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Reconsidering early U.S. public relations institutions: An analysis of publicity and information bureaux 1891–1918☆

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the United States popular press' representation of publicity and information bureaux from 1891 to 1918. Specifically this study discusses these bureaux' relationship with the press, use by governments, role in political campaigns, and function within non-profit organizations. Publicity and information bureaux are an important part of public relations history and identity because they represent the departmentalization of PR within organizations. Implications for PR historiography are discussed.

1. Introduction

The professionalization of public relations is important for both PR theory and practice. Recognizing PR as a stand-alone profession lends legitimacy to the field and also provides scholars the ability to identify, categorize, and critique industry practices. However, the current history of U.S. public relations provides an inaccurate and under-inclusive narrative of the history of PR professionalization. One major area of American PR professionalization that is largely unexamined is the publicity and information bureaux of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Publicity and information bureaux are an important part of U.S. public relations history and identity because they represent an early example of departmentalization of PR within organizations.

Despite their importance, relatively little is known about these bureaux. One of the few mentions of publicity bureaux is found in Cutlip's (1994) history of twentieth century public relations in which he identified the first PR firm named the Publicity Bureau founded in Boston in 1900. However, Cutlip (1994) did not explore publicity bureaux outside of the context of this large Boston firm. In his history of PR, Edward Bernays (1952) ignored the publicity bureau altogether and equated early PR development to George Creel's Committee for Public Information that operated during World War I (an organization where Bernays worked). Other influential PR scholars, such as Grunig and Hunt (1984), do not address publicity and information bureaux at all, and locate professionalized PR practice with tactics instead of professional institutionalization. Even business historians such as Chandler (1977), Tedlow (1979), and Marchand (2001) did not explore the emergence of publicity and information bureau specifically. Instead their work on the growth of professional communication center on technological innovation, strategy, and corporate structure.

Despite the lack of historical inquiry into publicity and information bureaux, they are an important historical phenomenon that was essential to the emergence of professional PR practice. The emergence of stand-alone bureaux in the late nineteenth century suggests that PR was moving forward to be a more serious, recognized, and professionalized practice. Perhaps the

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most important characteristic of these bureaux is that they emerged simultaneously in a cross section of organizations that included politics, grassroots movements, businesses, and civic clubs. They also provide insight into how organizations worked to influence the media to craft favorable representations of organizations. Examining publicity and information bureaux goes beyond merely examining a historical era in PR history. They show how modern public relations practice developed in the United States.

This study seeks to fill this gap in PR history by providing an analysis of U.S. press representations of publicity and information bureaux from 1891 to 1918. This analysis shows that American public relations was developing institutionally in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries in a variety of sectors such as: government, politics, business, and non-profit spheres. Publicity and information bureaux were used simultaneously in these areas with government playing a dominant role in developing and implementing publicity and information bureaux. Press representations of publicity and information bureaux suggest they were linked closely with both press needs and public outreach. These bureaux had a sophisticated understanding of communication strategy, and recognized the importance of publics, opinion leaders, and goodwill. Concern over public opinion, media relations, and message strategy dominated the work of these bureaux in all spheres.

2. Public relations historiography

Publicity and information bureaux are important not only because of their significance within U.S. public relations development, but because their existence contravenes the received history of American PR. Early histories of PR embraced a linear, progressive narrative of public relations development (Bernays, 1952; Cutlip, 1994,1995). This narrative rooted the beginning of American public relations in late nineteenth century press agentry and argued that by the 1920s PR had become a stand-alone profession that was moving away from its unethical press agent roots. These histories focused on prominent male figures, notably Edward Bernays and Ivy Lee, as leading major transitions in the professionalization of the field. This type of history led to a neat compartmentalization of public relations' past that was popular because of its simplicity and easily understandable periodization. However, like any area of history, oversimplification and neatly drawn periodization leaves out much historical richness and nuance. As a result an incomplete and inaccurate historical account of public relations came to dominate PR scholarship (Bernays, 1952; Cutlip and Center, 1958).

