

**REVISITING FUND-RAISING ENCROACHMENT  
OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN LIGHT OF  
THE THEORY OF DONOR RELATIONS**

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presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
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In Partial Fulfillment  
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Master of Arts

By  
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The undersigned, appointed by the Dean of the Graduate School, have examined  
the thesis entitled:

**REVISITING FUND-RAISING ENCROACHMENT  
OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN LIGHT OF  
THE THEORY OF DONOR RELATIONS**

Presented by William Swanger

A candidate for the degree of Masters of Arts in Journalism (Strategic Communication)  
and hereby certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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Maria Len-Rios

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Alan Strathman

This work is dedicated to my family,  
who supported me in this mid-career endeavor  
and gently cajoled me to finish what I had begun.

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## **ABSTRACT**

This qualitative study of public relations and fund-raising practitioners in charitable organizations found fund-raising encroachment of public relations occurring at a rate roughly comparable to levels documented in the first studies of encroachment conducted some 15 years ago. Encroachment has been found to focus public relations on one organizational public at the expense of others. Partly as a defense against encroachment, the theory of donor relations advances the concept that fund raising is a specialization of public relations. Contrary to concerns that fund-raising practitioners would not accept this concept, a majority of fund-raising practitioners in the study sample agreed that fund raising is a specialization of public relations. However, both public relations and fund-raising practitioners had reservations that this reconceptualization would end fund-raising encroachment, preferring separate-but-equal organizational structures for the two functions. The research also found support for a refinement of donor relations theory through incorporation of contingency theory.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## **A Field Ripe for Encroachment**

Performing a role “necessary in a democratic society” (Spicer, 2000, p. 116) as it works to establish and maintain mutually beneficial relationships between organizations and their publics (Cutlip, Center, & Broom, 1985), public relations has been variously described as the overarching management of organizational communication (J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 1989), as situated at the point “competing interests collide” (Pearson, 1989, p. 67), as reflecting “gendered” values (L. A. Grunig, Toth, & Hon, 2000), by postmodernists and critical scholars as the locus from which “organizational activists” might arise (Holtzhausen, 2000; Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002; Berger, 2005), and as “perfectly functionary in a creative and technical staff role, yet … [facing] a growing demand that it assume a more strategic management role in organizations” (Plowman, 2005, p. 131).

Practiced in what is termed the two-way symmetrical model, J. E. Grunig (2000) argued, public relations “can lift organizations above the wrangle in the marketplace to help them understand that they will further their self-interest more by tempering advocacy with collaboration” (p. 43). In short, public relations is “a unique management function that helps an organization interact with … the publics who affect the ability of the organization to accomplish its goals and who expect organizations to help them accomplish their own goals” (J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 2002, p. 37). Based on excellence theory, ethical management of such interdependencies with stakeholder publics represents the manner by which organizations gain value from public relations (J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 2002; J. E. Grunig, L. A. Grunig, & Ehling, 1992).

Simultaneous to the elaboration of these important but also expansive roles, public relations is sometimes additionally characterized as suffering an “identity crisis,” (Hutton, 1999, p. 199), an issue arising not from a lack of understanding of how to practice public relations, but from a sense that there may be *too* many ways to define and, especially, to practice it. Within some organizations, for example, public relations consists primarily of activities designed to generate publicity. In others, public relations practitioners are cast as technicians responsible for ensuring the communication necessary for marketing products or generating monetary donations. In still other organizations, public relations, arguably in accord with at least some aspects of normative theory, serves the managerial role of creating and maintaining long-term relationships with the strategic publics on whom organizational success or failure depends.

The result of these divergent practices has been a field “in search of a unifying theory and set of definitions” (Leeper & Leeper, 2001, p. 461). Although significant scholarly progress has been made, such as the multi-year International Association of Business Communicators Research Foundation excellence study (J. E. Grunig, 1992) and elaborations to excellence theory by researchers such as Cameron (1997) and his associates, public relations scholars and practitioners have failed to settle on a comprehensive and widely accepted theoretical underpinning for the field, as well as common understanding of what constitutes the domain of public relations (Hutton, 1999). Gordon (1997), for example, readily summarized nine prominent definitions of public relations, arguing that such delineations frequently act as self-fulfilling guides for practice. Despite concern over confusion that may have arisen over such earlier trends as integrated marketing communications (J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 2002),

organizational public relations, as practiced, ranges from overarching strategic management of relationships to marketing communications, public affairs, media relations, and even advertising, as well as numerous combinations of these varied pursuits, some of which might be considered sub-disciplines. One result of the lack of a comprehensive definition can be a perception of public relations as but one or more of these parts. By competing for attention within the organization or attempting to define themselves as the core of public relations rather than as subsets of a broad profession, these communication-related specialties further fracture the field (Lesley, 1996), a situation that can lead to a sometimes-tenuous position for public relations, making it one of the most “self-analytical” of all communication-related professions (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003, p. 381).

The absence of agreement on a common definition and underlying theory sometimes allows those outside public relations to define it (Leeper & Leeper, 2001). This tendency toward identity crisis or resultant misperception is of particular note when it affects public relations’ standing within the organization, especially in relation to the organization’s dominant coalition. Inclusion in that decision-making group, J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1989) argued, is important because only then can public relations practitioners influence the “choice of publics in the environment for which strategic public relations programs are planned … fulfill[ing] a communication counseling and management role” (p. 60). Compounding this concern is Lauzen’s (1992a) finding that both practitioners and those outside the field often consider public relations to be “a highly substitutable function” (p. 64), with practitioners as a result holding technician roles that tend to decrease public relations’ organizational power. L. A. Grunig (1990)

found that lack of education about public relations among members of the organization's dominant coalition also tends to constrain public relations' power.

A lessened role for public relations, organizational misunderstanding of the function, or an internal focus on tactical processes—sometimes, as Lauzen (1992a) demonstrated, the result of the senior public relations practitioner's role-enactment or perception of public relations' power schema—can leave the practice ripe for what is termed encroachment, the subordination of public relations within another organizational department. Encroachment occurs when organizational leadership places someone from outside the public relations field into the manager role for the public relations unit (Dozier, 1988). “These non-public relations professionals practice public relations *as they understand public relations* … further dilut[ing] the already fluid definition of what is and is not public relations” (Lauzen, 1992b, p. 173, italics in original).

In such cases, certain publics may be favored over others (Kelly, 1991, 1993a, 1994). In the case of encroachment of public relations by fund-raising—that is, subordination of public relations to fund raising, generally by placement of the public relations function within the fund-raising department (Kelly, 1991, 1993a)—that favored status typically is accorded the donor public, generally at the expense of other organizational stakeholders. Fund-raising encroachment of public relations “effectively plac[es] *environmental blinders* on the function and the organization … Systems theory suggests that such an imbalance eventually will result in dysfunctional organizations susceptible to crises involving strategic publics other than donors” (Kelly, 1994, p. 4, italics in original). For that reason alone, fund-raising encroachment of public relations

offers an important subject for inquiry, particularly if research points to ways to diminish or eliminate this form of encroachment on public relations.

### **Purpose of the Study**

This study expands research on fund-raising encroachment of public relations through examination of the structures and relationships of public relations and fund-raising departments within a network of charitable organizations across the United States. The study sought, first, to determine whether fund-raising encroachment of public relations was occurring within the selected charitable organizations; although documented by Kelly (1991, 1993a, 1994), fund-raising encroachment of public relations has apparently received little scholarly attention in the nearly 15 years since those early studies. Whether the emphasis Kelly (e.g., 1991, 1998) and a few others placed on the subject had diminished fund-raising encroachment or increased practitioner recognition of the issues inherent in encroachment was unknown. Second, the research was designed to explore the assertions by Kelly (1991, 1998) that fund raising is a specialization of public relations and that fund raising should be reconceptualized as that specialization within a broad public relations department operating under the theoretical model of relationship management.

Delineated within Kelly's (1991) theory of donor relations, the proposed reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations was conceived as eliminating fund-raising encroachment of public relations because the manager of the unified public relations department could be cross-trained in both public relations and fund raising, have a "*firm grasp* of the two functions" (Kelly, 1998, p. 386, italics in original), including an understanding of the theoretical links Kelly (1991, 1995a)

established between the fields, and oversee a fund-raising staff working as part of overall relationship-management activities (Kelly, 1998). Kelly's (1991) donor relations theory advanced this relationship-focused view of fund raising:

Contrary to conventional wisdom, the primary purpose of fund raising is not to raise money, but—as a part of public relations—to enhance and protect organizational autonomy by effectively managing communications between a charitable organization and the donor publics in its environment. (p. 320)

She later changed management of communications to management of relationships.

Kelly (1991) described a problem with the theory of donor relations as arising over the probable lack of acceptance by practitioners of this view of fund raising as a public relations specialization, as well as constraints placed on fund-raising models by the worldviews held by those within organizational dominant coalitions, shown to help determine fund-raising agenda (Kelly, 1995b). While some recent scholarship, such as that delineated by Waters (2007a), has shown increasing awareness of a relationship management-based approach by fund-raising practitioners, it has not addressed the problem Kelly (1991) cited, namely a projected lack of acceptance by fund-raising practitioners—and, by extension, by public relations practitioners as well—of fund raising as a specialization of public relations.

Hamilton (as cited in Hamilton, 1992) argued that the “most critical issue facing the field of public relations is the link between theory and practice” (p. 123). Underscoring that point, J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1989) “found consistently that organizations do not practice the kind of public relations that our theories argue,

logically, would be best in their environments” (p. 29). Moreover, “public relations scholars often say that the gap between the profession and the academy is widening” (Waters, 2007a, p. 231). As Cornelissen (2000) noted in discussing ways through which theory can inform practice, “academic research is primarily initiated for academic understanding and is concerned with building theories … from a practitioner perspective, academic knowledge can often be considered as rather abstract and conceptual” (p. 316). Yet, “scholars construct theories to make sense of reality—to supply order to it … We can judge a theory to be good, therefore, if it makes sense of reality (in the case of a positive, or explanatory, theory) or if it helps to improve reality (in the case of a normative theory)” (J. E. Grunig, 2006, p. 152). Kelly (1991) constructed the theory of donor relations, based extensively on the body of knowledge of public relations, to provide a theoretical grounding for the practice of fund raising, but also to offer “a set of propositions … to guide the behavior of fund-raising practitioners and to help them solve the problems they face” (p. 7).

If the theory of donor relations, with its proposed reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations, is to provide a defense against fund-raising encroachment of public relations, practitioners of both public relations and fund raising need to understand and accept this reconfiguration. Further, as the result of Kelly’s (1998) recommendation of “integrated relationship management” (p 380) as the operational model for a broad-based public relations department with fund raising as a specialization, practitioners must also see value in a relational perspective, including the need to evaluate public relations and fund-raising programs from that perspective (Kelly, 1998). Ideally, they also should have some acquaintance with methods by which

relationships may be cultivated (see, e.g., Hon & J. E. Grunig, 1999; J. E. Grunig, 2002; Seltzer, 2006; Waters, 2007a; Kelly, 2000). As Waters (2007a) pointed out, “public relations scholars can start building the bridge with the profession by … engaging [practitioners] in discussions about the relationship management paradigm, in particular by asking them how they conceptualize the different relationship cultivation strategies” (pp. 231-232). Therefore, despite Dozier and Lauzen’s (2000) caution that “as an intellectual discipline or domain matures, the professional agenda should play a declining role in defining and setting the agenda for the intellectual domain” (p. 20), additional research was necessary to determine if some version of the conceptualization Kelly (1991, 1998) advanced can indeed end or reduce fund-raising encroachment. Additional considerations included recent challenges or revisions to the public relations models on which Kelly constructed her similarly named models for fund raising, the emergence of theories that contest or expand on excellence theory, and the struggle over how best to implement processes and strategies that cultivate long-term organization-public relationships.

Kelly’s caution concerning potential lack of practitioner acceptance of donor relations theory is perhaps well-founded. At the inaugural meeting of the Communicators Network of Lutheran Services in America, held in Baltimore, Maryland, in April 2007, a speaker noted, in a roomful of both public relations and fund-raising practitioners, that the communications unit he headed did not include anyone from “the dark side”—a specific reference to fund-raising practitioners. Such a comment, though seemingly offered in jest, is in keeping with Kelly’s (1991) assessment that “public relations practitioners … have spurned fund raising as something outside their functional area. To

them, fund raising is mysterious ... demeaning ... and somewhat shady" (p. 331). In an interview (Elsasser, 1998), Kelly said that the reputation of fund raising "is poorer than [that of] public relations. It is often viewed as hustling or begging with high-pressure tactics." At the same time, fund-raising practitioners, "who are largely misinformed about the newer definitions of public relations, perceive [public relations] as solely a publicity or publications function and assign it to a supportive role that somehow helps make their job easier" (Kelly, 1991, pp. 330-331). In doing so, they view public relations practitioners as technicians who will attend to media relations, create special events, and develop brochures to support the goal of raising dollars. Yet they turn to those same public relations practitioners to improve organizational image when they encounter "an environment that is unresponsive or even hostile to their fund-raising efforts" (p. 331).

Such perceptions by both public relations and fund-raising practitioners seem to pose significant impediments to the development of a public relations practice that incorporates fund raising as a specialization and operates under an integrated relationship management model. The predominance of fund raising arising from a press-agency model and asymmetrical worldview (Kelly, 1995a) seems to pose additional challenges to the adoption of an integrated model of public relations practice informed by the two-way symmetrical approach on which much relationship-management theory is based. In her call for additional research following summation of the theory of donor relations, Kelly (1991) proposed "an introspective study" (p 509) of the intersections between public relations and fund raising, with particular focus on the incidence of fund-raising encroachment of public relations. Because the theory of donor relations was conceptualized as extending the excellence model of public relations practice, she argued:

Excellent public relations departments in charitable organizations, it is hypothesized, will have incorporated the fund-raising function within that department in order to effectively manage communication with all of the organizations' strategic publics, including donors. (p. 510)

Yet little research on fund-raising encroachment of public relations appears to have been done in the years since that call for study. More recently, in fact, Kelly (2002) noted that academic journal "articles dealing with fund-raising problems still are few" (p. 43). Waters (2007a) wrote that, "Even after offering multiple suggestions for future studies in *Effective Fund-Raising Management* [Kelly, 1998], few public relations scholars have heeded the call for additional inquiry" (p. 42).

This research helped to fill that void. Having undertaken Kelly's suggested introspective study of the intersections between public relations and fund raising, it examined whether her proposed reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations, practiced with a relationship-management focus, seemed to offer the most promising approach to end fund-raising encroachment of public relations, and if practitioners were willing to accept that model.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **Literature Review**

#### ***The Matters of Definitions, Models, and Roles***

Scholars and practitioners have debated definitions and theories of public relations for decades. Definition, in particular, may relate to broader acceptance of a strategic role for public relations and, especially, to the issue of encroachment of public relations because, as Gordon (1997) argued, the rhetorical efforts to form definitions represent social processes that in turn help to shape reality; that is, how one defines the practice of public relations can affect how it functions, particularly in relation to other organizational processes such as fund raising. Some researchers have argued that the field's failure to articulate a comprehensive definition has harmed the practice of public relations, allowing external critics to fill this void, frequently characterizing "PR" in negative terms (Hutton, 1999). Similarly, some researchers have uncovered prejudicial behavior toward public relations practitioners, arising from misperceptions about how public relations is practiced, a lack of understanding of the field's benefits, and a view that the practice lacks credibility (Wright, 2005). One result of such misperceptions, Kelly (1991, 1993a, 1994) and others (e.g., J. E. Grunig, 1992; J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 2002) argued, is the view of public relations as a supportive and technical, rather than strategic, function. That view tends to assign public relations a secondary role within the organization, focused primarily on generating communication products such as news releases and newsletters to further a positive image for the organization (Kelly, 1991).

Challenges to a comprehensive definition arise from a variety of sources. Griffin and Pasadeos (1998), for example, described the influence exerted by those advocating

integrated marketing communication, a situation addressed in the development of public relations excellence theory (see, e.g., J. E. Grunig, 2006; J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 2002). As with the emphasis on donors that typically occurs with fund-raising encroachment, synthesis of public relations with the sales or marketing function can result in a focus on consumers at the expense of other publics and may have detrimental effects on the organization, argued David (2004), who assigned consumers as the marketing audience, but “citizens”—that is, all publics including consumers—as the focus of public relations programs. His assertion corresponds with Kelly’s (1991) statement that donors represent but one of the many strategic publics that fall within the purview of public relations, as well as with the list of eight common stakeholder groups identified within the public relations excellence study (J. E. Grunig, 2006).

Many attempts to advance a comprehensive definition of public relations derive from or build on such conceptualizations as advanced by Cutlip et al. (1985): “Public relations is the management function that establishes and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and the publics on whom its success or failure depends” (p. 4). In fact, most current definitions include an organization, its publics, and management of relationships (Gordon, 1997). A focus on relationships, which Ferguson (1984) argued should be the central unit of study for the field, corresponds with more recent attempts to reconceptualize public relations as relationship management (see, e.g., Broom, Casey, & Ritchey [1997]; Hon & J. E. Grunig [1999]; Ledingham [2003]).

