at all.³⁴

Biagi finished the PR chapter by saying, "Some will even admit what they do is manipulation, but manipulation with a noble, higher goal in mind: defending or advancing the cause of their client. There are two sides to every story, goes the argument. They are (PR practitioners), in a sense, the equivalent of attorneys in the court of public opinion." The coders considered this to be a negative reference because in their view, attorneys had a negative public image.³⁵

Nelson and Rhoades' textbook, one of the two textbooks with more positive references than negative, had most of its negative references focused in one area -- under "Other Views of Public Relations." Nelson and Rhoades said that "some journalists still look on public relations as a 'smoke screen' between the press and the real truth about an organization, and they look on PR practitioners as communicators who distort the truth and attempt to manage the news."³⁶

This textbook also said, "Many public relations messages are biased and, as in every line of work, not all practitioners are completely honest."³⁷

Whetmore's public relations chapter was grouped with advertising and titled "Advertising and Public Relations: The Pretty Package." The front page gave a quote from Marshall McLuhan, "News, by its very definition, is bad; if one hears good news -- it must be advertising or PR."³⁸

Whetmore's textbook also tied public relations to press agency of the past. In a section titled "Ethics, Journalists, and PR" Whetmore wrote it was ironic that the industry in charge of maintaining a good public image for its clients seems unable to do the same for itself. "The public at large may not even distinguish between advertising and PR, but when it does, PR is often perceived as a shady practice."³⁹

The textbook by Harless gave another version of the quote about PR's public image. "A paradox of the mass communication system is that public relations, the communication profession that has done so much to win appreciation for so many, has not been able to win general approval for

itself."⁴⁰

Hiebert, Ungurait and Bohn's textbook said that public relations practitioners are presented as "ever-smiling, glad-handing, image makers working secretly behind the scenes, except in times of crisis when they are called upon to perform their magic tricks in public."⁴¹

Although this textbook discussed the Public Relations Society of America (PRSA), it said that not all practitioners belong to it. The textbook said that the "procedures and penalties for unethical practices have been criticized as weak, and the codes have been criticized for their lack of grounding in ethical theory."⁴²

Most of the ten textbooks linked public relations to press agency and propaganda. Most authors pointed out that the profession charged with creating a good public image does not have a good public image itself.

Overall, the coders said the mass media textbooks examined were negative toward the public relations profession. The research question, "Do introductory mass media textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the public relations profession?" was answered. Overall, they showed a *negative* bias toward the public relations profession.

Endnotes

¹Dennis L. Wilcox, Phillip H. Ault and Warren K. Agee. Public Relations - Strategies and Tactics, Harper & Row, Publishers, Inc., 1989, p.327.

²Doug Newsom, Alan Scott and Judy Vanslyke Turk. This Is PR - The Realities of Public Relations, Wadsworth, Inc., 1989, p.362.

³Doug Newsom, Alan Scott and Judy Vanslyke Turk, Ibid., p. 370.

⁴Doug Newsom, Alan Scott and Judy Vanslyke Turk, Ibid., p. 380, 383.

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CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This thesis was prompted by a desire to find a contributing factor to the adversary relationship existing between public relations practitioners and journalists. This study examined 22 introductory college textbooks used in the teaching of public relations and journalism. The content analysis included six introductory public relations textbooks examined for bias against journalism, six introductory journalism textbooks examined for bias against public relations and ten introductory mass media textbooks examined for bias against journalism *and* public relations.

The focus of this study was to determine if each of these 22 textbooks showed a negative or positive bias toward either of the two professions. This was examined through frequency count and qualitative analysis.

Conclusions

Overall, out of the 22 textbooks examined, there was a total of 1,555 positive and negative references counted. Of these 1,555 references, 1,153

(74%) were negative and 402 (26%) were positive.

The following research questions were answered:

- 1) Do introductory public relations textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the journalism profession?
- 2) Do introductory journalism textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the public relations profession?
- 3) Do introductory mass media textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the journalism profession?
- 4) Do introductory mass media textbooks show a negative or positive bias toward the public relations profession?

All four categories of textbooks were found to have an *overall* negative bias toward the profession in question.

The study found that 19 of the 22 textbooks had a negative bias against public relations and/or journalism. The only three found to show a positive bias were the Nelson and Rhoades (mass media) textbook, the Dominick (mass media) textbook and the Ward (journalism) textbook. The Nelson and Rhoades textbook and the Dominick textbook were found to be positive toward both the public relations profession *and* the journalism profession. The Ward textbook was determined to be positive toward the public relations profession, but it should be noted that the only mention of public relations was found in a small section over press conferences.

The journalism and mass media textbooks examined connected public relations with a past of press agency, propaganda and publicity. The public

relations practitioner's ethics were called into question in all but a few of the textbooks. The textbooks also portrayed the fact that most public relations materials (i.e., press releases) must be rewritten or improved.

The public relations and mass media textbooks examined questioned the reporter's accuracy, objectiveness and ethics. The textbooks provided many studies on the decline in newspaper readership contributing the decline to the public's distrust of the media.

Overall, this study demonstrated that a significant negative bias exists today in introductory journalism, public relations and mass media textbooks. These findings update and expand Carolyn Cline's 1986 study of 12 mass media textbooks to determine if there was negative bias toward the public relations profession. Cline's study found that the textbooks showed a strong negative bias. This study demonstrates that the bias of six years ago still exists today.¹

Although it cannot be proven that this negative bias is the cause of the adversary relationship existing between the two fields, the negative bias can be concluded to be a contributing factor in the adversary relationship. This widespread negative bias, absorbed by students entering the two fields, can only stand to hurt those who practice in the two fields and to slow their productivity levels.

Although these textbooks have to provide negative aspects of each profession to some extent, a conclusion is made that the textbook's authors need to try to balance the negative and the positive references to each

profession.

Recommendations

Further research into the negative bias in introductory journalism, public relations and mass media should be conducted. This study will need to be repeated in the future to keep track of the adversary relationship's existence in new textbooks. Also a study of the underlying meanings or reasonings for this negative bias could be undertaken.

Another study should be conducted to examine whether in-class instruction contains negative bias against either profession. If negative bias is found in the classroom, combined with negative bias in the textbooks utilized, a student could be carrying this negative bias into the workplace and this only stands to hurt both professions.

Other recommendations for research in determining contributing factors of the adversary relationship include examining images of PR practitioners and journalists in the mass media (film and television), examining professional experiences of teachers of PR and journalism and examining the public images of each field and the reasons for these images.

As a recommendation for using the information presented in this completed research, it is highly recommended that future textbook authors in both fields be aware of their own bias and that they work harder to present a fair representation of both sides - positive and negative.

Endnotes

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VITA 2

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