The genesis of this early inaccurate PR history narrative can be traced to books written by Bernays (1952) and Cutlip and Center (1958). Bernays (1923, 1928) began writing about PR tactics and strategies in the 1920s, focusing on how to influence public opinion. However, in 1952 Bernays wrote a textbook, *Public Relations*, which provided a history of the field up until that time. In *Public Relations* Bernays argued that early professional public relations was press agentry, which used unethical manipulation of the press and staged stunts to promote entertainment groups. By the early 1900s Bernays wrote that corporations used publicity. While he gave a tacit nod to Standard Oil's PR man Ivy Lee, Bernays (1952) situated himself as the father of modern public relations practice. This first narrative set many of the unquestioned truisms of PR history: press agentry was unethical, early PR was exclusively done for entertainment clients, and Bernays was the father of modern PR practice. As a result of this history, other historical inaccuracies emerged such as: PR was created in the twentieth century; Americans invented PR and distributed it to the world; professionalized PR practice was a post-World War I invention; and corporate public relations developed after entertainment press agentry.

Bernays's (1952, 1965) work was not the only source of these historical inaccuracies. In 1958 Cutlip and Center's widely popular textbook, *Effective Public Relations*, reiterated this narrative presented in Bernays's (1952) *Public Relations*. Like Bernays, Cutlip and Center (1958) were not trained historians, but were PR educators who were innovators in undergraduate PR training. While their book did not acknowledge Bernays's (1952) *Public Relations* specifically, they reiterated almost verbatim his narrative of press agentry, the transition of PR during World War I, and the evolution of professionalized PR practice.

This periodization of public relations was advocated again in Grunig and Hunt's (1984) four models of public relations. In the textbook *Managing Public Relations*, Grunig and Hunt (1984) put forth a typology of public relations that followed a historical periodization of the field. They argued four types of PR existed: press agentry, information model PR, two-way asymmetrical PR, and two way symmetrical PR. While Grunig and Hunt (1984) used these models to explain the types of practices of modern PR, their model lends itself to a historical periodization of the field because each model is represented by chronological historical examples. According to the four models, press agentry began in the nineteenth century and gave way to twentieth century information and two way asymmetrical public relations. The end point of the four models is two way symmetrical communication, which is what Grunig and Hunt (1984) argue is a best practice and the approach modern PR should advance.

The problem with all of these early works of PR history is they were done without any empirical evidence. No primary sources were cited, and none of these authors engaged with historical academic literature. Grunig and Grunig (2003) said that as non-historians they "choose not to enter the dispute" on historical periodization of American PR practice (p. 337). None of these authors, save Cutlip, viewed themselves as historians. Moreover, none of these authors received formal historical training, nor did they follow accepted historical methods. Cutlip (1994,1995) would go on to write more histories of public relations from the seventeenth to the twentieth centuries. However, these histories, while valuable, do have some issues because they lack any citations to primary sources, frequently use masters theses written by Cutlip's students as chapters, and largely draw from Cutlip's own personal knowledge of the history of the field.

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Outside of public relations, business histories have addressed PR development. However, these histories focus on PR only in the context of corporate business. Tedlow (1979) reiterated the Bernaysian narrative of modern PR development arguing that press agentry was the root of modern PR practice. Marchand (2001) examined corporate use of advertising, public relations, and consumer goodwill, but focused only on the 1920s and 1930s. Noted business historian Alfred Chandler (1977) was not exclusively a scholar of public relations, but he included public relations as part of the communication technology and practice that changed corporate business practice. Only Raucher (1968) challenged the Bernaysian periodization of PR in his analysis of utility companies' use of public relations. In his book, *Public Relations and Business*, Raucher argued public utilities was the major innovator in public relations practice. Bernays (1969) vehemently criticized Raucher's (1968) work, and pointed out what he believed to be the book's methodological sloppiness, chief of which was Raucher's failure to interview Bernays.

PR scholars began to criticize the historical inaccuracies of public relations historiography. Olasky (1984, 1987) argued that focusing on public relations' business roots did not necessarily give PR the legitimacy it sought. Later scholars argued that the corporate focus of PR was largely inaccurate and did not take into account the true nature of corporations (Miller, 2000; Myers, 2014). Academic literature criticized PR history's lack of inclusion of non-corporate organizations, which marginalized the historical voices of non-elites, notably women (Gower, 2008; Hon, 1997; Lamme, 2003, 2004, 2007, 2014; Russell & Lamme, 2013). Scholars also questioned PR history's periodization as a practice rooted in nineteenth century America (Lamme & Russell, 2010; Watson, 2008). In the past decade PR historians challenged the historical depictions of nineteenth and early twentieth century PR practice. They argued that the realities of that time (Myers, 2015) meant that publicity and public relations was much different than what was presented in Bernays's (1952) work (Coombs & Holladay, 2012; Myers, 2014, 2015; Russell & Bishop, 2009; Stoker & Rawlins, 2005). Outside of the U.S., European scholars questioned an America-centric PR history and argued that PR developed in varying ways depending on the historical realities of the nations in which PR was practiced (Bentele, 2010, 2015; Bentele, Grazyna-Maria, & Chen, 1996; L'Etang, 2004; Watson, 2008).