The manner in which public relations is practiced also has served as a method for establishing theoretical underpinning and definition. J. E. Grunig and Hunt (1984) advanced four now well-known models of public relations, derived from the field’s

developmental history and predicated on the direction of communication—one-way versus two-way—and balance of intended effect, described as asymmetrical or symmetrical. Those four models are press agentry/publicity (described as one-way asymmetrical), public information—initially denoted as one-way symmetrical, though J. E. Grunig later changed his mind and described the model as an asymmetric one (J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 1992)—two-way asymmetrical, and two-way symmetrical. Press agentry/publicity refers to public relations efforts that seek attention from the media, often using propagandistic techniques to gain notice. The public information model is described by J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1989) as providing accurate, truthful information about the organization, although typically without volunteering any negative information. Two-way asymmetrical programs employ research to craft messages designed to gain public support without behavioral change on the part of the organization, whereas “‘two-way symmetrical’ public relations departments use bargaining, negotiating, and conflict-resolution strategies to bring symbiotic changes in the ideas, attitudes, and behaviors of both the organization and its publics” (J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 1989, p 31). The two-way symmetrical model is integral to J. E. Grunig’s (1992) excellence theory of public relations, advocated as a normative theory for public relations. In it, the model is described as using “research to facilitate understanding and communication … [with] understanding … the principal objective of public relations rather than persuasion” (J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 1992, p. 289).

Additional research, as summarized by J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1989), found various factors that influence use of the models, including organizational ideology, type of organization, and choices made by the organization’s dominant coalition. The

research found as well that organizations use the “different models strategically to deal with different public relations problems and different sources of conflict in their environments … [with] a single organization, therefore, employ[ing] different models as the situation changes” (p. 59). While J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1989) wrote that public relations can be described as the management of organizational communication employing all four models, they also argued that “the two-way symmetrical model will be most effective for organizations with complex environments and that are the most socially responsible” (p. 58), particularly in periods of conflict. The two-way symmetrical model, with its focus on developing understanding between organizations and publics, will be more effective, J. E. Grunig and White (1992) asserted, because “organizations get more of what they want when they give up some of what they want” (p. 39).

Building on the concept of worldviews within public relations as elaborated by J. E. Grunig and White (1992), Deatherage and Hazleton (1998) confirmed that organizations with symmetrical worldviews do use the two-way symmetrical model of public relations more frequently than do those that exhibit an asymmetrical view, but found also that symmetrical-worldview organizations use the press-agentry and two-way asymmetrical models more than the asymmetrical group. Although the researchers ascribed this unexpected finding either to type one error or the possibility that press agentry and persuasion may not inherently be asymmetrical, the use of such one-way communication may speak to a willingness to employ means derived from exigency, congruent with the situational usage of the models outlined by J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1989). Deatherage and Hazleton (1998) did find that the symmetrical model of public relations, as hypothesized within excellence theory, was a significant predictor of

perceived effectiveness within public relations. Along with their findings on worldviews, that result, they argued, provides “significant support for Grunig’s contention that the theory of public relations excellence is a normative theory” (p. 69). Consistent with excellence theory, Gordon and Kelly (1999), in a study of public relations departments in hospitals, found significant relationships between organizational effectiveness and the public relations departments’ potential to practice two-way communication, take part in strategic planning, and enact the manager role.

Factor analysis by Deatherage and Hazleton (1998), however, delineated two rather than four models, models the researchers termed one-way and two-way. J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1990, 1992) argued that confirmatory, rather than exploratory, factor analysis would support the existence of four models and that the appearance of just two models might arise from organizational mixing of the models. Nevertheless, J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1990, 1992) reconceptualized the four models as two continua. Building on correlations between the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models, Hellweg’s (as cited in J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 1990, 1992) elaboration of a continuum of symmetrical and asymmetrical public relations practices, and Murphy’s (1991) delineation of a mixed-motive model, the Grunigs “improved” the models theory by conceptualizing “the four models in terms of two continua: one of *craft* and one of *professional* public relations” (1990, p. 34; 1992, p. 312, italics in original). Craft public relations represents a continuum between the press agency/publicity and public information models, while professional public relations describes the continuum from the two-way asymmetrical model to the two-way symmetrical one. Later, Dozier, J. E. Grunig, and L. A. Grunig (as cited in J. E. Grunig, 2001), refined the two-way continuum

to depict each end as asymmetrical, one representing organizational interests only, the other the interests exclusively of a public. “The middle of the continuum contains a symmetrical win-win zone where organizations and publics can engage in mixed-motive communication” (J. E. Grunig, 2001, p. 25). This new two-way model, J. E. Grunig (2001) asserted, “subsumes the former two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models of public relations” (p. 26). The idea of a continuum plays a central role in contingency theory, as advanced by Cameron (1997) and his associates as an elaboration and refinement of excellence theory; Cameron’s contingency theory is discussed more fully below in a section detailing concerns with the excellence theory-based models of practice. J. E. Grunig (2001) suggested moving from models to public relations behaviors, citing four variables: symmetry and asymmetry, one-way and two-way, mediated and interpersonal forms of communication, and ethical practice.

The original four models of public relations practice, as advanced by J. E. Grunig and Hunt (1984), provided part of the theoretical structure for Kelly’s (1991) reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations. In her theory of donor relations, she delineated the history of fund raising as following an evolutionary path similar to that through which the public relations models developed. Moreover, she described the practice of fund raising as being represented by similarly named models, at least one of which may represent a worldview that tends to impose role delineations on public relations consistent with fund-raising encroachment. The asymmetrical press-agency view held by many fund-raising practitioners tends to reinforce the perception of public relations as serving primarily a publicity function (Kelly, 1991). In line with this perception, fund-raising encroachment can result in assignment of a technical-oriented

function to public relations, with a focus on generating communication products in support of fund-raising goals. Kelly (1991) described fund raisers as viewing public relations practitioners “as technicians rather than managers of communications [who] are expected to get news releases printed in newspapers, draw crowds to special events, and produce award-winning brochures” (p. 331).

Employing role to help define public relations has, in fact, been viewed as central to models of practice and to theories of how public relations operates within organizations (Dozier & Broom, 1995). Today, scholars tend to delineate these roles along the primary orientations of manager or technician. Originally, Broom and Smith (1979) advanced five role models after having studied the work of public relations consultants. As later refined and collapsed into four, these roles were delineated as the expert prescriber, communication facilitator, problem-solving process facilitator, and communication technician. The expert prescriber is an authority on public relations problems as well as their solutions, researching issues and creating programs to resolve issues. While communication facilitators work to maintain two-way communications between an organization and its publics, they generally act as a liaison or interpreter, “creating opportunities for senior management to hear from key publics and key publics to hear from management” (Dozier & Broom, 1995, p. 8). The problem-solving process facilitator works with other managers to identify and correct problems, with an emphasis on gaining management involvement in the solution (Dozier & Broom, 1995). The communication technician offers the technical skills needed for public relations programs to be successful and is sometimes characterized as an organization’s “journalist-in-residence” (Dozier & Broom, 1995, p. 8; Kelly, 1991, p. 384). As she did with the public

relations models of practice, Kelly (1991) reconceptualized public relations role theory to posit similar roles for fund-raising practitioners, discussed more fully below.

Dozier (as cited in Dozier & Broom, 1995; J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 1989) factor analyzed the data and recast the roles into two major ones and two minor ones, with the two minor roles considered variations of the major ones. Those major roles were of communication manager and communication technician. The communication manager oversees planning, conducts communication audits, undertakes environmental scanning, and informs the organization of potential relationship-related issues, while the communication technician is typically the practitioner who writes newsletters, designs marketing collateral or advertising, handles media relations, and creates Web sites (Dozier & Broom, 1995). Delineation of the communication technician role underscores what frequently occurs in fund-raising encroachment when public relations is defined as a supportive function to fund raising, sometimes viewed within the organization as “more important” to organizational success because of its perceived immediate bottom-line contribution (Kelly, 1991).

In addition, a misunderstanding of public relations, derived from an emphasis on this communication technician role as well as from such historical models as press agentry/publicity, can mislead “practitioners and scholars into believing that fund raising is a separate or superior function in relation to public relations” (Kelly, 1991, p. 24). To that end, research has shown that workplace socialization—how public relations is practiced within an organization and, especially, how it is viewed by those outside the department—may limit public relations by defining it in accordance with organizational demands (Berkowitz & Hristodoulakis, 1999). Moreover, in many organizational

structures, particularly within the non-profit arena under study, public relations practitioners may find themselves in small departments or even on their own (Berkowitz & Hristodoulakis, 1999), with this isolation or lack of resources compelling practitioners to focus on the tactical aspects of the field, such as writing and designing publications. Duffy (2000) found, in fact, that public relations textbooks tend to describe the history of the field as evolving into use of a two-way symmetrical model, while simultaneously focusing on many of the technical aspects of the practice, including asymmetrical models of communication. Such dichotomies may add to what Leichty (2003) deems a cultural contest among distinct voices, or “tribes,” all claiming a stake in public relations and affecting its definition through their mode of practice. Categorized from cultural theory as the voices of fatalism, egalitarianism, hierarchy, autonomous individualism, and competitive individualism, such viewpoints can have a powerful impact on public relations practice (Leichty, 2003). As just one example, the fatalist tribe has low expectations for public relations because its members view themselves as having little say in their organizational status. Such a viewpoint may help to explain a focus on tactics by practitioners who, unable apparently to influence the organization or public relations’ position within it, find solace and satisfaction in creative efforts. This view may also help to explain why some practitioners, as Kelly (1991) reported, are willing to accept fund-raising encroachment of the public relations function.

Yet, as Dozier and Broom (1995) cautioned, this role-enactment can result in significant limitations for public relations:

The generation of mediated messages for one’s organization has no inherent value in public relations. Writing and disseminating messages are

important activities in public relations and in other organizational functions, but not ends in themselves. ...The value of communications (as distinct from communication) is determined by the quality of mutually beneficial relations that such communications help to establish with key publics. By inference, the value of technician role enactment is nested within the public relations management function. (pp. 22-23)

Underscoring that point, Lauzen's (1990) study of 16 public relations managers revealed one of five reasons for encroachment of public relations to be technician role-enactment.

### ***The Issue of Encroachment***

Various aspects of professional encroachment of public relations—the assignment of “the top management role in the public relations department to someone from outside public relations” (Dozier, 1988, p. 9)—have been studied, including imperialistic behavior of various other organizational functions (Lauzen, 1991), role-enactment of the senior public relations practitioner and its effect on the incidence of encroachment (Lauzen, 1992a), the relationship of encroachment to gender (Lauzen, 1992b), the role of program evaluation in potentially reducing the occurrence of encroachment (Laborde, 2005), encroachment by educators in school-district public relations (Zoch, Patterson, & Olson, 1997), the role perceived shared values between public relations practitioners and the organization’s senior management play in reducing encroachment (Lauzen, 1995), and amount of encroachment in terms of Web oversight (Ryan, 2003).

In her early research on marketing encroachment, Lauzen (1990) identified five reasons encroachment of public relations occurs: technician role aspirations, a lack of manager competencies, a perceived lack of manager competencies, senior management

lack of understanding of public relations, and marketing imperialism. Two of these reasons—perceived lack of manager competencies and confusion by senior management over public relations—were collapsed into a single variable, role sent, and the variable of organizational turbulence added to create a model of encroachment. The research theorized that encroachment of public relations by marketing typically occurs in the presence of an aggressive marketing function and a weak public relations department, particularly during times of instability within the organization. The role public relations fills—technical communicator or strategic manager of relationships—also acts as a predictor of encroachment, particularly when another department, such as fund raising, functions as an organizational communicator as well, because when two departments within an organization are viewed as having similar goals and offering comparable skills, the more powerful department typically takes over the one with less power or fewer resources (Lauzen, 1991). In addition, a function may be predisposed to encroachment, as described by Ehling (1992). In assessing reasons public relations often is not subject to benefits-cost analysis, he described organizational “goal displacement and functional subserviency … [in which] public relations is regarded as a journalistically oriented, publicity-driven activity organized as a service unit to perform logically defined duties for other functional areas such as marketing … or personnel” (p. 619).

Lauzen (1991) found that encroachment of public relations caused by imperialism—the takeover by the more powerful unit of duties performed by the less-powerful function—occurred primarily in relation to marketing, though her research also examined potential encroachment by the legal, personnel, and human resources functions. Spicer (1991), however, raised questions about the extent of marketing encroachment on

public relations, finding that on the micro-organizational level, marketing and public relations practitioners engage in different types and scopes of communication activities; he recommended that employers “be especially careful not to confuse the two” functions (p. 303). Nevertheless, Lauzen (1993) found that increases in both domain similarity and resource dependence between the public relations and marketing departments were positively related to marketers’ assumption of activities typically performed by public relations managers; she also demonstrated that in such situations, encroachment of public relations is more likely to take place.

Lauzen’s (1992b) quantitative study of 166 public relations practitioners within the United States revealed that “public relations practitioners predominantly enacting the manager role will experience less encroachment in their organizations than will practitioners enacting the technician role predominantly” (p. 179). Lauzen (1992a) further found that the incidence of encroachment will be lessened when an organization’s most senior public relations practitioner “holds a powerful schema of the public relations function” (p. 76). Partly the result of role aspirations and the acquisition of competencies, schema are defined as structures of knowledge that help to organize practitioners’ perception, in this case, of the public relations function (Lauzen, 1992a). Public relations practitioners who hold manager aspirations are “also likely to view public relations as an organizational function requiring specialized education and expertise. This practitioner holds a powerful schema of public relations” (Lauzen, 1992a, p. 69). The combination of a powerful schema and manager role-enactment, she suggested, acts to stem encroachment by increasing departmental power through involvement in organizational decision-making, the provision of skills that are non-substitutable, and the use of research

to reduce uncertainty for the organization. Lauzen (1995) also found that when values held by public relations managers are different from those of managers within the organization's dominant coalition, encroachment may occur more readily. She identified public relations practitioners' involvement in "decision-making teams encouraging strategic change" (p. 295) to be a predictor of decreased likelihood of encroachment.

Because Dozier (as cited by Lauzen, 1992b), Lauzen (1990, 1991, 1992a, 1992b), and others focused research on marketing encroachment of public relations, generally within the for-profit realm, Kelly (1991, 1992, 1993a, 1994) extended the inquiry into encroachment of public relations by examining fund-raising encroachment of the public relations function within non-profit organizations. Drawing on the premise by J. E. Grunig et al. (1992) that an effective organization develops communication programs that create and maintain relationships with strategic publics that have the ability to constrain organizational autonomy, Kelly (1994) proposed that:

The survival and success of non-profit organizations depends [sic] on managing environmental dependencies with multiple publics, not just donors. Subordination of the public relations function through fund-raising encroachment focuses undue attention on donors at the expense of other strategically important publics, leaving the organization vulnerable to loss of support and even attack by those who have been ignored (e.g., legislators, employees, or clients). (p. 3)

In such cases, she argued, fund-raising encroachment, by focusing public relations practitioners on the donor public, hinders the effectiveness of the public relations function in environmental scanning and, based on systems theory, may result in

“dysfunctional organizations susceptible to crises involving strategic publics other than donors” (p. 4). The value of public relations is diminished, with the function reduced primarily to a technical, supportive role removed from organizational decision-making and the organization facing the possibility of eventual loss of autonomy (Kelly, 1991, 1994).

In her efforts to document fund-raising encroachment of public relations, Kelly (1993a) conducted depth interviews with 19 non-profit organizations in Maryland and Louisiana, following an earlier survey of members of the Public Relations Society of America that “documented the subordination of public relations in an alarming proportion of … organizations” (as cited in Kelly, 1994, p. 2). The interviews uncovered evidence of encroachment in four of the six primary types of charitable institutions, with the public relations function subordinate to fund raising in seven of the 19 organizations researched and structurally separate in the remaining 12. In no organization did the fund-raising function report to public relations. Of the 12 organizations with separate public relations departments, only three public relations managers could cite evidence that the structure was stable and maintained the public relations unit’s autonomy. Moreover, three of the remaining nine organizations had already experienced encroachment from a unit other than fund raising. In addition, indicators of organizational power and dominant-coalition access revealed significant inequalities between public relations and fund raising, conditions that may serve as antecedents to encroachment. Like Lauzen (1990), Kelly (1993a) found that role-enactment of a technical, supportive function tends to correspond with the perception of public relations as a supportive, rather than strategic, function and therefore may serve to increase vulnerability to future encroachment by fund

raising. Her study also suggested that those organizations that depend on financial sources other than fund raising for a significant portion of their income or that have diversified revenue streams may experience fewer instances of fund-raising encroachment. This finding paralleled Lauzen's (1990) conclusion that periods of organizational uncertainty may serve as precursors to encroachment.