All of these criticisms of current PR history have culminated with scholars arguing that PR history has to be rethought and reexamined. Watson (2014) said that public relations history must be more inclusive of those aspects that are not flattering to the field to create an accurate historical record. Lamme and Russell (2010) surveyed historical PR literature only to find that public relations history was largely unknown and unexplored. They called for a new examination of public relations that moved away from the inaccurate and artificial periodization of Bernays and the four models.

This study seeks to fill a portion of this large gap in historical PR literature by examining the publicity and information bureaux in the United States from 1891 to 1918. While this is a large timeframe and an expansive topic it suggests both a new timeframe for U.S. public relations development and creates a more inclusive narrative of the field.

3. Research questions

Given this gap in the current literature this study seeks to answer the following research questions:

- How did the American press portray publicity and information bureaux?
- What was the relationship between the American press and publicity and information bureaux?
- What communication practices did publicity and information bureaux use?
- What type of organizations used publicity and information bureaux?

4. Methodology

In this study 601 articles were analyzed from the digital archives in Historical Newspapers Online and the American Periodical Series from 1770 to 1918. The year 1770 was used as a beginning date for this research for two reasons. First, a distinct American conscience emerged as a result of the Stamp Act Crisis, which began in 1765. American identity further solidified during the 1760s, culminating with in the Boston Massacre in 1770. Second, selecting such an early year for analysis allows this study to include the first mention of the term "publicity bureau" or "information bureau." That allows for a more complete and inclusive analysis of the term. The year 1918 was chosen as an end because public relations history and mass communication is thought to have dramatically changed after World War I. By concluding in 1918 this study only examines a public relations profession prior to the major influence of Bernays and the massive growth of corporate advertising of the 1920s, which dramatically transformed American PR practice (Marchand, 2001). Using the press as primary source is important for this type of study. The press' use of a term allows researchers to get a fuller understanding of how terms were used within specific historical contexts. As Schudson (1990) points out, "the American newspaper is. . .the most representative carrier and construer and creator of modern public consciousness" (p. 421).

The first appearance of either term from these databases was 1891 and the last was 1918. The search terms "publicity bureau" and "information bureau" were used for each database. For the term "publicity bureau" every article from the American Periodical Series and every fifth article from Historical Newspaper Online was used. For the term "information bureau" every fifth article was analyzed from both American Periodical Series and Historical Newspapers Online. This sample produced a total of 393 articles for "publicity bureau." This sample for "information bureau" produced a total of 246 articles. This produced an initial sample of 639 articles of which 38 were either duplicates or unusable. This left a final total of 601 articles used for this study. These terms publicity and information bureau were interchangeably used in all sectors during the period from 1891 to 1918, except in a business context.

5. Corporate publicity and information bureaux and the press

The development of publicity and information bureaux is linked directly to the popular press. This illustrates how public relations practice emerged from and in response to press practices in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The influence of publicity and information bureaux was portrayed in some circles as a corrupting influence on journalism and on public awareness. In fact, the U.S. Congress convened the Armstrong Committee in 1905 to investigate insurance companies and their use of bureaux to influence press coverage. This influence of information and publicity bureaux was the subject of harsh reactions from many diverse groups. *The Bookman*, a conservative pro-business magazine, ran an article on the influence of the "publicity bureau" in 1906 entitled "Tainted News as Seen in the Making" (1906, p. 396). In this article the "publicity bureau" as described as a "machine" that produced "opinion-to-order" news to editors who need copy ("Tainted News," 1906, p. 396). *The Bookman* described the process:

> "Hence the publicity man provides news or he creates a literary interest. With this he baits his hook. The amount of concealment necessary to assure an easy passage for this instrument down the editorial gullet depends upon the state of the editor's mind as regulated by the attitude of the public with reference to the cause for which the publicity man proposes to win acceptance" ("Tainted News," 1906, p. 396).

One article from 1909 claimed that every "publicity bureau" had a card index of all editors that contained their "weak spots" (Haste, 1909, p. 348). *The Arena*, a left-leaning and anti-corporation publication, accused the mainstream press of being corrupted by corporate influence, particularly corporate organizations that operated public utilities. It said all positive press coverage of these organizations constituted "black journalism" and was the direct result of corporate manipulation through advertising and through the Boston-based Publicity Bureau (Flower, 1907, p. 71). In fact, *The Arena* accused the Publicity Bureau, the New York based Press Service Company, and the Washington D.C. based National News Service of being "publicity bureau[x]" that engaged in deceptive news practiced on behalf of corporate clients (Albertson, 1907, p. 170). The influence of these large publicity bureaux was not limited to the public-at-large. Rather "publicity bureau" literature was targeted to decision-makers, particularly those in political office ("Tainted News," 1906, p. 396).

Other articles described the publicity bureau as a hired advocate that would represent organizations and individuals. *Bankers' Magazine* described the increasingly popular "publicity bureau" in 1909 stating:

> "One very striking evidence of the victory of publicity lies in the mushroom growth of the "publicity bureaus." These are private organizations formed for personal pecuniary profit. They take contracts from corporations, from societies of all kinds and from individuals of every degree to act as intermediaries between the and the press. Their object is to meet reporters who seek information regarding the affairs of their clients, to send authoritative statements to the newspapers when those clients seek to communicate for their own purposes with the public. Five years ago [1902] there were two of these, whereas to-day one could not count them on the fingers of both hands. Moreover, they are all doing well and making money" (Meade, 1907, p. 95).

Articles associated lying and exaggeration with having retained a "publicity bureau" (Mason, 1914, p. 63; Johnson, 1916, p. 227). Other articles spoke about how publicity bureaux operated as advertisers for organizations. One article in 1907 said that a "publicity bureau" leaves "no stone unturned to protect and advance their interests" (Woodruff, 1908, p. 582).

6. Government use of publicity and information bureaux

The U.S. federal government regularly utilized publicity and information bureaux during the early twentieth century. Federal agencies or federally-backed organizations such as Congress, the Treasury Department, Department of Agriculture, the U.S. Forest Service, Department of Health, Department of Commerce and Labor, used a "publicity bureau" or "information bureau" to promote their organizations and their political issues ("Lardner Bends," 1917, p. 22; "Congress Condensed," 1914, p. 6; "Ballinger Probe," 1910, 4; "Slocums Engineer," 1904, p. 3; Garner, 1904, p. 420). These federal publicity bureaux operated differently than those in business or in non-profit sectors because they were associated with political issues that went beyond generating public awareness. Government publicity bureaux also operated in a pseudo-lobbying capacity since they were organized to influence and create public policy.

One of the biggest issues handled by information and publicity bureaux in the federal government was wartime initiatives. Sometimes these bureaux operated as an outreach agency that brought together soldiers and their families. The U.S. government set up an "information" bureau in several locations in the U.S. and abroad (Barry, 1918, p. 49) Rather than operating in a purely publicity capacity, they often served as a liaison between soldiers and their families, sometimes handling soldier mail ("Better Mail," 1917, p. 6).

However, information and publicity bureaux also advanced the causes of war and had a direct relationship with the press. In 1897, an article said the Military Information Bureau released maps of China, Japan, Turkey, and Greece to the public and press so the public could follow the conflicts in those countries ("May Proclaim Neutrality," 1897, p. 2). These information and press bureaux served an information gathering and intelligence capacity. Other "publicity bureau[x]" were used for promotional purposes such as soldier recruitment, buying war bonds, and publicizing military exploits of various military divisions ("Marine Corps," 1913, p. 14; "New Department," 1918, p. 73).