Following her qualitative studies, Kelly (1994) documented encroachment of public relations by fund raising within a variety of non-profit organizations. Of respondents to a national survey [N=175], 23% reported fund-raising encroachment within their organizational structure, while an additional 13% noted public relations as being managed by a department other than the fund-raising unit, bringing to more than one-third the number of public relations departments experiencing encroachment. While the findings showed significant variations in the incidence of fund-raising encroachment by type of charitable organization, one-quarter of respondents agreed with the survey statement that "fund raising increasingly is taking over the management of public relations (i.e., fund-raising encroachment has occurred or is occurring)" (Kelly, 1994, p. 13). Moreover, 40% of respondents indicated that senior fund-raising staff within their organizations had greater influence in strategic decisions than did the highest-level public relations practitioner, "a trend that theory suggests is an antecedent to fund-raising encroachment" (Kelly, 1994, p. 20). Following Lauzen's (1990) focus on role theory in her study of marketing encroachment, Kelly (1994) theorized that public relations departments with the knowledge and expertise to practice the communication manager role and a two-way symmetrical model of public relations would be less likely to experience fund-raising encroachment, theories her findings supported.

### ***The Reconceptualization of Fund Raising***

Similar to the situation within public relations, Kelly (1991) proposed that there has not been consensus on an overarching definition of fund raising, although she characterized the function as involving “the purposive process of soliciting and accepting monetary gifts from individuals, corporations, and foundations by a charitable organization, especially as managed for the organization by fund-raising professionals” (p. 80). Addressing definitional needs as part of her theory of donor relations, she characterized fund raising as “the management of communication between a charitable organization and its donor publics” (Kelly, 1991, p. 6). She later refined the definition to advance fund raising as “the management of relationships between a charitable organization and its donor publics” (Kelly, 1998, p. 8). Beyond assigning definition, Kelly (1991) proposed a reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations. She contended that operational and theoretical links between public relations and fund raising had been overlooked by fund-raising scholars and practitioners because their definitions of public relations did not include a management component and because their perceptions of the field derived from early asymmetrical models, such as press agency/publicity, whose focus tends to restrict the function to serving in a supportive role.

The reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations is explicated within Kelly’s (1991) theory of donor relations, developed at least partially as a result of concern over a lack of scholarly interest in and theoretical grounding for fund raising. Among the key questions she sought to address were how fund raising contributes to organizational effectiveness, why charitable organizations practice fund

raising in various ways, what characterizes the relationship between a charitable organization and its donors, and how fund raising might “be explained in a different way that would help us more fully understand the current fund-raising behavior of charitable organizations” (Kelly, 1991, p. 3).

As part of studies undertaken to arrive at that “different” explanation, topics of which included fund-raising encroachment, the intersections between public relations and fund raising, and a conceptualization of fund raising derived from the historical models of public relations, Kelly (1992) conducted research among educators at colleges and universities with both public relations sequences and affiliation with the Association of Schools of Journalism and Mass Communication. Her findings indicated that 71 percent of respondents did not have separate fund-raising courses, but included fund-raising concepts within public relations courses. More to the point of Kelly’s (1991) conceptual alignment of the two functions, 73 percent of survey respondents [N=79] agreed with her contention that fund raising is a specialization of public relations; moreover, only 16 percent of respondents indicated strong agreement that fund raising is closely related to public relations, but nevertheless a separate function (Kelly, 1992). However, 55 percent of fund-raising practitioners [N=296] who responded to another study indicated that fund raising is more closely allied to marketing than to public relations (Kelly, 1995a). Kelly (1991, 1998) disputed that view by noting that marketing concerns itself specifically with consumers, who may or may not be donors, and by pointing to the significant differences in the exchange relationship that occurs in marketing vis-à-vis fund raising, as more fully elaborated below.

Although some researchers, such as Cutlip et al. (1985), have argued that fund raising and public relations should not be combined, Kelly's (1991, 1993a, 1994, 1998) proposal that fund raising is a specialization of public relations concurs with the Public Relations Society of America's Body of Knowledge Task Force, which incorporated fund raising "as the seventh element of the professional practice of public relations, along with media relations, community relations, financial and investor relations, internal relations, public affairs, and marketing, marketing support, and consumer relations" (as cited in Kelly, 1992, p. 19). Similarly, J. E. Grunig (2006) identified donors as a group for which specialized public relations programs are developed, and L. A. Grunig (1989) found public relations practitioners in non-profit organizations describing fund raising as a specific duty. Similarly, Dyer, Buell, Harrison, and Weber (2002) described the assignment of overall fund-raising duties to public relations practitioners in non-profit organizations, frequently the result of limitations on staffing resources. Kelly (1991) advanced her characterization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations by drawing a parallel with the manner in which investor relations is viewed in scholarly and trade literature as a public relations specialization within the for-profit arena. (Interestingly, Petersen and Martin [1996] found that CEOs in their study sample preferred to handle investor relations themselves or assign the responsibility to their top financial officer, a situation the researchers partly attributed to encroachment of this public relations function.)

In recasting fund raising within the public relations domain, Kelly (1991) incorporated the four models of public relations as outlined by J. E. Grunig and Hunt (1984)—press agentry, public information, two-way asymmetric, and two-way

symmetric—to posit four similarly named models for fund raising. She described the purpose of press agency within fund raising as propagandizing a cause, with communication based on emotion and derived from principles governing manipulation and control. By contrast, the public information model is based on enlightenment, with truth important. Essentially, this fund-raising model disseminates accurate information on organizational needs. The two-way asymmetrical model persuades giving through messages based on research. The goal of the two-way symmetrical model is to obtain mutual understanding between the organization and its donor public, with two-way communication and balanced effects:

Whereas fund raisers practicing one of the three asymmetrical models believe that donors benefit from making a gift primarily because the charitable organization benefits, those practicing the two-way symmetrical model identify prospective donors' needs and negotiate the philanthropic exchange so that benefits flow both ways, as well as spill over into society (i.e., the exchange is not *quid pro quo*, which differentiates it from a market exchange. (Kelly, 1995b, p. 116)

Kelly (1995a) quantitatively tested the four models with fund raisers [N=296], finding evidence that the models characterize fund-raising traditions over time and that all four remain in use, with the majority of charitable organizations predominantly practicing the press-agency model (although the extent of its use varies based on the focus of the fund-raising program, that is, annual giving or major gifts). Tests for validity also supported the models, but indicated that they are not as carefully delineated in practice as in theory. The research pointed to a mixed model, with some practitioners, for example, holding

symmetrical concepts but practicing a two-way asymmetrical model of fund raising as a result of organizational self-interest. In such findings, her research paralleled the literature review by J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1992) that found that while the public relations models “can be reliably measured … are valid … and do exist in real organizations, [those] organizations do not practice the models purely … many us[ing] different models for different situations and different programs” (p. 297).

In a quantitative study [N=30] of public historically Black colleges and universities, Tindall (2007) found support for Kelly’s assignment of the four public relations-based models to fund raising, as well as for a mixed-motive model of fund raising. Incorporating both symmetrical and asymmetrical activities, this model is designed to achieve both short- and longer-term goals while providing the flexibility necessary to adopt communication styles necessary to specific environments and situations. Similarly, Murphy (1991), drawing from literature on game theory, had described the mixed-motive model of public relations as bringing together “the seeming conflict between asymmetric (pure competition) and symmetric (pure common interest) models, in that it preserves the central importance of one’s own interests, yet acknowledges the power of opposing viewpoints” (p. 127). Although practitioners may benefit from a two-way symmetrical or mixed-motive model of fund raising, Tindell (2007) found, as Kelly (1995a, 1995b) had, that the press agency model is employed more often than the two-way symmetrical model, particularly in relation to fund raisers’ age and experience, with asymmetric practices stemming potentially from a desire to represent the organization in as positive a manner as possible.

Kelly (1995a) argued, however, that the predominant use of the press-agentry model of fund raising can damage the credibility of charitable organizations because the model “manipulates donor publics with emotional propaganda that is not necessarily truthful” (p. 125). In conducting the second phase of research on her survey data of fund-raising practitioners, this time focusing on the fund-raising behavior of charitable organizations, Kelly (1995b) found that the dominant coalition within charitable organizations determines how fund raising is practiced and thus is selecting the “oldest and least ethical model of fund raising” (p. 133). This practice stands in contrast to her findings that the two-way symmetrical model of fund raising is the only model that correlates both positively and significantly with total number of dollars raised.

In relation to the appropriation of public relations role theory for her reconceptualization of fund raising, Kelly (1991) called for future studies to determine differentiation of manager and technician roles and to “document how much fund-raising practitioners contribute to organizational effectiveness, which may prove to be relatively little” (p. 510). Kelly (1998) later renamed two of Broom and Smith’s (1979) role classifications—communication facilitator and communication technician—as liaison and technician to facilitate their use within the fund-raising field and also assigned the parsimonious roles of manager and technician to fund-raising practitioners. Fussell (2006) found that fund raisers do identify with these primary roles of technician and manager, “reinfor[ing] the idea that fund raising is a subset of public relations” (p. 20).

Kelly’s (1991) theory of donor relations encompasses much more than a reconceptualization of fund raising as a public relations specialization, including a conceptual demarcation of charity and philanthropy, the manner in which fund raising

should be evaluated, and the delicate balance that must be achieved in terms of organizational autonomy through the management of interdependencies with donors, based on assumptions that all sources of donors and all gifts have the potential to affect organizations' autonomy negatively. Bringing fund raising into the domain of public relations on both the macro- and mesolevels, she argued, works to protect organizational autonomy by shifting the primary purpose of fund raising from raising money to managing relationships with donors. On the micro-level, she described the fund-raising process as consisting of four steps involving research, cultivation, solicitation, and recognition. The process, she claimed, is similar to the public relations formula of research, action, communication, and evaluation.

Kelly (1998) later proposed an expanded fund-raising process, reflecting steps outlined in a formula termed ROPES, for Research, Objectives, Programming, Evaluation, and Stewardship. This added fifth step is of particular importance in managing relationships with donors because it "provides an essential loop back to the beginning of fund raising" (p. 391), involving reciprocity, responsible gift use, reporting, and relationship nurturing. Advocating that stewardship of relationships be part of public relations programs for all organizational publics, Kelly (2001) quantitatively tested the ROPES model and found that survey participants—members of the Association of Fundraising Professionals who hold a Ph.D., therefore tending to represent senior fund-raising practitioners—and their staff members closely follow the ROPES process. ROPES' inclusion of evaluation of all fund-raising objections is especially important, Kelly (2001) argued, because "it incorporates measurements of both dollars raised and relationships built" (p. 109), an integral step in moving fund-raising into a relationship

management model.

Kelly (1991) intended the reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations to prompt such change in fund-raising practice, moving it toward a primary focus on the management of relationships with donors. In her book, *Effective Fund-Raising Management* (1998), she specifically called for the structural alignment of public relations and fund raising within a public relations department practicing “integrated relationship management” (p.380). Although Ferguson (1984) had earlier advocated relationships become the key unit of study within public relations, Kelly (1998) did not cite specific scholarly work on relationship management, undoubtedly because much of the initial research on current relationship management theory was under way at the time *Effective Fund-Raising Management* was published. However, it is clear this growing field of public relations scholarship represents the model Kelly envisioned for the public relations unit incorporating fund raising as a specialization. Kelly’s (2000) explication of stewardship as the fifth step in the ROPES process for public relations activities cites a range of pivotal studies in relationship management theory by such scholars as Ledingham, Bruning, Broom, and J. E. Grunig. Advised in his dissertation by Dr. Kelly, Waters (2007a) conducted a survey among non-profit hospital donors and fund-raising staff at those institutions partially to determine whether the relationship dimensions of trust, control mutuality, satisfaction, and commitment, outlined in the scholarly literature of relationship management, can be used to assess relationships between non-profit organizations and donors; his research also used coorientation methods to measure both sides of the relationship as a method of advancing relationship management theory. And Kelly, Thompson, and Waters (2006) used a

relationship management-based coorientation study to examine hospice-physician relationships related to patient referrals. Moreover, Kelly's (1998) seminal text on fund raising focused on various techniques and processes with which to build and enhance organization-donor relationships. As Kelly (2000) noted in referencing the need for relationship cultivation to be the principal aim of public relations practice, the importance of "existing relationships has long been acknowledged in fund raising" (p. 282).

### ***The Relationship Management Perspective***

Stemming partly from Ferguson's (1984) call for relationships to be the primary unit of analysis in public relations research, relationship management has continued to gain increasing attention, particularly since the 1990s. J. E. Grunig (1993), for example, argued that public relations should focus not only on symbolism or organizational "image," but also on managing behavioral relationships. (Although the phrase "relationship management" has been used widely in the literature, J. E. Grunig [2006] advanced a well-reasoned argument "that it is not really possible to 'manage' relationships," [p. 167] and that the efforts involved actually represent management of processes leading to outcomes, such as relationships. He therefore advocated use of the phrase "relationship cultivation strategies" [p. 167]. In this summation of research on the excellence model of public relations, J. E. Grunig [2006] went on to describe the relational approach, including cultivation strategies, as "the heir to the models of public relations and the two-way symmetrical model, in particular" [p. 168].)

Following the definition advanced by Cutlip et al. (1985) of public relations as the management of mutually beneficial relationships, Ehling (1992) described the shift to relationship management as a pivotal conceptual change, a concept that Kelly (1998)

suggested serve as a model under which fund raising would successfully function as a specialization of public relations. Based on the two-way symmetrical communication underpinning of many definitions of public relations, relationship management derives from a relational perspective that posits the outcome of effectively practiced public relations as positive public relationships (Ledingham, 2003). The relational perspective can be employed to outline the function of public relations within organizations (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998), may “serve as a platform to guide theoretical inquiry and professional practice” (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999, p. 158), and advances public relations as taking place within the four-step management process of analysis, planning, implementation, and evaluation (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998).

Relationship management focuses research and practice within public relations on organizational relationships with interdependent publics, on the dimensions on which those relationships are built, and on determining the effects those relationships have on both organization and publics (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). Essentially the overarching management of relationships between an organization and its interdependent publics, the relationship management perspective changes the mission of public relations from a primary goal of swaying public opinion to a focus on “building, nurturing, and maintaining organization-public relationships,” or OPRs (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999, p. 158). Relationship management displaces the traditional view of public relations as primarily a communications function, substituting instead a conception of it as a management function that employs communication strategically (Ledingham & Bruning, 1998). Relationship management defines public relations not in terms of what it does, but what it is; further, it advances an integrative approach to conceptualization of public

relations by borrowing from the scholarly literature of such fields as mass media, marketing, interpersonal communication, social psychology, and interpersonal relationships (Ledingham, Bruning, & Wilson, 1999).

Citing a need to develop a common understanding of the concept of “relationship,” Broom et al. (1997) reviewed literature from the fields of interpersonal communication, psychotherapy, interorganizational relationships, and systems theory to propose that relationships can be studied as “phenomena distinct from the perceptions held by parties in the relationship” (p. 95), have measurable properties, can be distinguished from their antecedents and consequences, involve linkages through which the parties meet interdependent needs, and may lead, among other results, to loss of autonomy or the achievement of mutual goals. Addressing further definitional needs, Ledingham and Bruning (1998) proposed that an OPR be described as the “state which exists between an organization and its key publics in which the actions of either entity impact the economic, social, political and/or cultural well-being of the other entity” (p. 62). They further delineated the “ideal” organization-public relationship as a state “that provides economic, social, political, and/or cultural benefits to all parties involved, and is characterized by mutual positive regard” (p. 62). In terms of organizational effectiveness, J. E. Grunig et al. (1992) described the organization-public relationship as providing a concept central to excellence theory.

Ledingham (2003) fashioned an overall relationship-based definition for public relations on four key developments within research and practice: Recognition of the centrality of relationships; reconceptualization of public relations as a management function; discernment of the myriad organization-public relationships and their effect on

attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors; and development of OPR models. Citing Ehling, Ledingham (2003) proposed that relationship management shifts goals from communication processes to relationships changes, with measurement focused on relationship-related objectives rather than communication efficiencies. He advanced the tenet that “effectively managing organizational-public relationships around common interests and shared goals, over time, results in mutual understanding and benefit for interacting organizations and publics” (p. 190). Hung (2005) defined OPRs as arising “when organizations and their strategic publics are interdependent, and this interdependence results in consequences to each other that organizations need to manage constantly” (p. 396). That is, relationship management requires acknowledgement within the organization that it can affect the lives of those within its publics and that members of those same publics can affect it (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999). Dialog, an underpinning of the two-way symmetrical model of communication, thus becomes crucial, although both parties must be willing to engage in it. Describing the challenges inherent in a dialogic approach, Kent and Taylor (2002) outlined a range of tenets on which dialog might be built.

In the relational perspective, public relations serves to oversee practices that represent exchanges between the organization and its publics, “exchanges that provide building-blocks for relationships” (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999, p. 160). Bruning, DeMiglio, and Embry (2006) cited work by such scholars as Thibaut, Kelley, and Littlejohn to note that social exchange theory delineates these exchanged resources as either costs or rewards, with each partner having an expectation of the other that, when met or exceeded, results in satisfaction over the relationship; dissatisfaction occurs when

the opposite is true. In accord with this view of relationship management, Wilson (as cited in Ledingham & Bruning, 1998) argued that the focus of public relations should be on “the development of ‘*relational responsibility*’” (p. 57, italics in original). Similarly, J. E. Grunig (2000) proposed that public relations balance organizational tendencies toward marketing or competitive perspectives by injecting collaboration into decision processes. If focused solely on exchange relationships and unwilling to build communal relationships, organizations may “incur greater costs from negative publicity, unfavorable legislation, and other costs that result from noncommunal relationships” (p. 42).