The use of publicity and information bureaux during wartime was controversial. The Creel Committee, also known as the Committee on Public Information (CPI), was the subject of many articles. Often referred to as a publicity and information bureau, these articles not only detailed the CPI's responsibilities, but also contained sharp criticisms of their tactics and general purpose. Bernays (1952) credited the CPI with influencing him to create psychographic approaches to public relations. From the articles in this study this power of psychology, persuasion, and press censorship were recognized as part of the CPI's mission ("Publicity Board Created by Wilson," 1917, p. 2; "The Administration," 1918, p. 344). In some instances the CPI served as a media analyst issuing official statements about the accuracy of news reports ("Won't Discuss Nuorteva," 1918, p. 24).

However, articles about Creel and CPI were largely negative. The CPI was described as a "bureau of censorship" that had cabinet level responsibilities and access to President Wilson (de Wagstaffe, 1917, p. 447). Other articles argue the CPI "publicity bureau. . .imitated the bad example of its counterpart in Germany" equating Creel and CPI with suppression of freedom of the press ("Freedom of the Press," 1918, p. 1). George Creel was the subject of many criticisms, with articles commenting on his inappropriate comments about the Justice Department, trying to censor newspaper editors, and costing the government too much money ("Creel Critic, He Says," 1918, p. 2; "Publicity Board Meets," 1917, p.7; "Senate Asks," 1918, p. 7). When CPI closed in 1918 it not only had offices in Washington D.C., but also had foreign bureaux and was printing an official news bulletin ("Information Bureau Closed," 1918, p. 7). Despite this criticism of CPI, the federal government's use of publicity and information bureaux was replicated at state and local levels.

Similar to the federal government, state and municipal governments used publicity and information bureaux. However, unlike their federal counterparts, these state and municipal publicity and information bureaux did not involve political issues so much as promotional materials. They attempted to increase business investments, travel and tourism, or utilization of state resources by providing and promoting their states ("It was a hot time," 1903, p. 4; "Asbury Park," 1907, p. 9).

Municipal governments' "publicity bureau[x]" also began to be mentioned in articles and advertisements during the 1910s. They almost exclusively served to promote visitors to these cities and highlighted city attractions for tourists ("What Fools These Morals Be!," 1906, p. 2; "A Pioneer Publicist," 1914, p. 4). Individual publicity bureaux for cities and municipalities went beyond providing information to tourists and actually created literature and events for prospective tourists ("Baby Parade Cups Stolen," 1911, p. 1; "To Bring Trade Here," 1911, p. 2; "City Information Bureau," 1911, p. 3). Portland and Boston hired full-time directors of their "publicity bureau" to do "advertising" for the city ("Where State and Municipal Opportunities," 1910, p. 932; "Mayor and Business Men," 1913, p. 1). Other municipalities such as Atlantic City, Manhattan, Michigan, and the New York court system had permanent information and publicity bureaux ("Fire Panic," 1903, p. 2; "Cheap Fares," 1893, p. 10; "Grange," 1906, p. 534; "New York Children's Court," 1916, p. 297).

Some municipal and state information and publicity bureaux took on a police function. One article from 1917 in the *Central Law Journal* criticized this stating that "publicity bureaus" actually corrupted state court systems and inhibited a defendant from receiving a fair trial (Forster, 1917, p. 299). However, these bureaux were structured to serve as both community outreach and as something like an early twentieth century informant hotline. The Governor of West Virginia supported the creation of a "bureau of information" to serve as a "secret service" of the state gathering information about potential criminals ("Favors Information Bureau for State," 1909, p. 3). New York set up an "information bureau" to investigate the amounts of peonage, or servitude based on paying off a debt, that was illegally occurring in the state ("Peonage Cases," 1909, p. 2). Police departments in large metropolitan cities, such as New York, had "information bureau[s]" where citizens could report crimes and reporters could get information about newsworthy cases ("Lookout for Criminals," 1899, p. 2).

The American press also mentioned foreign governments had publicity and information bureaux. Kunczik (2014) showed that during World War I public relations was greatly used by both Central and Allied powers, particularly Great Britain. Great Britain had publicity and information bureaux throughout World War I that gave status updates about troops, battle plans, and set up forums where American soldiers could communicate with their families ("England is to Send Territorials Abroad," 1914, p. 5). Kunczik (2014) argues it was this British propaganda that ultimately changed American public opinion in favor of entering World War I. However, the *New York Times* stated in one 1914 article that Great Britain's "publicity bureau[x]" paled in comparison to Germany's ("France and England as Seen in Wartime," 1914, sec. SM7). German "information bureau[x]" were depicted as institutions designed to manipulate the foreign press so Germany could garner support during World War I ("Finds Germany Undaunted," 1915, p. 2). An article reported that "information bureaus" were instrumental in Germany's attempt to create language schools in South America that would foster support for German colonization ("German Colonization Policy," 1901, p. 3).

7. Political use of publicity and information bureaux

In addition to government, political figures and parties in the U.S. used publicity and information bureaux to promote political and electoral agendas. U.S. campaigns and parties had "publicity bureau[x]" as early as 1899 ("Many Were His Dupes," 1899, p. 2). However, unlike the governmental bureaux, political parties were more likely to use the term publicity bureau instead of information bureau. Articles showed both the Democratic National Committee and the Republican National Committee had a "publicity bureau" as part of their structure during the first decade of the twentieth century ("Talented New Chief for the Democratic Publicity Bureau," 1916, p. 8; "Taft Certain of Ohio," 1908, p. 2). One article shows these bureaux were expensive. In 1908 the Democratic National Committee spent $88,899 on a "publicity bureau" ("Mack Had $640,644," 1908, p. 2).

National political campaigns such as that of Woodrow Wilson, Judge Alton Parker, Charles Evans Hughes, William Howard Taft, and Theodore Roosevelt all employed publicity or information bureaux to do campaign outreach ("Wilson Meets Friends Here," 1912, 2; "Modern Anecdote," 1904, p. 69; "Political Boons at Close Quarter," 1908, p. 3; Bennet, 1916, p. 933; "Do Not Yield to Taft," 1908, p. 4; "Outline New Party," p.1912, 1). Even lesser known politicians such as Gifford Pinchot, the Chief of the U.S. Forest Service who was fired by President Taft in 1910, had a campaign "publicity bureau" that represented his views in the press during an ensuing scandal ("Gives Lie to Glavis," 1910, p. 1). Smaller groups of interested voters such as the League of Voters, the Progressive Party, and socialists maintained bureaux ("Low Rates to Voters," 1912, 4; "The Progressive Party," 1913, p. 7; "The Balkans," 1913, p. 245). Sometimes bureaux were created for the sole purpose of a political cause such as temperance, women's suffrage, labor unions, banking reform, and workers compensation rights ("Lockwood," 1914, p. 524; "New Suffrage Campaign," 1911, p. 1; "Immigration of Italians," 1904, p. 5; "Western Bankers," 1911, p.2; "Westchester Fire," 1913, p. 221). The popularity of these political publicity bureaux was so prevalent that William Randolph Hearst had his own "publicity bureau" that verified statements made by other candidates' bureaux ("Hearst Says of Mack," 1906, p. 5). This use of publicity and information bureaux was not limited to the U.S. During the Mexican Revolution Pancho Villa and other rebels used a "publicity" and "information" bureau to communicate their movements and successes to the American press ("The Issue in Mexico," 1912, p. 23).

The 1912 presidential election is illustrative of the power and cost of publicity and information bureaux. *McClure's Magazine* discussed the power of publicity and information bureaux in American politics in the article "Manufacturing Public Opinion: The New Art of Making Presidents by Press Bureau" (Turner, 1912, p. 316). According to *McClure's*, the real invention of publicity and information bureaux in politics came during the 1912 presidential campaign. In this election year "publicity bureau[x]" first disseminated news stories directly to papers, and sent direct mailings of pamphlets and campaign literature to registered voters. Republican Senator Robert La Follette was credited with creating the first modern publicity campaign by utilizing direct mailings to register voters using his franking privileges (the right of members of Congress to mail items without paid postage). According to *McClure's*, La Follette took publicity seriously and decided that he would not run for president unless he could have at least $75,000 in cash on hand. La Follette utilized his "publicity campaign" to mail newspaper editors and publish in his own liberal Republican weekly (Turner, 1912, p. 316).

Theodore Roosevelt's publicity capabilities were widely acknowledged in 1912. After much urging by progressives in his party Roosevelt established a presidential publicity bureau only after he secured $100,000. These bureaux utilized a three-prong publicity plan that targeted national newspapers, local weeklies, and direct mail to voters. Roosevelt used a publicity bureau in Washington to provide news directly to reporters. *McClure's* described the bureau and its practices:

> "These bulletins, in appearance like typewritten manuscript, were dealt out to the Washington correspondents. Each morning and afternoon the newspaper men, hunting singly or in squads, according to their habit, came to Davis' office, took their copy, and asked their questions. And so the big dailies were provided for"(Turner, 1912, p. 316).