A key attribute of relationship management is that it offers practitioners the ability to use quantitative means to identify and track relationship changes over time (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999). Rather than relying on the assumption that well-crafted messages will solve public relations issues, relationship management focuses program development and evaluation not on communication produced, but on the measurement of:

Perceptual, symbolic, relational, and behavioral outcomes .... The shift from message manipulation to initiating, developing, and cultivating mutually productive relationships is important because the focus of program evaluation shifts from measuring the dissemination of communicated messages to determining the influences that organizational activities have on key public members’ perceptions of the organization-public relationship, as well as determining the outcomes of organizational activities on key public members’ behaviors. (Bruning & Ledingham, 2000, p. 87)

Bruning and Galloway (2003) therefore argued that scholars and public relations practitioners must develop measures that provide benchmarks of relationship attitudes toward the organization by key publics. With such benchmarks, practitioners can create public relations programs that effectively enhance critical public members' opinions and evaluations of, as well as behaviors toward, the organization. Quantitative analysis of change is possible because, as Bruning and Ledingham (2000) noted, "the organization-public relationship has been shown to influence key public members' perceptions and behaviors in multiple industries" (p. 92).

Among efforts to quantify OPRs, Ledingham and Bruning (1998) reviewed scholarly literature from fields such as interpersonal relations, marketing, and social psychology to list 17 relationship dimensions, among them trust, commitment, investment, interdependence/power imbalance, comfort with relational dialectics, cooperation, mutual goals, social bonds, structural bonds, and adaptation. Focus groups refined the dimensions to trust, openness, involvement, investment, and commitment. Their quantitative research based on the results found that these relationship dimensions differentiated those who would stay with the organization, leave it, or who would be undecided about it in a competitive situation. As part of the same research of customers of a three-state telecommunications company, Bruning and Ledingham (1998) reported that the organization-public relationship influences consumer satisfaction. Bruning and Ledingham (1999) found that public relations campaigns focused on enhancing perceptions of these dimensions tended to result in public members assessing the relationship dimensions positively. Findings suggested that "organizational involvement in and support of the community in which it operates can engender loyalty toward an

organization among key publics when that involvement/support *is known by those key publics*" (Ledingham and Bruning, 1998, p. 63, italics in original).

Expanding their research into relationship dimensions, Bruning and Ledingham (1999) created a multi-dimensional OPR scale, beginning with the relationship dimensions of trust, openness, commitment, involvement, and investment, and adding to them a number of dimensions postulated through other scholars' work, including reciprocity, mutual legitimacy, and mutual understanding. Their research allowed them to conceptualize organization-public relationships around professional, personal, and community relationship dimensions, recommending that public relations operate to create strategies to "maximize the benefit experienced by both parties in each of these types of relationships" (Bruning & Ledingham, 1999, p. 165). Management of the personal relationship, they noted as an example, could involve actions that build trust between the organization and key publics; the investment of time, energy, and feelings in interactions; and the demonstration of interest in members of key publics as well as commitment to meeting individual needs. Bruning and Ledingham (2000) found that public members' perceptions of the professional, personal, and community relationships they have with an organization influence their evaluation of satisfaction with the organization. The results prompted expansion of the Ledingham and Bruning (1998) proposal that organizations manage relationships with key publics and then communicate that involvement through use of a five-step "SMART public relations program" involving Scan, Map, Act, Rollout, and Track (p. 92). Based on a study of bank customers, Bruning (2000) underscored the need for organizational investment in relationship-building by noting that "public

relations practitioners cannot expect to build lasting relationships by adopting a ‘one-size fits all’ orientation when communicating with key public members” (p. 444).

In addition, Bruning (2002) found satisfaction with community and personal relationships was substantially related and satisfaction with professional relationship was moderately related to the decision made by college students to return to an institution for additional years of schooling or to transfer to another university. The research was noteworthy because it provided a link between relationship attitudes and actual behavior as opposed to research that had correlated relationship attitudes with intent. With a focus on expanding the Bruning and Ledingham OPR scale to take into account the factor of commitment found within personal relationships, Bruning and Galloway (2003) recast the dimensions of organization-public relationships as centering on anthropomorphism, community improvement, personal commitment, comparison of alternatives, and professional benefit/expectation attitudes. They argued that organizations focused on creating anthropomorphic relationships—those in which respondents imbue the organization with attributes associated with persons—can strive to develop traits typically associated in interpersonal-relations literature with satisfying personal relationships.

In another line of research, Hon and J. E. Grunig (1999) created a relationship measurement scale based on the quantitative assessment of six indicators of relationships, identified as control mutuality, trust, satisfaction, commitment, exchange relationships, and communal relationships. Initial testing of the scale demonstrated that it provided good measures of relationship perceptions. J. E. Grunig (2000) noted that trust and control mutuality—“the belief by each party in a relationship that they have an adequate degree of control over behaviors of others that affect them in a relationship” (p. 41)—are

critical to collaborative relationships. In addition, he identified communal relationships “as particularly relevant as an outcome of symmetrical public relations” (p. 42). Later, J. E. Grunig (2002) advanced qualitative research guidelines to assist in assessing OPRs. Huang (2001) expanded these measurement efforts by constructing OPRA, the organization-public relationship assessment, a cross-cultural five-item scale that incorporates four dimensions derived from Hon and J. E. Grunig’s (1999) work—trust, control mutuality, relationship satisfaction, and relationship commitment—and adds a fifth dimension reflecting Eastern culture, face and favor. Results of research on OPRA upheld propositions that relationships have more than one primary feature and measures should take into account multiple dimensions. Similarly, Kim (2001) created a scale measuring relationship quality by including information from research in interpersonal communication, public relations, and relationship marketing.

In an effort to link relationship management more fully with excellence theory, J. E. Grunig and Huang (2000) added to Broom et al.’s (1997) research by developing a three-stage model of organization-public relationships focused on relational antecedents, strategies to create and nurture relationships, and outcomes, with indicators suggested to monitor program progress as well as long-term effects. They also suggested perfecting their one-party indicators and then moving toward a coorientational approach to measure relationships. They wrote that, “in addition, a third-party observer can measure the perceptions of both parties and compare the two” (p. 47). Also concerned that most studies tended to focus on the public’s perception of the organization-public relationship but ignored the organization’s viewpoint, both Seltzer (2006) and Waters (2007a) advanced the coorientational approach to measuring OPRs, suggested as far back as

Ferguson's (1984) original call for relationships to be the primary focus and unit of analysis within public relations practice.

In addition to the exchange and communal relationships that Hon and J. E. Grunig (1999) described, Hung (2005) identified additional types of OPRs, including exploitative, manipulative—sometimes used in conjunction with media relations—symbiotic, contractual, and covenantal, described as win-win. Referencing the role power plays in relationships, Hung (2005) described research participants' concerns that communal relationships might not be truly altruistic but were, rather, long-term exchange relationships, and called attention to participants' difficulties in identifying just one type of relationship; instead, they referenced their organizations' various relationships as "intertwined" and existing in different forms "in accordance with the purpose of behaviors" (p 404).

Further research on relationship management has taken a variety of forms. Yang and J. E. Grunig (2005) demonstrated the effects on reputation of the outcomes of organization-public relationships, which were described as cognitive representations of the organizations in the minds of the organizations' publics. In a longitudinal study of relationships involving banks and activist publics, Dougall (2006) advanced a framework for tracking organization-public relationships "that is not limited to the perceptions of a few individuals captured at only one or several points in time" (p. 176). And the relational perspective has been incorporated into studies of how OPRs are constructed through online media. Vorvoreanu (2006) developed a research protocol based on Web-site experience analysis, integrating communication and reader-response theory with OPR research. Len-Rios (2001) advanced new methodology for evaluation of

organization-public relationships, with emphasis on the online environment, through the use of rules theory. Relational strategies also have been shown to mitigate perceptions of a crisis when employed as part of an organizational blog, with “the perceived state of crisis decreas[ing] as communication increased and got closer to the organization itself” (Sweetser & Metzgar, 2007, p. 342).

Kelly (2000) argued that the overall “public relations process is incomplete without stewardship” (p. 289) as part of relationship management. Despite the prevalence of the press-agency/publicity model Kelly (1991, 1998) and others (e.g., Tindall, 2007) identified within fund-raising practice, the idea of managing relationships with donors has gained adherents, sometimes under the banner of “relationship fund raising” (Sargeant, 2001). Hall (2002), for example, summarized the research of Kelly and other scholars in advocating a relationship model for fund raising within community colleges. O’Neil (2007) surveyed donors to a food bank and found that longer-term organization-donor relationships affect behavior, revealing an association between strong relationships and years of support, willingness to recommend that others donate to the organization, and happiness to maintain giving, though no clear link was found between relationship and amounts of donations. However, she surveyed only one side of the relationship—donors—and recommended, similar to Seltzer (2006), that future research focus on perceptions of the relationship by both parties. In line with that suggestion, Waters’ (2007a) coorientation study uncovered differences in perceptions of the relationship between fund raisers and donors, with fund-raising practitioners evaluating relationship dimensions and cultivation efforts more positively than did the donors, demonstrating a need for enhanced communication.

Sargeant (2001), in an extensive quantitative study of donors within the United Kingdom, similarly found that quality of service is important in keeping donors from lapsing, as is feedback, which was described as informing donors as to how their contributions were used and, particularly, how donated funds improved the lives of those within the beneficiary group. Enhancing both of these attributes, Sargeant (2001) argued, involves a relationship-based approach that provides the donor with choices around communication from the organization. MacMillan, Money, Money, and Downing (2005) found that donors described knowledge of the efficient use of their gifts and of the positive effects those gifts had on intended recipients as “nonmaterial benefits” derived from the relationship (p. 809).

Several studies have investigated the relational perspective in terms of fund raising on the Internet. Sargeant, West, and Jay (2007) found such attributes as accessibility, accountability, interaction, education, and empowerment significantly related to the number of new donors a Web site can attract. Sargeant et al. (2007) questioned, however, the extent to which relational aspects of Internet fund-raising sites would be used to enhance organization-donor relationships because donors newly acquired through a Web site were subsequently developed through direct mail and other means. And Waters (2007b) found that non-profits classified as first tier in the Philanthropy 400 list tended to provide prospective donors with information on their missions and yearly goals, as well as annual reports and immediate, electronically generated receipts for giving. Second-tier organizations were more inclined to view electronic interactions with donors as part of an exchange relationship rather than a method of developing or enhancing the organization-donor relationship.

***Ideas for Consideration:  
Symmetry, Contingency, and the State of Relationships***

The symmetrical model on which Grunig and others have claimed excellent public relations is built is not, however, without its critics, who often argue that the approach is “unrealistic or idealistic” (J. E. Grunig & White, 1992, p. 45). Mackey (2003) cited Leitch and Neilson who wrote of the “absurdity” in believing that interaction between, as an example, an oil company and unskilled workers in a developing region of the world could be “symmetrical just because the interaction is symmetrical in form. It is even more absurd to suggest the reverse, that the interaction … can be symmetrical … if the workers are willing to compromise” (p. 2). Writing from a critical perspective, Roper (2005) argued that efforts at symmetry can, in fact, be hegemonic, with concession and negotiation employed to maintain a dominant power position. She noted that J. E. Grunig’s (2001) realignment of the four models of public relations into a mixed-motive model constituted acknowledgement that:

It is to be expected that any organization that practices symmetrical communication is doing so in order to satisfy their [sic] own interests as well as those of their [sic] publics. This would imply mutual satisfaction rather than sacrifice on the part of one party. (p. 70)

Typically, she wrote, compromise tends to favor corporate interests and may lessen critical stakeholders’ negotiating power.

Holtzhausen (2000) similarly found that consensus can be a “tool to maintain power” (p. 93), arguing for a postmodernist reconceptualization of public relations as a locus for the development of practitioners as “organizational activists” (p. 104). In a

rather vituperative article, Dover (1995) called the IABC Excellence project “a disastrous waste of … funds … [and] of minimal significance to the real world of practitioners” (p. 38), claiming that the project’s original purpose of linking communication success to measurable bottom-line results for organizations was subsumed by J. E. Grunig’s focus on advocating an earlier-introduced symmetry theory.

Leichty and Springston (1993) cited measurement problems with quantitative research previously conducted on the four public relations models, determining that reliability coefficients for the constructs were below minimum recommended reliability levels. They argued as well that improvements made in the reliability of three of the four measures through the use of fractionation scales by J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1992) probably reflected “a social desirability artifact” (Leichty & Springston, 1993, p. 330). They also questioned data provided to establish the criterion validity of the models, noting that their analyses suggested only two distinct models of public relations practice: one-way and two-way, akin to what J. E. Grunig and L. A. Grunig (1992) had by then reconfigured as craft and professional public relations models. Similar to the reasoning behind Cameron’s (1997) contingency theory, Leichty and Springston (1993) took issue with the presumption, without empirical evidence, that organizations conduct public relations in a single way across time and variety of publics, noting that “early work on public relations models explicitly adopted a contingency theory perspective … but abandoned [it] in favor of the ‘two-way symmetrical model is best’ position” (p. 333). Moreover, they argued that if public relations is to take seriously a focus on relationship management with attention paid to how organization-public relationships develop, change, and are maintained, “the ‘one best model’ position is an unfortunate one … [and

efforts should be made to] distinguish ... between the ‘PR approach’ which is *most desirable* and the PR style which is *most appropriate under the circumstances*” (p. 334, italics in original). Adding some weight to this emphasis on a mixed-motive approach, Sha (2004) developed a link between the mathematical Noether’s Theorem, which demonstrates that symmetry exists simultaneously with conservation, and the symmetrical model of public relations. Sha’s (2004) research underscored “the reality ... that neither the organization nor its publics ever completely relinquishes its own goals to satisfy those of the other party” (p. 409).

Aware of practitioners’ discounting of symmetry theory “for its lack of pragmatics,” David (2004, p. 185) advanced a 3P model, for professional values, practice, and pragmatics. In that model, “shared expectations are conceptualized as an alignment and optimization of individual, organizational, and social values, with symmetry as the driving force” (p 186); recommendations for practice are then drawn partially from contingency theory (Cancel, Cameron, Sallot, & Mitrook, 1997). Somewhat similarly, Heath (2006) advanced the fully functioning society theory of public relations, arguing that a third era of public relations best practices and research has arrived. Excellence in public relations communication and excellence in management, “ably advanced by J. E. Grunig and his associates” (p. 98), represented the first two periods. Heath’s (2006) theory postulated that individuals and organizations wish to make “rewarding decisions in the face of risks posed by uncertainties that require enlightened decision-making ... [arrived at] through shared meaning that rests on interpretations of information, weighing of values, and consideration of policy” (p. 99).

Developing a view of public relations as reflecting cultural styles based on a model-of-history conceptualization advanced by J.M. O’Malley, Distinguished Professor of Church History at Weston Jesuit School of Theology, Brown (2006) argued that “the symmetry theory of public relations is actually an a-historical heuristic that justifies a belief system that legitimizes public relations” (p. 207). The four models of public relations, which the author described as designed to reflect a supposed rapid evolution from “the origin myth of P.T. Barnum” to the excellence concept based on symmetry, derive from “historically oriented errors [that] have their source in the drive toward professionalization” (p. 207). This drive, he argued, continues Edward Bernays’ attempt to distance public relations from propaganda. The issue, Brown (2006) wrote, is that “if propaganda is not the evil twin of public relations, it is a fly in the ointment” (p. 208).

While the Deatherage and Hazleton (1998) research cited above demonstrated that worldviews are significant predictors of perception of public relations effectiveness, their work also found only mixed support for several excellence theory-related hypotheses as well as the “unexpected finding” that:

The empirical relationship between the worldviews ... was not statistically significant. That is, agreement with a symmetrical worldview did not necessarily predict disagreement with beliefs concerning the asymmetrical worldview ... It may be necessary to recognize in the theory of excellence what has been acknowledged for a long time in the study of persuasion and attitude change. That is, frequently individuals may in fact subscribe to beliefs, attitudes, or values, and exhibit behaviors that are inconsistent on their face ... What we would need to ask in public relations is why and

under what conditions would an organization vary in its adherence to worldviews. (p. 68)

In analyzing their findings, they noted that perhaps press agency and persuasion are not necessarily asymmetrical. “Publicity may in fact be used as an ethical and legitimate means for making publics aware of information” (Deatherage & Hazleton, 1998, p. 69). Their recognition that organizations vary in worldviews in relation to situational factors may be construed as pointing to the same considerations that led Cameron (1997) and his associates to develop a contingency theory of accommodation.

Arguing that the practice of public relations derives from an extensive range of factors including antecedent conditions through current situational opportunities, Cameron (1997) and Cancel et al. (1997) advanced a contingency theory posited on the belief that organizations tend to take an “it depends” stance toward how they respond to various publics. Noting that “it’s time to question the canon of our field that symmetrical communication is widespread, feasible, effective and inherently the most ethical approach,” Cameron (1997, p. 27) advocated a contingency theory that expands on symmetry theory but also identifies factors that qualify its applicability. While terming the four models of public relations advanced by Grunig and others “remarkably robust and sound concepts,” Cancel et al. (1997, p. 38) nevertheless questioned the utility and value of shoehorning what they termed a complex and fluid field into “four boxes known as the four models of public relations. Even worse, to promulgate one of the four boxes as the best and most effective model not only tortures the reality of practicing public relations but has problems, even as normative theory” (p. 33).

Like Leichty and Springston (1993), Cancel et al. (1997) cited the “weak data” (p. 37) supporting the four models. They further questioned symmetry’s focus on accommodative behavior even though some publics might be “morally repugnant” (p. 38) and argued that the four models do not adequately take into consideration power differentials between publics and organizations. Moreover, they cited the potential for confusion caused by excellence theory’s suggestion that public relations practitioners, in combining the two-way symmetrical and asymmetrical models, may serve both as advocates for their organization and an organizational public. Such a suggestion, they wrote, does not take into account competing interests involved in some organization-public conflicts. Overall, the scholars argued that excellence theory “must be elaborated upon and qualified to become a more mature and comprehensive theory, while remaining normative in purpose” (Cameron, Cropp, & Reber, 2001, p. 242).

Drawing on work by such scholars as Hellweg (as cited in Cancel et al., 1997), Murphy (1991)—who had cited the difficulties inherent in pure two-way symmetry and advocated the refinement of “the concept of symmetric communication along less rigorous lines that include shades of behavior along a continuum ranging from conflict to cooperation” (p. 124)—and others, Cancel et al. (1997) developed the contingency theory of accommodation. The theory represents an organization’s response to a public, or stance toward it, as taking place along a continuum from pure accommodation to pure advocacy. “Between advocacy, which means arguing for one’s own case, and accommodation, which means giving in” (Pang, Jin, & Cameron, 2007, p. 8) are a range of organizational stances that reflect varying degrees of advocacy and accommodation in dealing with publics. Cameron (1997) argued that “this continuum is more sensitive and

easier to use in measurement, better to find predictive value of factors that lead to greater or lesser degrees of accommodation. Where you end up on this continuum depends on a welter of factors” (30). While excellence theory tends to prescribe an organization’s stance toward a public, contingency theory:

Holds that identifying excellence is not so simple … We must always ask what is going to be the most effective method at a given time. True excellence in public relations may result from picking the appropriate point along the continuum that best fits the current need of the organization and its publics. (Cancel et al., 1997, p. 35)

Cameron’s contingency theory therefore attempts to “understand the dynamics, within and without the organization, that affect an accommodative stance” (Cameron, Pang, & Jin, 2007, p. 136).

Based on an extensive review of public relations literature, excellence theory, grounded theory, and observations, Cancel et al. (1997) advanced a matrix of more than 80 factors that can affect “the location of an organization on that continuum at a given time regarding a given public” (Cancel, Mitrook, & Cameron, 1999, p. 172). To test the theory, Cancel et al. (1999) conducted interviews with 18 middle- and upper-level public relations practitioners, finding universal agreement among study participants with the advocacy-accommodation continuum. The study refined the categorization of factors, initially divided into internal and external, along temporal lines reflecting what were termed predisposing and situational variables.

Predisposing variables help to shape organizational predisposition toward relationships with publics; “these variables exist before an organization enters into a

situation or interaction with a particular external public” (Cancel et al., 1999, p. 177) and thus position the organization at a particular location along the continuum before a public interaction. Situational variables arise from the actual interaction of the organization with a particular public; these variables “influence how an organization shifts its stance towards an external public as the situation plays out” (p. 177), causing changes in the predisposed stance and therefore the organization’s location on the continuum. Among the predisposing variables found to be well-supported by this research were organizational size, corporate culture, public relations access to the dominant coalition, business exposure, individual characteristics of key involved persons, and dominant coalition decision-making power and enlightenment. Supported situational variables included potential or obvious threats, potential costs or benefits for the organization resulting from choosing various stances, characteristics of the external public, characteristics of the external public’s requests or claims, and urgency of the situation. In addition, the research suggested that the stance of an organization may not move if situational variables are not powerful enough to precipitate a move or if various situational variables cancel the effects of other variables. Cameron et al. (2001) added to this aspect of contingency theory by delineating instances when accommodation is not possible because of “proscriptive variables” (p. 247), including conflicts among multiple publics and legal, moral, or regulatory constraints.

Yarbrough, Cameron, Sallot, and McWilliams (1998) successfully tested “real-world” use of the contingency theory by studying its applicability to conflictive situations arising during the summer 1996 Olympic Games in Atlanta, Georgia. Findings noted that “conflict management is complex and subtle … [and that] effective and ethical public

relations is possible at a range of points on a continuum of accommodation” (Yarbrough et al., 1998, p. 53). Shin and Cameron (2005) studied the sometimes-conflictive views of journalists and public relations practitioners. Reber, Cropp, and Cameron’s (2003) review of the hostile takeover of one corporation by another revealed the need for public relations practitioners to have a seat at the dominant coalition table and, of interest for this research, revealed that the public relations function was partly successful because it was not encroached upon by another unit, in this case the legal department. Continuing to test the theory’s applicability to practice, Mitrook, Parish, and Seltzer (2008) found that the public relations and related programs of a basketball franchise moved along the continuum from advocacy to accommodation within an effort to secure public funding for a new or renovated sports arena. And Pang, Cropp, and Cameron (2006) extended the contingency theory to intra-organizational conflict, analyzing the manner in which such factors as corporate culture, access to the dominant coalition, and enlightenment of the dominant coalition affected a communication department’s efforts to implement a regional crisis master plan.

In the interest of parsimony, Reber and Cameron (2003) tested scales reflecting a construct built on five themes of the 86 variables: external threats and the characteristics of the external public, organization, public relations department, and dominant coalition. With four of the five groupings having strong alphas, the researchers argued that the findings demonstrated “the theoretical soundness of contingency” (Reber & Cameron, 2003, p. 443). They found organizational and external-public characteristics as the most influential situational variables and senior-management characteristics, particularly public relations’ role within the dominant coalition, as playing a pivotal role in public

relations practice. To further the effort at parsimony, Shin, Cameron, and Cropp (2006) quantitatively tested the 86 variables, grouping them into 12 factors on two dimensions, five on external and seven on internal. Among extensive additional research including Shin, Park, and Cameron's (2006) survey that identified all 86 contingent variables as being influential to public relations practice in South Korea, Jim and Cameron (2006) developed a scale that determines the stance of an organization, "operationalized as the degree of accommodation or the willingness of taking accommodations toward publics in varied situations" (p. 424). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses produced a stance scale that grouped ten degrees of accommodation into two types of stance enactment: action-based accommodation, ranging from a yield to the public's demands to agreement to try solutions suggested by the public, and qualified-rhetoric-mixed accommodation, ranging from expressing regret or apologizing to admitting wrongdoing.

Of note in terms of the models included within Kelly's (1991) theoretical conceptualization of fund raising is contingency theory's:

Disentanglement of stance from clusters of strategies and tactics that follow from a given stance. Stance drives strategy and tactics in public relations, but is not synonymous with a style of communication. For example, an organization may decide to be munificent toward a public, using one-way communication to announce a new health plan for workers. One-way communication may be typically associated with manipulation or propagandizing, but in this instance offers information of benefit to a key public. (Cameron et al., 2007, p. 137)

The flexibility of stance provided by contingency theory's continuum may be useful in refining Kelly's theory of donor relations to create understanding of the organization-donor relationship as located along that continuum, while employing the various models of fund raising outlined by Kelly (1991, 2000, 2001) or refined along lines J. E. Grunig (2001) proposed, to build relationships and to communicate with donors based on organizational stance at a given moment.

In response to contingency theory and to the various criticisms of symmetry theory, J. E. Grunig (2001) argued that scholars had inaccurately reconstructed his theory. Symmetrical public relations, he wrote, does not occur in a utopian situation in which "competing interests come together with goodwill to resolve their differences because they share a goal of social equilibrium and harmony. Rather, it takes place where groups come together to protect and enhance their self-interests" (p. 18). In fact, J. E. Grunig (2001) noted that within his new two-way model of public relations, represented by a continuum with a symmetrical win-win zone in the middle and asymmetric positions at either end—one pole for the organizational position, the other for the public's—"the difference between the mixed-motive and two-way symmetrical models disappears. In fact, describing the symmetrical model as a mixed-motive game resolves the criticism that the symmetrical model forces the organization to sacrifice its interests for those of the public" (p. 25). J. E. Grunig (2001) agreed that contingency theory served as "an elaboration of the symmetrical model" (p. 16), though Pang et al. (2007) wrote that contingency theory may have begun as an elaboration and qualification of excellence theory but has, in the decade since, "come into its own, and emerged as an empirically

tested perspective that the complexity in strategic communication could not be reduced to excellence theory's models of excellence" (p. 2).

While advancing complexity theory as a vehicle through which public relations research might build on the uncertainty she argued underlies the field, Murphy (2000) described Cameron's (1997) contingency theory as lying at the "more extreme end of ... uncertainty-based theories" and questioned the feasibility of working with "some seven dozen variables" (p. 449). Yet she also elaborated on the state of accommodation, key concepts within both symmetry and contingency models, by noting that:

Both sides, organizations and publics, make decisions about how accommodative to be, based on a wide range of variables including trivial ones; they make these decisions nonrationally and inconsistently ... as much through instinct or guesswork as through strategy or self-consciousness. Eventually, from this complex process may emerge a stable state in which the demands of both sides achieve balance, comparable to the 'moving equilibrium' of symmetrical public relations.

However, complexity theory views the emergence of a global equilibrium as ... serendipitous .... (p. 451)

Complexity theory's focus on local adaptation, while more a result of uncertain factors, nevertheless bears considerable resemblance to contingency theory's "it depends" position (Cancel et al., 1997).

The relationship management perspective also has its critics. Mackey (2003) underscored issues some researchers have with the uncertain nature of the various dimensions of relationships, but further argued that relationship management may be an

“instrumental procedure … an approach to mapping a multitude of ways public relations may be ‘done’ rather than a way to get to the essence of any normative notion of what public relations ‘is’ or should be” (p. 4), in spite of relationship management scholars’ contention that the focus provides a theoretical underpinning for public relations (Ledingham, 2003). Moreover, Mackey (2003) wrote that relationship management may simply represent reconnection with a “goodwill” aspect of public relations still found in some definitions of the field but dismissed by scholars because “goodwill can serve many purposes, not all of them necessarily ‘symmetrical’” (p. 5).

Chia (2006) claimed that relationship management scholars, while extending “thinking about relationships … failed to provide sufficiently for the constantly varying nature of relationships” (p. 2). Noting that Hon and Grunig (1999) acknowledged the diversity and situational nature of relationships as well as the complexity of the exchanges involved in two- and multi-party exchanges, Chia (2006) argued that relationship management scholars have focused on measuring relational attributes at the expense of coming to terms with the multiple dynamics of relationships. Business relationships, she noted, have similar characteristics to interpersonal ones but can be even more dynamic or complex because of interactions involving individuals and teams or varying levels of management. She noted that:

The contribution of relationship scholarship from psychology and business is one that public relations scholars may have considered but they appear to have diverted their attention to measure and define what is essential to a relationship and what constitutes a relationship … Public relations scholars need guidelines for effective management of relationships even

whey [sic] they may be challenging and difficult. Attempting to measure relationship properties and developing endless lists of relationship qualities is attempting to define and measure the immeasurable, to quantify the subjective and to pin down measurable relational aspects of complex, dynamic relationships. (pp. 10-11)

Recently, however, some relationship management scholars, such as Bruning, Dials, & Shirka (2008), have expanded their focus along what appear to be similar lines, testing the role of dialogue in organization-public relationships. Their quantitative research suggested that “organizations facilitate relationships best through a dialogic process” (p. 29) that requires the organization to engage the public through communication. Following dialogue and the resulting awareness of public needs, the organization must design programs or similar efforts that respond to public expectations. The study’s results also “suggest that the practice of public relations needs to continue exploring techniques for personalizing organization-public interactions. Far too often relationship building activity has adopted a ‘one size fits all’ strategy” (p. 29).

The present research project focused on fund-raising encroachment of public relations, an examination of the organizational structures of public relations and fund raising, and practitioner acceptance of Kelly’s (1991) reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations within a relationship management-based public relations department. However, questions about the public relations models on which Kelly partially based her theory of donor relations or concerns over the nurturing and measurement of relationships were germane to this study, focused on gaining a better understanding of practitioner response to Kelly’s suggestions. The discussion

surrounding excellence models of public relations was of particular interest because Kelly (1991) reconceptualized fund raising along similar models. Of equal note is contingency theory's refinement of excellence theory, on which Kelly (1991, 1998) based much of her groundbreaking work.

### ***Theoretical Framework: Systems, Boundary-Spanning, and Bridging***

The public relations model of relationship management and Kelly's (1991) theory of donor relations represent necessarily broad concepts and incorporate within them a number of theoretical constructs including resource dependence theory—in which relationships form in response to an organizational need for resources (Broom et al., 1997)—norm of reciprocity, social exchange theory, power, role theory, and public relations excellence theory. Of perhaps greatest importance to a study involving the potential intersection of Kelly's theory and organizational structures is systems theory. “Useful components of [this] perspective include its interdisciplinary nature [and] its assumptions about the interconnectedness of the system, its subsystems, and its suprasystem” (L. A. Grunig, 1989).

Kelly (1991) emphasized the importance of this perspective to her theory by noting that “contrary to conventional wisdom … relationships [between charitable organization and donors] are best understood not as benevolent, business, or pseudo relations, but as interdependencies of groups and organizations within an environment” (p. 173). Such interdependencies, she argued, involve an exchange process requiring negotiation and management on the part of the organization. How well the organization manages those interdependencies, a task in this case assumed primarily by its professional fund-raising practitioners, may affect the organization's ability to define and

pursue its goals, a state represented by the concept of organizational autonomy (J. E. Grunig et al., 1992).

Systems theory also has played a pivotal role in the development of the relationship-management perspective, as Broom et al. (1997) pointed out:

Systems theorists base their definitions of systems on the central notion of interdependence or relatedness of elements. Similar to propositions of systems theory, relational communication scholars suggest that mutual adaptation forms the essence of all interpersonal interaction ...

Relationships represent the exchange or transfer of information, energy or resources. Therefore, attributes of those exchanges or transfers represent and define the relationship. At the level of organization-public systems, the attributes of linkages among the participants describe the relationships within the system as well as the structure of the system. (pp. 93-94)

Adding to the conceptual link between relationship management and systems theory, J. E. Grunig et al. (1992) argued that the nature of organization-public relationships is central to the theory of public relations excellence and organizational effectiveness, a framework that grows out of systems theory:

Theorists such as Katz and Kahn [1978] ... turned to an *open-systems* perspective. That perspective recognized that organizations are interdependent with other organizations and groups in their environment. It also recognized that these other systems influence both what goals organizations choose and the extent to which they can meet those goals. (p. 67, italics in original)

As Kelly (1998) succinctly emphasized, “A consequence of open systems is interdependence” (p. 325).

Systems theory adds another important component to the relationship-management model in that some systems theorists believe that relationships can be described in terms of relational attributes independent of the perceptions of the parties involved in the relationship, although many studies have employed concepts of relationships that combine relationship qualities independent of participants with participants’ subjective perceptions (Broom et al., 1997). Seltzer (2006) extended this perspective by adapting an earlier model proposed by Broom and Dozier (as cited in Seltzer, 2006) to advance a coorientational approach to analyze organization-public relationships. This approach, in keeping with the interdependencies described within systems theory, is important “because it suggests that two entities … can hold similar attitudes about an issue of common concern, and yet the relationship between them can still be considered a ‘poor’ relationship (and vice versa)” (p. 12). The nature of the relationship, Seltzer (2006) asserted, “rests on shared meaning” (p. 13). Waters (2007a) similarly advanced and tested a coorientational approach to relationship management.

Dozier and L. A. Grunig (1992) pointed to another intersection between the relational perspective and systems theory, describing the linkage between the two-way asymmetrical and two-way symmetrical models of public relations and an organization’s open-systems orientation, positing, however, that only the symmetrical model advanced within most conceptualizations of relationship management includes the concept of organizational change, involving internal processes or structures, in response to interdependencies with external publics. Acknowledging such interdependencies and,

again, keeping with a two-way relational perspective of public relations, J. E. Grunig (2006) underscored the proposition “that individuals, organizations, and publics should use communication to adjust their ideas and behaviors to those of others rather than to try to control how others think and behave” (p. 156). In line with open-systems theory, public relations contributes to organizational effectiveness through its use of communication to manage relationships with publics, in the process occupying what is termed a boundary-spanning role (J. E. Grunig et al., 1992). In terms of this role, Reber and Cameron (2003) found while developing contingency-theory scales that 50 percent of survey respondents [N=91] strongly agreed that public relations is a bridge-building profession, with many also agreeing that “bridge building is always the best public relations practice” (p. 443). Yet, congruent with contingency theory, respondents also cited instances in which such bridge-building might be prohibited or constrained.

Kelly (1991) expanded on the concept that public relations practitioners straddle the boundary between an organization and interdependent groups in the organization’s environment to posit that fund raisers hold similar roles. Drawing on J. E. Grunig and Hunt’s use of Esman’s typology of the linkages between an organization and specific publics that are critical to its survival (as cited in Kelly, 1991, p. 308)—elaborated as part of the rooting of public relations within systems theory—Kelly (1991) argued that fund raising is equally concerned about linkages with interpenetrating systems because of the potential for interactions that can threaten organizational autonomy.