Local papers also wanted this campaign-produced news. *McClure's* said that editors directly asked for the material and even demanded bribes from campaign officials to re-print the material verbatim. The primary in North Dakota between Roosevelt and La Follette contained so much direct mailings that post offices were inundated with left-over pamphlets farmers refused to pick up.

According to *McClure's* 1912 also saw the rise of "publicity bureau[x]" by William Howard Taft and Woodrow Wilson. Taft's half-brother owned a newspaper in Cincinnati and utilized reporters from that paper as publicity advisors. Despite this advantage, Taft did not want a "publicity bureau" and created one only out of necessity in light of Roosevelt's publicity machine. *McClure's* said Taft was ill equipped for the publicity requirements during the 1912 election because "preference primaries" rather than party bosses influenced who would be the party's nominee. Because of this, candidate publicity created by a "publicity bureau" was a requirement for electoral success (Turner, 1912, p. 316).

McClure's explained that Woodrow Wilson's campaign accepted this new political reality and embraced the publicity bureau as a campaign necessity. Wilson's advisors took advantage of afternoon and evening newspapers' printing times and disseminated news reports of the campaign to coincide with desired paper editions. Wilson's campaign advisors changed Wilson's own communication strategies to suit newspaper coverage. Campaign workers made Wilson stop giving extemporaneous remarks, which was Wilson's preference, and give written speeches that could then be disseminated to the press ahead of time. *McClure's* detailed the process of providing pre-released campaign literature to the press writing:

> "In a bureau of three rooms, with a dozen people, the Wilson news was fed out to Washington newspaper correspondents and a list of papers every day, on mimeograph sheets. Some seven hundred of these mimeograph stories were sent out every day; and every week, from Washington and New York, to six thousand weekly papers as sent a small eight page sheet to clip from" (Turner, 1912, p. 316).

However, *McClure's* was critical of bureaux's influence over the campaign process. By the end of the presidential campaign of 1912, *McClure's* reported candidates spent over $1 million each. The article concluded by predicting this massive amount of money used for campaign publicity meant that Congress would most likely pass laws in 1913 to place caps on campaign expenditures (Turner, 1912, p. 316).

8. Non-profit and entertainment use of publicity and information bureaux

Analyzing the popular press from 1891 to 1918 shows that the use of publicity and information bureaux was commonplace for non-profits and entertainment organizations. Non-profit publicity and information bureaux were used as a form of early promotion or advertisement. While political and commercial bureaux focused on persuasive messaging, non-profit publicity bureaux focused more on outreach to potential members, attendees, or supporters of events ("Druggests in Convention," 1905, p. 1220; "Sweet Charity," 1906, p. 7; "Columbia Varsity Show at Hotel Astor," 1911, p. 48; "Invading Trout Waters," 1913, p. 690).

Other special interest groups had "information bureau[x]" that provided special information to the public such as the car information, healthcare suggestions, and women's issues ("Mrs. Woodford Exonerated," 1913, p. 14; "Our London Letter," 1899, p. 666; Allyn, 1905, p. 828). Expositions, fairs, and coordinated public events also used publicity and information bureaux to publicize events and to provide information to attendees (Buchanan, 1901, p. 517; Jeffery, 1912, p. 239). These publicity bureaux were used for staged events including boxing matches, theater shows, races, a Grand Army of the Republic exposition, Pan-American Exposition, the World's Fair, and a memorial service for those who died on the Titanic ("Referee Graney Defends Decision," 1904, p. 10; Chapman, 1903, p. 11; "After Wire Tappers," 1907, p. 4; "Council in Session, 1902, sec. G3; Tridon, 1912, p. 1185; 'Twenty Thousand Dollars,' 1893, p. 176; "Prepare to Meet the Funeral Ship," 1912, p. 3).