This concept of the fund raiser in a boundary role, Kelly (1991) wrote, emphasizes the position fund-raising practitioners should occupy in helping to determine if or how much organizational autonomy is lost or gained as a result of the process of

seeking and accepting gifts. Because the excellence model of public relations (J. E. Grunig, 1992) holds that public relations advances organizational effectiveness by identifying the publics in the organization's internal or external environment that may limit or enhance organizational autonomy and therefore its ability to pursue its goals, Kelly (1991) argued within her theory of donor relations that fund raising should be reconceptualized as a specialization of public relations because such a view would also serve to protect or enhance organizational autonomy.

Describing systems theory as the foundation for the conceptual framework she developed for fund raising within her theory of donor relations, Kelly (1998) advanced that systems theory:

Explains how fund raising impacts society, why charitable organizations have the function, and what contribution the function makes to the effectiveness of such organizations. In other words, systems theory provides the 'reason for being' of fund raising and legitimizes the practice. (p. 325)

In this model, donors become an enabling public with resources that the organization needs to be successful; donors in turn look to the organization to which they have contributed for a range of returns, engaging in a social exchange, though one different from the *quid pro quo* of the marketing-based exchange because some of the benefits of the organization-donor exchange "spill over into society" (Kelly, 1991, p. 160).

In studying the use of evaluation of public relations effectiveness as a method to stem encroachment, Laborde (2005) also discussed the intersection between systems theory and public relations excellence, including public relations' role in managing

interdependent relationships. He argued, however, that “systems theory, as applied in a public relations context, has limitations … fail[ing] to account for systems that de-value [sic] communication” (p. 3), such as encroachment. “Yet, excellence theory as applied has limitations—namely, it fails to explain how to maintain public relations’ independence” (p. 1). It can be argued that Dozier and L. A. Grunig (1992), L. A. Grunig (1989), and J. E. Grunig (2006) do address this issue in discussing both vertical and horizontal structures for the public relations department, recommending a flexible, “dynamic horizontal structure” (Dozier & L. A. Grunig, 1992, p. 402) in which public relations may agilely work with other organizational functions, typically in a matrix arrangement, to help those functions build relationships with their stakeholders. In the excellence model, this arrangement is described as tending to engender collaboration rather than competition for resources, which may serve to stem encroachment. J. E. Grunig (2006), in fact, emphasized the importance of structure in keeping public relations from being subordinated to another management function, which “typically result[s] in attention only to the stakeholder category of interest to that function” (p. 160). The result of this subordination typically is asymmetrical communication, which research “has consistently shown is not an effective strategy for cultivating relationships” (p. 160).

Yet “the reality of interdependence means that organizations have relationships with outside stakeholders … whether they want such relationships or not .... Building relationships—managing interdependence—is the substance of public relations” (J. E. Grunig et al., 1992, p. 69). As noted, Ledingham and Bruning (1998) have proposed a definition of what they term the ideal organization-public relationship: “the state that exists between an organization and its key publics that provides economic, social,

political, and/or cultural benefits to all parties involved, and is characterized by mutual positive regard” (p. 62). Ledingham (2003) significantly advanced the relationship management perspective by proposing that it serve as a general theory of public relations. Based on a literature review, he argued that the concept of relationship management is consistent with dominant constructs in the field including systems theory and the two-way symmetrical model of public relations.

Finally, despite the linkages between open-systems theory and both relationship management and the theory of donor relations, Dozier and L. A. Grunig (1992) wrote that organizational dominant coalitions are not likely to change public relations structures simply “to achieve some optimum form suggested by systems theory. The present structure satisfies; it meets the minimum needs of the overall organization” (p. 410). The scholars thus viewed open-systems theory as normative and suggested a number of power-control processes, elaborated within the concepts of environmental scanning, network centrality, and pseudoplanning, with which public relations practitioners can reconsider open-systems theory. The power-control perspective, they argued, takes into consideration that organizational environment and other factors limit the choices of the dominant coalition in terms of organizational structure. Understanding such factors may help practitioners to advance the appropriate structure or gain the power necessary to stem encroachment of public relations or to advance a view of public relations as relationship management, with fund raising as a specialization.

### ***Research Questions***

This exploratory, qualitative study examined whether and how fund-raising encroachment has occurred within various charitable organizations, as well as the

perceived effect of that encroachment. Of corollary interest was how the public relations and fund-raising functions are defined from an organizational perspective, as well as how they are structured administratively. Further, the research investigated how both senior public relations and fund-raising practitioners responded to Kelly's (1998) assertion that fund raising is a specialization of public relations and to the suggestion of relationship management as the basis for a relational-focused public relations department in which fund raising operates as a specialization and is therefore no longer a locus from which encroachment of public relations occurs.

The research expanded on Kelly's early study of public relations practitioners (as cited in Kelly, 1991), which found that "a majority of public relations practitioners believe an equal, cooperative, but separate relationship with fund raising is the ideal" (p. 332). In that view, they concurred with Cutlip (as cited in Kelly, 1991) who advocated a "separate-but-equal" structure for the two functions (p. 336). Because organizational structure can play a role in public relations' autonomy and encroachment of its function (see, e.g., the discussion in Bowen, 2006), the study sought to understand whether public relations and fund-raising practitioners would proffer cautions about a structural alignment or suggest alternative methods by which to stem encroachment. A goal was to learn whether public relations practitioners agreed with Kelly (1994) that "encroachment on the fund-raising function by public relations may be the only complete defense to fund-raising encroachment" (p. 21)

Finally, despite findings that the relationship management model offers the ability to measure perceptions of the organization-public relationship as well as changes within it (Hon & J. E. Grunig, 1999), that personal relationships with organizations are highly

associated with publics' evaluation of satisfaction (e.g., Bruning & Ledingham, 2000; Bruning, Dials, & Shirka, 2008), and that the model might provide a framework from which to practice both public relations and fund raising (Kelly, 1998, 2000), questions remained over practitioner knowledge of or willingness to adopt the model.

The following broad research questions were therefore posed:

**RQ1:** *Has fund-raising encroachment occurred and what concerns, if any, does it or its potential to occur raise among both public relations and fund-raising practitioners?*

**RQ2:** *What organizational structure, if any, do public relations and fund-raising practitioners believe represents the “ideal” for public relations and fund raising, particularly in terms of protecting against encroachment?*

**RQ3:** *In what ways do public relations and fund-raising practitioners accept or not accept the postulate that fund raising is a specialization of public relations?*

**RQ4:** *In what ways, if any, do public relations and fund-raising practitioners believe relationship management offers a theoretical underpinning for a public relations practice in which fund raising is reconceptualized as a specialization of public relations?*

**RQ5:** *How do recent elaborations to public relations excellence theory, such as contingency theory, offer a refinement of the theory of donor relations, largely based on the excellence model?*

**RQ6:** *What are the characteristics or professional training practitioners believe are needed by leadership of a relationship-focused public relations department that includes fund raising as a specialization?*

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **Methodology**

#### ***Depth Interviews***

The method chosen for this research was the semi-structured depth interview. This approach was selected because of its ability to take into consideration varying perspectives on a specific topic. Newcomb (1991) advised that multiple interviews can be employed to increase the amount of information obtained as well as to broaden points of view, adding that depth interviews can serve as “heuristic devices” (p. 101) that not only provide additional information and broaden perspectives, but also create new questions for additional research participants while providing data that may be used for historical comparisons should interview subjects be involved in later, related research. Such openness to additional information and questions informed the interview process employed in this research, as initial interviews helped to fine-tune later questions or deepen areas of inquiry to gain more understanding in particularly pertinent areas, such as the proposed reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations. Moreover, as Hung (2005) noted in citing Patton, “qualitative studies are especially suited for purposeful sampling in that researchers are able to select information-rich cases that will fully inform the questions under study. Therefore the size and selection of specific cases depend on the study’s purpose” (p. 402).

These facets of the depth interview underscore “what is perhaps the interview technique’s greatest strength—the gathering of more comprehensive information than might be possible in participant observation” (Newcomb, 1991, p. 101). Berger (1998) emphasized that through depth interviews the researcher often obtains “unexpected

information that other forms of research might not discover” (p. 57), although he also referenced the sometimes-daunting challenge of dealing with the amount of information such interviews can produce. The depth interview offers an appropriate method through which to gain a more nuanced understanding of the intersection between fund raising and public relations, an intersection Kelly (1991) proposed be more deeply explored.

Although they expressed reservations about the universal applicability of the typology, Jankowski and Wester (1991) cited Zelditch and Denzin as providing a useful correlation of data-collection techniques with types of information. In that typology, interviewing is generally considered an “efficient and best form” for conducting research on “institutionalized norms and statuses” (p. 60). Referencing research that shows a discrepancy between data gained through interviews and related behavior observed through participant observation, they argued for triangulation or, at least, careful matching of the research methodology with each research project in terms of subject and the inquiry’s purpose. Because this research involved organizations spread across the United States and focused on organizational structure, perceptions of organizational role, and encroachment, as well as opinions on theoretical models related to interaction of public relations and fund raising, participant observation was not practical, nor ideally suited to developing the type of understanding sought.

To that end, Pauly (1991) emphasized that qualitative research focused on symbolic persons or events “clears a space in which the researcher can tell his or her story” (p. 12). Qualitative researchers “justify this procedure by noting that humans’ workaday sense of ‘the typical’ is literary rather than mathematical” (Pauly, 1991, p. 2). Similarly, the participant-selection process Holtzhausen and Voto (2002) used for depth

interviews was undertaken “merely to ensure equal representation of practitioner voices, and not for the conventional postpositivist benchmark of rigor” (p. 64). This approach meshed with Pauly’s (1991) contention that “quantitative research guarantees the probable validity of its results by choosing a sample that adequately stands for some larger population. For the qualitative researcher, ‘representativeness’ is itself a discourse” (p. 12).

Depth interviews also function well “to understand the complex behavior of members of society without imposing any *a prior* categorization that may limit the field of inquiry” (Fontana & Frey, 1994, p. 366). Qualitative research, Hung (2005) noted in citing Rubin and Rubin and Gubrium and Holstein, “is a way to find out what others feel and think about their world” (p. 400). More to the point of the present research, Creswell (2003) wrote that “qualitative research studies appear as broad, panoramic views rather than micro-analyses” (p. 182). Newcomb’s (1991) suggestion of an explanatory framework including such delineations as organizational structures and group and individual dynamics provided a useful overview for considering data from interviews of senior fund-raising and public relations practitioners, who tend to represent divergent worldviews as well as extent of knowledge of and theoretical grounding in modes of organization-public relationship-building or public relations models (Kelly, 1991).

Gaining a better understanding of such views and perceptions is in keeping with the aims of qualitative research. Practitioners of qualitative research, as Pauly (1991) elaborated, are quick to emphasize that “meaning, rather than effects, influences, functions, or information, is *the* fundamental problem of communication” (p. 2). Based on assumptions derived from the contention that the goal of this research was to uncover

the manner in which meaning is constructed relative to the strategic roles of public relations and fund raising, research attention should focus on “how groups use cultural artifacts to assert and sustain a version of reality, articulate and celebrate a sense of identity, and disguise or flaunt styles of domination or control” (Pauly, 1991, p. 3). With power playing a role in encroachment (Lauzen, 1990), uncovering these versions of reality and identity becomes particularly important. This approach also aligns with the goals of qualitative studies as Geertz (1973) emphasized in his “thick description” essays: “Analysis, then, is sorting out the structures of signification … and determining their social ground and import” (p. 9).

Quantitative research has been conducted on relationship management (e.g., Ledingham & Bruning, 1998) and on encroachment of public relations (e.g., Kelly, 1994; Lauzen, 1992a, 1992b), elucidating several reasons encroachment occurs, including manager role-enactment, imperialism by another organizational unit, organizational structure, gender, and perception of the public relations unit or function by senior managers. In addition, early qualitative research (e.g., as cited in Kelly, 1991; Lauzen, 1990) was undertaken to determine extent of encroachment or to lay the groundwork for more extensive quantitative surveys.

More research was needed, however, to determine if public relations practitioners, especially in light of the earlier findings and related recommendations that might be used to end encroachment, still face encroachment of their function. Should that be the case, additional research could help to explicate more fully or at least for a wider range of charitable organizations the reasons public relations practitioners continue to face fund-raising encroachment or why they “permit” fund-raising executives to perceive public

relations as a supportive, technical function existing primarily to serve the donor population as opposed to a strategic management function focused on relationships with all organizational publics. More importantly, there was little, if any, research on whether knowledge, understanding, acceptance, or utilization of the relationship-management paradigm by public relations and fund-raising practitioners might serve to stem fund-raising encroachment of public relations by shifting worldviews and perspectives toward a public relations function focused on overall management of all organization-public relationships, including those involving donors. Finally, Kelly's (1991) suggestion of an introspective study of the structural relationships between public relations and fund raising and of practitioner acceptance of the model proposed by her theory of donor relations called for qualitative research.

### *Sample*

Participants for this research were chosen from among public relations and fund-raising practitioners in the range of charitable organizations that comprise Lutheran Services in America (or LSA), one of the larger non-profit social service networks in the United States. A survey of LSA members, which had a 52 percent response rate and provided data for 2002, revealed that annual revenues of respondent member organizations were \$8.2 billion, with revenue total for all members estimated at \$10.8 billion (Dale, 2004). By contrast, a more recent listing of “top 100” non-profit organizations in the United States showed no entry as having annual income, ranked for 2005, higher than that figure (Hrywna, 2006). Jill Schumann, president/CEO of Lutheran Services in America, however, cautioned that such comparisons are of “apples to oranges” and that some other non-profit groups, if linked similarly, would present larger

figures (J. Schumann, personal communication, February 18, 2008). Nevertheless, the LSA network represents one of the more significant providers of charitable health care and social services in the United States.

Based in Baltimore, Maryland, Lutheran Services in America provides a networking function as well as several administrative and policy-related services to nearly 300 independent, though Lutheran-affiliated, health care and social service organizations located throughout the United States and the Caribbean. LSA-member organizations provide services including hospitals; hospice and nursing care; disaster response; senior living accommodations; advocacy; and programs for children and families such as counseling, foster care, and adoption. These organizations represent an important range of charitable non-profits in that they vary in size and scope from single-service organizations working in one community to national groups operating multiple and sophisticated health-care services such as rehabilitation and long-term care facilities and hospitals. According to its Web site ([www.lutheranservices.org/AboutLSA.asp](http://www.lutheranservices.org/AboutLSA.asp)), the network annually serves more than one in 50 persons within its national service territory. LSA-member organizations share characteristics similar to those of charitable non-profits nationwide in responding to fiscal and other issues, as identified by a Johns Hopkins Center of Civil Social Studies report as part of its Non-Profit Listening Post Project (Salamon & Geller, 2007). Identified common issues include charitable fund raising in the face of shrinking budgets to meet human-service needs, staff recruitment and retention, marketing to generate fee income, the need for capital investment, and the ability to adopt new technologies to improve service delivery (Salamon & Geller, 2007; Schumann, 2007).

Charitable health-care and social service organizations were selected for this study because such organizations typically depend on fund raising to help underwrite the amount of benevolent care provided to clients and because the public relations function within such organizations may be susceptible to convergence with or encroachment by other disciplines, particularly fund raising, as a result of the institutions' funding streams and reliance on external sources of funding, often donors (Kelly, 1991). In addition, these types of charitable organizations were selected because many previous studies concerning encroachment of public relations have focused on the for-profit sector (e.g., Laborde, 2005; Lauzen, 1992a, 1992b) or, in the case of fund-raising encroachment of public relations, on educational and cultural institutions, such as Kelly's PRSA-member study (as cited in Kelly, 1991), though other studies of non-profit organizations (Kelly, 1993b, 1994) included human-service organizations among respondents. Further, it has been 15 years since Kelly's seminal work on fund-raising encroachment of public relations; a question arises of how changes in either field since then may have increased or decreased the incidence of fund-raising encroachment or affected organizational structures related to both public relations and fund-raising units.

The LSA subset of charitable organizations was chosen for several reasons. Because this research focused only on the LSA population and was qualitative in nature, results cannot be generalized to charitable organizations in total. However, because of the diversity of the LSA-member organizations, study results can be used to posit directions for future, additional research on the interaction between public relations and fund raising within charitable institutions, particularly around the use of relationship management and its potential impact on fund-raising encroachment. The membership role of the LSA

Communicators Network indicates many of its organizations maintain both public relations and fund-raising operations, which made them ideal candidates for study. In addition, the scope of the national network provided variety in terms of geographic breadth, service scope, organizational size, and program focus, appropriate for a comprehensive study (Dale, 2004). Further, the researcher's 30 years of experience with and employment by a member organization provided ready access to public relations and fund-raising officials within the LSA network and an awareness of the issues these charitable organizations face, including fund-raising encroachment of public relations. This access and knowledge helped to inform the quality of the interview process, although this knowledge, it could be argued, increased the potential for reflexivity. That possibility was acknowledged by the researcher and is reported in more detail below.