Lamme (2014) found that evangelistic religion and social movements, such as temperance, regularly used public relations tactics to attract new congregants and advance social causes. One way this was accomplished was by publicity and information bureau. Churches and individual preachers used "publicity" and "information" bureaux to promote their services and special events (Hoben, 1911, p. 225). The early use of these bureaux by churches is significant because it suggests organizations may have borrowed the practice of bureaux from grassroots organizations. Examples of these church "publicity" and "information" bureaux include a Methodist Convention, evangelical church services, a Presbyterian food drive, and a church-run temperance meeting ("A World View of Methodist Ministers," 1903, p. 1712; "Bureau of Information," 1894, p. 27; Notices, 1895, p. 32; "Ministers' Meeting," 1896, p. 29).

Members of the Church of Christ Scientists, also known as Christian Scientists, were noted for their use of a "publicity bureau" in major U.S. cities, such as Boston and New York, where they provided literature about their religious movement (Hendrick, 1912, p. 481). Jewish immigrants also set up "information" and "publicity" bureaux to provide recent immigrants with community contacts and help find them jobs ("Hebrew Charities," 1904, p. 1154). Similar to religious institutions, libraries and museums used both "information bureau[x]" and "publicity bureau[x]" to provide both information about resources and for increasing visitors (Aldrich, 1905, sec. X6; Stevens, 1913, p. 244). Schools advertised for applications and enrollment stating that potential students could contact their "information bureau" for the application procedures (Smith, 1897, p. 955).

9. Conclusion and implications for PR development

It is difficult to engage with what public relations literature says about the publicity and information bureaux because little scholarship exists on either term. However, analysis of the popular press from 1891 to 1918 shows something significant about the development of public relations as a practice. Cutlip (1994) used the creation of the Boston-based Publicity Bureau as the starting point of institutionalized public relations practice. As Lamme and Russell (2010) point out, selecting certain events as the official start of PR practice is problematic because these events are frequently arbitrary. Equally problematic is Cutlip's (1994) focus on the Publicity Bureau's corporate identity because it suggests the beginning of modern public relations practice emerged because corporate interests were represented by the Publicity Bureau. It is important for PR historiography to recognize that not only did publicity and information bureaux emerge in different contexts, but they also emerged simultaneously in government, politics, business, and at the grassroots. This analysis shows that the so-called professionalization of public relations largely resulted from both a top-down and bottom-up development. Politics, government, and grassroots influences in public relations development are largely ignored in preference for a corporate narrative. Interestingly the government's publicity and information bureaux were more respected than their business counterparts. This too illustrates that rooting early public relations practice in corporations is not only inaccurate, but fails to provide the professional legitimacy modern PR seeks through this narrative.

This study presents an initial step in this area of scholarship. Future studies should examine publicity and information bureau, particularly the economic and communication success of these bureaux in various institutions. Scholars should also investigate the economic and communication success or failure of these bureaux in various organizations. However, this initial press study of publicity and information bureaux is necessary given the current incomplete historical narratives of U.S. PR development. As Lamme and Russell (2010) argue, PR historians' work is hindered by inaccurate and under inclusive Bernaysian narratives. Because of this, examining a large timeframe of PR terminology helps to create an accurate depiction of PR history. Once these accurate historical accounts of PR history are created, historians can then delve deeper into the specific figures, episodes, and organizations.

This analysis of publicity and information bureaux also forces public relations scholars to acknowledge the non-corporate influence of the field. Bernays (1965) and Cutlip (1994) recognized that precursors to professional PR practice included government and politics, but they failed to acknowledge that government and politics played a direct role in early professional

PR practice. These governmental and political uses of publicity and information bureaux show that government not only served as a PR precursor, but was an active part of early PR practice.

This use of publicity and information bureaux in government, politics, business, and civic organizations also shows that American public relations development was not evolutionary. Rather, this analysis supports the idea that public relations as a practice emerged from many sources (corporate and non-corporate alike) in tandem. Because of this, simultaneous emergence of public relations practice shows the inaccuracy in using PR typologies, such as the four models, as a historical timeline for U.S. public relations history (Grunig & Hunt, 1984). Because professional practice emerged at a time when press agentry still existed and operated in multiple fields demarking public relations into compartmentalized stages of practice is historically unjustifiable. Additionally, the fact this type of professional PR practice emerged simultaneously in different field suggests evolutionary narratives of the development of PR are also inaccurate. This analysis of the popular press suggests that PR development in the U.S. followed a non-linear and multifaceted development in which fields borrowed communication objectives, skills, and implementation from each other.

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