### ***Discussion Guide Development***

The discussion guide was developed to focus on several broad areas related to organizational structure, models of practice including excellence and contingency theories, fund-raising encroachment of public relations, relationship management, and Kelly's (1991, 1998) theory of donor relations, including its proposed reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations. Although following a predetermined sequence of broad questions, the discussion guide was developed in such a way as to allow the researcher and participants to explore various areas of inquiry as required by responses to specific questions. Probes were included as part of the discussion guide, but numerous questions not on the guide arose during the interview process and were asked. At times, this process provided for a more "dialogic" approach (as cited in Holtzhausen & Voto, 2002) to the interview and greater depth of findings.

The discussion guide was pre-tested with two public relations practitioners not included in the sample and minor adjustments made. The same questions, though worded slightly differently to reflect participants' primary organizational responsibilities, were asked of both fund-raising and public relations practitioners. In cases in which other researchers had developed indices of an item or practice under study, these indices were included in the discussion guide, although sometimes rewritten for clarity, important in helping to translate theory to practitioners often unaccustomed to the academic terminology. As such, questions within the discussion guide drew from prior research as found in Broom and Smith (1979), Dozier (1998), Ferguson (1984), J. E. Grunig and Hunt (1984), Hon and J. E. Grunig (1999), Kelly (1991, 1994, 1995a, 1998), and Lauzen (1990, 1991, 1992a, 1992b). The following broad topics informed development of the discussion guide (see Appendix for the complete discussion guide) and provided the framework for the interviews:

- To whom do the senior public relations and fund-raising practitioners report?
- How are the public relations and fund-raising departments administratively structured and how do they interact?
- Has senior management ever promoted an individual from a profession other than public relations, moved an individual laterally from a department other than public relations, or hired an individual from a profession other than public relations, to manage the public relations department?
- What role—technician or manager—does the senior public relations practitioner enact?
- Does the organization place more importance on one public over another?

- Does the organization define success in fund raising primarily in terms of total dollars raised or in terms of the development and maintenance of relationships?
- How is public relations defined and how is its role in terms of fund raising defined?
- Under which model(s) (as defined by J. E. Grunig and Hunt [1984] and refined by Kelly [1991]) do senior practitioners believe the public relations and fund-raising departments operate?
- Does excellence theory or contingency theory seem to pose a more effective theoretical underpinning and, potentially, a more accurate representation of practice, for the relationship management department suggested by the theory of donor relations?
- Are relationships defined as the primary unit of analysis in evaluating the effectiveness of organizational public relations programs? Of fund-raising programs? In what ways? Moreover, do practitioners have an understanding of the relational paradigm?
- Do senior practitioners believe fund raising is a specialization of public relations? If so, why? If not, why?
- Does a relationship-management model of practice provide a framework for the restructuring of fund raising as a specialization of public relations? In what ways?
- What effects do practitioners in both fields believe a reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations would have on their

operations and would such a reconceptualization be “acceptable,” as Kelly (1991) suggested it may not be?

- Do practitioners believe there are ways to stem fund-raising encroachment of public relations other than, as Kelly (1994) proposed, “public relations encroachment” on fund raising through reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations?

Responses to questions developed to address these topics, along with a range of probes both within the discussion guide and suggested by participant statements, provided the primary units of analysis from which the results of this study were drawn, including directions for potential future research.

### ***Interview Procedure***

Interviews were conducted with 16 senior fund-raising and public relations practitioners from member-organizations of the Lutheran Services in America network. Eight of the participants were the most senior public relations practitioner within their organization; eight were the most senior fund-raising practitioner. Each participant self-identified as the most senior practitioner within his or her organization; all but one have more than five years of practice in their respective fields, many with more than 15 years’ experience. A number of the practitioners are certified or accredited within their respective fields, CFRE for Certified Fund Raising Executive and APR for Accredited in Public Relations. Titles of participants included vice president, director, executive director, and chief development officer; no one with a title below the organizational level of director was asked to participate. To obtain the widest breadth of diversity among participants in terms of organization size and geographic location, the 16 practitioners

represented 16 different organizations from nearly all regions of the United States with the exception of the Far West, the result of locations of size-appropriate LSA-member organizations.

Participants were recruited in two ways. A message was placed on the LSA Communicators Network electronic bulletin board explaining the research and seeking voluntary participants. Perhaps because the network involves a limited number of communications professionals within LSA, only one initial response was received. A senior fund-raising practitioner responded to the advertisement, expressing interest in the subject and in participating in the research; he later withdrew because of time constraints. All other participants were recruited by e-mail and follow-up telephone calls that explained the purpose of the research, its confidential nature, interview requirements, and timeline. All but one person, who was going to be out of town during the interview period but expressed interest in the project, contacted in this manner agreed to participate in the research. (See Table 1 for participant demographics.)

Potential participants were selected for contact based on the researcher's desire to represent both geographic and, to the extent possible, organization-size diversity within the study, although one criterion was that the organizations selected had to be sufficiently large to have both public relations and fund-raising practitioners. Participants represented organizations with regional (that is, an area within a single state or portions of two or more adjoining states), statewide, multi-state (that is, contiguous states), and national service territories (that is, having services in many states spread across the United States). Organizational services ranged from programs for those with disabilities and a variety of services for children and families, including foster care and adoption, through senior

living accommodations, health care, in-home services, ministries to prisoners and their families, disaster response, and programs for refugees and immigrants. The size of participants' organizations, measured in terms of annual budgets, ranged from \$7 million to \$284 million. Annually, the organizations serve from 1,000 persons to more than 100,000 persons.

<Insert Table 1 about here>

To assist in the recruitment process, the communications director for Lutheran Services in America provided lists of both public relations and fund-raising practitioners within LSA-member organizations. Titles on the list were used to narrow potential participants to the most senior practitioners; organizational Web sites were then studied to determine whether the organization had both functions. It was not possible through these reviews to determine the organizational structure of public relations and fund raising, important so as not to bias the research through selection of only organizations that had combined departments, an indicator of fund-raising encroachment. While three participants were recruited based on personal knowledge of them by the researcher, a member of the LSA Communicators Network, or because they had expressed interest in the subject during informal discussions at an LSA Communicators Network meeting in Baltimore in 2006, the researcher had no knowledge of their particular organizations' public relations and fund-raising structures.

Explanatory e-mails were sent to participants, along with a research consent form, which each participant was asked to sign. The focus of the research also was reviewed during initial telephone contact and additional information provided as requested. All participants were guaranteed anonymity. Because participants were spread across many

regions of the United States, all interviews were conducted by telephone and, with participants' permission, were recorded. Each interview lasted between one and two hours, with the majority taking just slightly more than one hour. Follow-up e-mails were sent to and responses received from three participants to confirm a response, seek clarification or expansion of an answer to a particular question, or to gain additional demographic data.

### ***Analysis of Findings***

The recorded interviews were transcribed, with the qualitative data collected in the form of the interview transcripts. Answers to closed-ended questions were recorded on spreadsheets, tabulated, and percentages calculated. Other data were analyzed using the constant comparative technique as described by Wimmer and Dominick (2003). This four-step process involves assignment of units of analysis to provisional categories, refinement or elaboration of those categories, and the uncovering of themes and relationships among the various categories. Finally, data are simplified and integrated into a potential theoretical structure. Data from answers to the open-ended questions specifically related to the primary RQs were grouped under that question. Each unit was then analyzed to highlight recurring themes or sub-themes and recorded to note cards, which were then grouped and in some cases recorded to a spreadsheet, again related to the RQ. This arrangement helped the researcher to view patterns within overall responses and to juxtapose those themes with several of the related closed-ended question. For example, as past research has demonstrated, did the data seem to show that technician role-enactment by the senior public relations practitioner was more prevalent in those situations in which the senior fund-raising practitioner expressed lack of acceptance of

the proposed reconfiguration of fund raising as a specialization of public relations?

Careful attention was paid to record data separately for public relations and fund-raising practitioners so that conclusions might be drawn regarding the two groups. The comparative process began after the first several interviews were completed; findings from each new interview were then compared as analyses continued.

### ***Reflexivity***

Because qualitative researchers believe they can never completely separate themselves from their own culture, background, and resulting assumptions (Jensen & Jankowski, 1991), the present researcher's background and experiences, as well as possible effects on the study, need to be disclosed. As a 30-year public relations practitioner who has worked several times within offices headed by fund-raising practitioners as well as within a separate-but-equal department structure, the researcher has experienced a successfully integrated operation, fund-raising encroachment of public relations, and a separate-but-equal structure.

While it can be argued that these experiences could affect the researcher's interpretation of fund-raising encroachment or information obtained through the interviews, it was also this experience that prompted initial interest in definitions of public relations as well as the theoretical foundations for fund raising and fund-raising encroachment of public relations. The researcher used both open- and closed-ended questions to obtain data, the latter of which provided information on fund-raising encroachment that required no interpretation. Further, the researcher continually re-evaluated any personal interpretations during data analysis and worked diligently to be aware of his perspective. Finally, a member check was utilized with three of those

interviewed to validate information reported and recorded in the interview transcriptions as well as later interpretation of data.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **Findings**

Analysis of the interview transcripts uncovered a number of themes related to the six research questions. An overarching theme was delineated as the dichotomy between practitioners' desire to collaborate for organizational success and concern among them and dominant-coalition members over the recognized effects of encroachment of public relations. Sub-themes, and units of analysis, included organizational hierarchy, organizational power, dominant-coalition inclusion, definitions of public relations success, definitions of fund-raising success, fund-raising models, public relations models, role enactment, and structural placement of public relations within the organization. The three additional major themes were conceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations, perceptions of public relations, and the bridge from theory to practice. Sub-theme units of analysis included resource constraints, practitioner acceptance of fund-raising reconceptualization, relationship focus, and public relations knowledge.

Findings are described below, grouped by research-question topic.

#### ***Fund-Raising Encroachment***

As noted above, Kelly's (1994) quantitative research on charitable organizations found fund-raising encroachment in 23% of the organizations studied (N=175), with an additional number (13%) encroached by another function. An earlier qualitative study of cultural and educational non-profit organizations (as cited in Kelly, 1993b) had "documented the subordination of public relations in an alarming proportion of those organizations" (Kelly, 1994, p. 2), calculated at 40% of the respondent organizations (N=184). An additional qualitative study, in this case of 19 charitable organizations in

two states, documented fund-raising encroachment of public relations in 37% of the participating organizations (as cited in Kelly, 1994). Aimed at updating those findings, the present study found just slightly under one-third (31%) of the participating organizations demonstrating fund-raising encroachment of public relations. Of the 16 participant organizations, five reported a structure defined as fund-raising encroachment—that is, the public relations function was a subordinate office within a larger fund-raising department and was overseen by the senior manager of fund raising, in all cases a person whose primary role is fund raising. Because it was qualitative in nature, the present research is best compared with Kelly's qualitative study of 19 charitable organizations rather than the larger quantitative sample. While the present findings represent a slight decrease from Kelly's figure, the rate of encroachment tends to indicate that fund-raising encroachment remains an issue for the public relations field.

Only one organization reported a structure in which the fund-raising function operated within an overall public relations department, although that structure had changed several years ago when fund raising was moved into a separate-but-equal department. The senior public relations practitioner in that organization explained the impetus for the change:

The director of fund raising made a plea [to the CEO] that she felt that to help with her donors, she really needed that direct line to the CEO to help cultivate those higher-end donors ... that position always had ... that line, but it may have been more of a personal, 'I feel my role is important enough to report directly to the CEO.' I think that's what it came down to.

The public relations practitioner noted, however, that the structure was being reviewed with a possibility of placing the fund-raising function back within the public relations office. “We’re looking at it again … because of that … speaking-with-one-voice concern,” she said. If that structure is re-established, the organization would be the only one among the 16 participating organizations in which fund raising is structurally positioned and administered as a specialization of public relations. At this time, however, it is one of the 11 organizations in the sample having separate-but-equal structures.

In addition, 11 of the 16 participating organizations reported fund-raising encroachment of public relations had occurred in the past. Two primary reasons were given for the change to the current separate-but-equal status for the two functions, indicating that existing structures could easily change again, presenting the potential for a sudden increase in fund-raising encroachment of public relations. The interrelated reasons involved a broadened focus for public relations and a desire not to have public relations goals totally subordinated to those of fund raising. Both reasons, however, were reported as arising from the personally held perceptions or beliefs of the organizations’ CEO or other members of the dominant coalition, factors that could change as leadership changes. For example, one organization’s senior fund-raising practitioner, who oversees an organizationally related foundation, said that:

When I came here 10 years ago, communications … reported to the foundation and was supervised by my predecessor, the vice president for philanthropy … When I assumed this position … we talked about it and decided at that point it would be better to have that position be reporting to someone else so that it would be in a sense a more corporate emphasis, so

it would not be seen totally as fund raising or interpreted totally as fund raising.

Similarly, a senior public relations practitioner, who previously reported to fund raising and therefore experienced encroachment, said that the change to separate departments for public relations and fund raising arose as the result of her “increasing responsibilities in the marketing and communications pieces that were independent of advancement.”

Reflecting the vagaries of organizational structure, another public relations practitioner, who also until recently had reported to her organization’s senior fund-raising manager and therefore experienced encroachment, was transitioned structurally to report to another administrator simply as part of training for that senior executive.

Other structural changes stemmed from decisions made by the CEO. One senior public relations practitioner reported that public relations and fund raising:

Were under a single administrative silo .... When [a new] CEO came in ... he emphasized that he really wanted the two—the communications and development areas—separate ... in a nutshell, it boiled down to the fact that if ... they were under one unit ... he felt the trend would be that eventually all communications would become development communications and he wanted a broader view.

The same practitioner noted that a subsequent CEO within his organization also favored the separate-but-equal structure for the same reason. Another public relations practitioner reported that fund-raising encroachment in her organization ended when the senior fund-raising practitioner left and organizational senior leadership placed the public relations department under the chief operating officer. “I honestly think it works better this way,”

she said, “because we … have so many needs to serve that it would not make sense to fall under fund raising because our scope is so much bigger.” Yet another public relations practitioner emphasized the role the CEO can play in whether fund-raising encroachment of public relations occurs. When a new CEO joined her organization, she said:

He changed the function to two—director of development and director of church and public relations—because he could see … things weren’t getting done in communications … simply because the emphasis tended to go toward development—and that’s a necessity, certainly—but he felt that by putting them into two different areas, that would enhance both parts.

The potential issues with such changes occurring as the result of CEO decision were underscored by the practitioner who had gained a separate department as the result of her increasing responsibilities. If a new CEO joined the organization and emphasized donors over all other organizational publics, “and said, for example, ‘I want our newsletter to be much more fund raising-focused than it is,’ then I would salute and say how high do you want me to jump, because she’s the boss.” Structural changes that occur primarily as the result of CEO decisions underscore the potential instability of the separate-but-equal structure as a method for eliminating fund-raising encroachment of public relations.

Several factors identified in prior studies as contributing to or occurring as the result of encroachment of public relations (see, e.g., Lauzen, 1990, 1991, 1992a, 1992b; Kelly, 1993a, 1993b, 1994) were also found within the present study. All but one of the 16 participating organizations’ senior fund-raising practitioners report directly to their organizations’ president/CEO; the sole exception works for an organization in which both the senior fund-raising and public relations practitioners report to a vice president whose

primary focus is mission integration but who is neither a fund raising nor a public relations practitioner. By contrast, six of the 16 organizations' public relations practitioners report directly to the president/CEO. Twelve of the 16 organizations' senior fund-raising executives are included in the organizational dominant coalition, with a thirteenth fund-raising practitioner included "occasionally ... for certain committee meetings." Further, in all three remaining organizations, the administrative structure is such that the senior public relations practitioner also is excluded from dominant-coalition participation, so in those cases neither the fund-raising practitioner nor the public relations practitioner is part of the dominant coalition. In just six of the 16 organizations is the senior public relations practitioner a member of the dominant coalition. This number indicates that even in some situations in which the public relations department has not been encroached by fund raising, the senior public relations practitioner lacks a seat at the "decision-making table."

Finally, in each of the five organizations in which fund-raising encroachment of public relations is occurring, the senior public relations practitioner enacts the technician role; this information was obtained by self-report or perception of the fund-raising executive in those organizations in which the senior public relations practitioner was not interviewed. In just five of the 16 organizations does the senior public relations practitioner enact primarily the manager role, indicative perhaps of the smaller public relations departments that exist within many charitable organizations; only two of the 16 organizations have public relations departments with more than four staff members and those two departments have extended responsibilities for production of service-related training materials and direct sales of senior living accommodations.

### ***The Structural Relationship***

Senior fund-raising and public relations practitioners were of mixed opinion on whether there is an “ideal” or preferred organizational structure for public relations and fund raising and what that structure might be. In response to whether he thought an ideal model existed, one of the participating fund-raising practitioners said:

Here’s one of my closely held beliefs—that there’s always more than one way to do something right. I think there are a lot of different organizational structures that would work well if you have people that are cooperative and collegial in their relationships. Our organization [which has separate-but-equal public relations and fund-raising departments] works quite well, in my opinion, and if I ran the world, I probably would not change it. But I’ll acknowledge that there are other ways that other organizations do it and perhaps equally as well.

Only one of the eight participating fund-raising practitioners strongly advocated a combined unit in which public relations is subordinate to the fund-raising function, despite fund-raising practitioners’ consistent statements that one of the goals of public relations is to serve in a supportive role to fund raising. Two of the eight public relations practitioners, one of whom works within an encroached public relations office, expressed some preference for an integrated department, though not strongly. Only one of the 16 practitioners, a public relations executive, identified without prompting the model advanced by Kelly’s (1991, 1998) theory of donor relations, in which fund-raising is a specialization of a larger public relations department. Explained the details of that model, however, six of the eight fund-raising practitioners expressed varying levels of support

for it, discussed more fully below in the section detailing responses to Kelly's (1991) claim that fund raising is a specialization of public relations.

A fund-raising practitioner with nearly 20 years of experience outlined the uncertainty with which some of the practitioners approach the structural relationship between the two functions:

I go back and forth ... I would suppose that, if there were an ideal situation, it would be one where the two departments are separate, however with a very, very strong connection between the two. You cannot, *cannot*, do fund raising without the marketing communications. And I think that communications always should carry the fund-raising piece. And what I mean by that—there should not be asks, direct asks or solicitations, in every piece. But certainly I think there should be a comment any time there is a general statement about the organization, the services we provide ... about benevolent care and the role that benevolent care plays in our ministries.

Echoing that uncertainty, another of the fund-raising practitioners said that she prefers an integrated unit so that the two functions communicate more readily, yet she added that “I don’t think that one being on top of the other is really ideal ... I think if one were to be the parent, so to speak, of the other, I don’t think that it would be as effective for either.” Emphasizing the importance of having both functions well represented in the dominant coalition, another senior fund raiser noted that “the person in charge of marketing and public affairs/public relations is my peer ... and that seems to work just fine.”

Although Kelly (1991, 1998) had advanced several cautions regarding a separate-but-equal structure for fund raising and public relations, a structure that allows for the potential of future fund-raising encroachment of public relations and does not reposition the two functions in an overall relational paradigm, there was strong support (75%) among the fund-raising practitioners and nearly as strong support (62%) among the public relations practitioners for the separate-but-equal structure. Based on the need for the organization to have “communications and marketing … savvy,” one fund-raising practitioner said that:

The ideal situation would be to have PR/communications/marketing, that whole communications piece, as a separate entity that would be equal to, on the same level as, senior fund-raising. So it would be someone at the table … with resources under that senior decision-maker.

Another fund-raising practitioner who strongly supported separate-but-equal public relations and fund-raising departments did so with a caveat, reflected in her current organizational structure. Although her organization has separate departments, the fund-raising staff includes a communications professional dedicated specifically to support fund-raising efforts, although with a dotted-line relationship to the communications office. In reflecting on this structure, the fund-raising executive said that:

I think that our structure is really ideal. We not only have somebody who is integrally involved in the PR and communication and marketing issues around advancement and how we need to listen to whatever story might be shared about a consumer and figure out how a donor might relate to that story and then want to be a part of that story, but yet I think you also then

gain a lot by having a separate communication department that's looking at the overarching needs of an organization because I think what can happen and what probably does happen at some agencies is you either spend your time and energy and effort worrying about that overarching communication story with so many different audiences that are listening or you have that targeted just towards donors and stakeholders and you might lose track of where your priorities are.

In addition, she said the structure had the effect of reducing the amount of technical support required of the communications office by the fund-raising department, allowing the public relations function to devote more resources to service programs and strategic initiatives. Conversely, a public relations executive reported that his office recently had hired a staff member exclusively to support the fund-raising department. “The communications aspects of development—in other words, if there are brochures to be done, online giving, any of the communications aspects, those do come through the communications department,” he said. “But other than that, the two functions are separate.”

One of the public relations practitioners captured the thoughts of four of the other participating communications executives on organizational structure when she said that:

I think it's better separate but equal ... From my past experience, I definitely do not think that public relations should fall under fund raising [because] ... priorities continue to ... [focus on] development—and obviously in a not-for-profit, that's still important—but other things

couldn't get done because of timing issues or whatever ... Based on my experience, I would not have it that way.

The manner in which public relations has historically supported fund raising through tactical efforts including publications, Web sites, and direct mail underlay the connection three of the public relations practitioners described with fund raising. That connection prompted one public relations practitioner, who provides a high level of technical support to fund raising, initially to express, but then reconsider, support for an integrated unit:

I think that it would be very harmful to the organization to have them [not be interrelated] ... I think the fact that we're separate is just because of the way [our organization] has evolved ... Were I to leave ... my recommendation might be that they hire a director of public relations ... who reports to the advancement VP, although now that I say that I don't think I *would* do that. I think that the person in my position, regardless of the title, should report to the CEO. I think that's important. I think that was an improvement in my job situation, to have some greater independence and autonomy; it gave me more decision-making ability. It also helped me with the field, to not always be perceived as an arm of the advancement office ... [and to] be seen as somebody who is more a resource to them.

She elaborated that because of a primary focus on seeking contributions, the fund-raising function was not always viewed by program staff members as a resource to them in doing their jobs, even though fund raising sought financial support for those same programs. As a result of their assistance with editing, publication and Web production, and relationship

cultivation with various audiences, public relations staff members, she said, were viewed as more of a resource. Reflecting somewhat similar issues, another public relations practitioner, operating within an encroached department, said an earlier separation of the public relations and fund-raising functions into two departments had occurred because:

There was a feeling out in the field, especially among the pastors, that the only time they ever heard from us was when we wanted money ... there was a general impression that all communications efforts were geared around raising money. And there was much more to the organization than that and we needed to get the word out about who we are and what we do.

A subsequent CEO, however, placed public relations back under fund raising within that organization.

Of the five practitioners (31%)—two in fund raising and three in public relations—who did not recommend the separate-but-equal structure, two—one from each field—offered no opinion on organizational structure beyond a need for the two functions to collaborate on strategy. A public relations practitioner preferred an integrated office without specifying organizational hierarchy because in prior employment she had experienced separate offices that did not collaborate strategically. “We can’t work at cross-purposes,” she said. The other two senior practitioners—one from each field—also preferred integrated departments, but with opposite hierarchies. The fund-raising practitioner strongly believed that public relations serves as a supportive function to fund raising and belongs within the fund-raising department, while the public relations practitioner advocated a model similar to that advanced by Kelly’s theory of donor relations, in which fund raising operates as a specialization of public relations.

While the fund-raising practitioner did not cite a model she believes is “ideal,” she said that:

I think the fund raising function has to have oversight of certain communications aspects of the organization and if I had to either give it up totally or supervise it, I would choose to supervise it … In my experience, the public relations professionals I have worked with have not been trained in the nuances of development and often are not comfortable in the development role, whereas most development professionals are comfortable with both communications and asking for support.

Of the two supporting the integrated department, the public relations practitioner had supervised the fund-raising function until her organization’s fund raiser sought a separate office so that she could report directly to the CEO and thus, the fund raiser argued, link donors with the CEO. Nevertheless, the public relations practitioner said:

We’re looking at [putting fund raising back under public relations] again … [so that] we [are] really saying the same thing [in messages] … that’s a concern … [and] when I look at the results from fund raising and total dollars raised … we can relate back to the public relations efforts and not necessarily fund-raising efforts.

In that structure, she said, the fund-raising function would report to the public relations executive. The structure, she added, had worked well in the past.

### ***Fund Raising: A Specialization of Public Relations?***

Kelly’s (1991, 1998) theory of donor relations reconceptualized fund raising as a specialization of public relations. Yet, Kelly (1991) wrote that an issue with the theory

was potential lack of practitioner acceptance of that reconfiguration. The present research addressed that question and found that six of the eight senior fund-raising practitioners agreed with the reconceptualization, although four of them expressed minor to moderate initial reservations with it. At the same time, the practitioner who demonstrated the most opposition to the concept that fund raising is a specialization of public relations also indicated interest in the potential of the theory and in investigating its implementation and benefits. Fewer than half of the eight fund-raising practitioners (37%) agreed with Kelly's suggestion that fund raisers would not accept the reconfiguration. Although Kelly's concern over acceptance of fund raising as a specialization of public relations was directed toward fund-raising practitioners, the eight public relations executives were asked the same questions about the reconceptualization. Six of the eight public relations executives immediately agreed that fund raising is a specialization of public relations, with a seventh practitioner reporting general agreement with the concept but expressing doubts about implementation in practice. One public relations practitioner said that a vice president of fund raising and public relations for whom the practitioner had worked at another organization "always said fund raising is just public relations for donors. And I always thought that was a good definition." Unlike the fund-raising practitioners, only one of the eight public relations practitioners believed fund-raising executives would accept the reconfiguration of fund raising as a specialization of public relations, and that person said fund-raising practitioners would nevertheless use the reconfiguration as a way to solidify encroachment:

I think what you'd see ... is an expectation that fund-raising's needs will trump other responsibilities that the PR department has. For example,

whenever they want a new Web page up or e-mail registration for fund raising, they want it up now!

The result, she said, would be an immediate “tension on priorities.”

The fund-raising vice president with nearly 20 years of experience said that the reconceptualization would “have a very positive effect on the overall agency, and a positive effect on both public relations outcomes and fund-raising outcomes,” although she cautioned that public relations practitioners would be less willing to accept the change if “the fund-raising piece was in-your-face fund raising and always perceived as a solicitation.” Moreover, she added, public relations’ focus on communication and relationship cultivation would benefit the reconfigured fund-raising department because:

You’ve got to get the word out about the organization, the good that it is doing, all of those statistics and measurable outcomes. You can’t do fund raising without that story because what does not work anymore is begging in fund raising. People do not want to contribute their time, talent, or resources to sinking ships. But they do want to be part of an organization that is really making changes for the better in the world.

One senior fund-raising practitioner, also with nearly 20 years’ experience, said that she did not initially agree that fund raising is a specialization of public relations, but added that:

I see how it could be. I understand the model and I like the idea. I would find it hard to implement in an organization such as mine because I’ve had people working here for 20 to 30 years in certain models. But I understand and I like the theory.

She did not believe other fund raisers would readily accept the idea:

I would see a long and arduous battle on implementing the change. I would see success once it was implemented and I would see some wonderful things happening during the implementation. Some good cross-training ... good communication and exchanging of ideas, strategies between kind of public relations-specific things and fund raising-specific things. [However,] ... most of the places where I have worked, fund raising is king because of that money you can see; it's measurable ... that's a negative piece of public relations ... it's harder to define why we need it, how it works, and how it is successful or not, versus fund raising is very easy to know that it's successful.

Her comments were echoed by several public relations practitioners who complained that organizational senior leadership often did not understand or value public relations as highly as fund raising because of a focus on the immediate income attributed to fund-raising efforts, a focus they described as short-sighted. A senior fund-raising practitioner confirmed their concern: "I see most of our supervisor- and manager-level leaders as having a kind of immature understanding of public relations—that all their marketing and public relations issues can be solved by a press release."

Several of the public relations executives cited reasons similar to that given by the 20-year fund raiser for fund-raising practitioners' potential lack of acceptance of fund raising as a specialization of public relations. Fund raisers would not be open to the idea, said one public relations practitioner, "if they're going from being the dominant to being the one that's not dominant. I don't think they'd be very happy about that." Another

public relations practitioner noted that fund-raising professionals would not be likely to accept the reconfiguration because “fund raisers view their role as more closely related to sales than PR and I personally think it’s not—I think the connection is more directly related to PR than sales,” comments that reflect assertions made by Kelly (1991, 1998) that fund raising is more closely allied to the development of mutually beneficial relationships than the exchange relationship characterized by sales and marketing. Another public relations executive noted that he thought fund-raising practitioners “would have [a] concern with … not having that direct responsibility to the president or CEO. I think they may feel that their job is less important because they would be grouped under PR.” Another public relations practitioner said that the change would “be perceived on the development side … that [it] devalues their work. I mean *I* don’t see it that way.”

A fund-raising practitioner with nearly 30 years of experience initially responded that he did not believe fund raising is a specialization of public relations, because “the skill sets involved in doing the two are different; the sort of conceptual frameworks out of which the professionals come are different.” As he learned more about the theory of donor relations, he said that:

I can see how that would work … I think if it’s reconfigured that way, you probably would have a longer history of proven techniques from the public relations side than we have in the resource development/fund-raising side, so you would have more tested theories to apply to the process.

And if Kelly’s theory, he added, “led to the raising of more money and better stewarding of relationships with donors, I think they [fund raisers] would see that as important.”

The chief development officer who disagreed that fund raising is a specialization of public relations and agreed with Kelly that fund-raising practitioners would not accept the reconceptualization argued that fund raising is not a specialization of public relations because it could exist without the public relations function:

If I had to eliminate one function or the other, I would eliminate the public relations function. Typically, the not-for-profits are unable to survive without their philanthropy or are unable to make the jump from good to excellent quality of care without the philanthropy. And therefore in a limited-resource environment where, if you had to pick one or the other, in my view the primary function is the development function and the PR is a support of that.

She said that although she understood how the model was conceptualized, she believed it could exist only in theory.

I guess in an academic environment, maybe I could see the argument that you need relationships with donors, you need relationships with your consumers, you need relationships with your employees, and because those are all relationships, that makes them all public relations. I can understand how that model could be designed, but in terms of how it works out in practice, those things aren't weighed equally and they don't require equal amounts of time, nor do they require equal skill sets ... From my perspective, the employee piece, the communications-with-employees piece is just a teeny-tiny little piece of what we do. I mean we do have an internal newsletter that tries to be a kind of a morale booster and a little

communications piece, but most of our communications are handled by ... [an intranet] ... so we do not view the employee relations piece really as a significant public relations function ... Certainly the perceptions of employees are critical to an organization's ability to operate smoothly and effectively. However, in our organization, communications with employees are largely the responsibility of administrators, through our operations channels, not the responsibility of a centralized public relations and development function that has to prioritize its time.

This focus on one public at the potential expense of others, however, seems to align with the issues researchers have demonstrated occur when public relations is encroached by another organizational function.

The fund-raising practitioner who has a communications professional within her department responded that she had never thought of fund raising as a specialization of public relations, but noted that "I could look at it that way." Her structure, she argued, could be viewed as a helpful modification on Kelly's model:

I almost think that the model that we're using is somewhat similar to maybe what [Kelly] is suggesting in that we do have somebody who's ultimately responsible for the overall publics and image, but the pieces of pie that they would not be responsible for initially or solely would be that relationship [with] the donors. And so I think ... the model that we're using is almost [like that suggested by Kelly]—that that director of communications is focused on the public audiences of our contract holders more so than advancement would be, or the consumer families or the

referral sources. And the piece of the pie that we would be more responsible for would be that relationship [with] the donors and that's really what completes the pie. And then I think going into that with an eye always going back to that relationship work.

The focus on relationships, she said, is "what ties that all back together."

A fund-raising practitioner expressed "fascination" with the concept of fund raising as a specialization of public relations, saying that he would love to see the model operational in "the real world." He added that the reconceptualization would provide for:

More of a global [view] and for fund raising I think more of a global responsibility in terms of our various audiences. I mean ... my primary audience is prospects and donors and perhaps [the change] makes us more sensitive as an organization to the other audiences that we need to respond to. You know, I really rather like [the model] ... and does [it] make me more effective in bringing [in] money? Well, I think it probably would.

He added, however, that "organizational inertia" would make the model potentially difficult to implement in practice. Yet, with the model's expanded focus on relationship cultivation, "the proof is in the pudding, and if we begin to see that there are organizational changes that make us more successful in bringing money in the door ... those things are going to gain an audience."

A public relations practitioner cited the positive changes he believed the reconceptualization would bring to public relations:

I think it would be a big part in broadening people's perception of public relations. I think that is very narrowly viewed by leadership and managers

and ... even down at the staff level, it's very much perceived as an ability to get a story in the newspaper ... or some recognizable public event, and I think it's a much more strategic and broad relationship-driven effort, and I think that if you were able to establish a system where fund raising became an extension of that, by the very nature of that you would broaden people's awareness of that, and I think people in the finance office [would] become more aware of the value of PR beyond media.

He noted that relationship-building efforts could even involve such administrative departments with their key publics.

Kelly's (1991, 1998) reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations was partly developed as a model by which to end fund-raising encroachment of public relations. However, five of the eight public relations practitioners and three of the eight fund-raising executives said the reconceptualization of fund raising might not end encroachment but could, instead, potentially institutionalize it. One public relations practitioner, with 23 years of experience, said that if the structure were:

Not led properly or developed properly, it clearly could reverse that role and cause the fund-raising function to take over, and I think the key ... not only would be the leader, but the CEO ... because if you go this route the CEO's plugged into it ... but just like the CEO could overreact to a sales dip ... I think that there are going to be ... risks [that if fund-raising results initially change], they would blame the process ... and not give it time to work.

Another public relations executive said that eventually “because of the high emphasis in not-for-profits on the fund-raising piece … I think [fund raising] would just become so dominant that … everything [else] would fall by the wayside.” Another public relations practitioner noted that “we’d have to be careful we’re not always just trying to get every dollar for our efforts … you’d have to watch the balance of telling our story and telling our story only in a way to try to get every dollar.” Still another public relations practitioner said that:

Absolutely [institutionalization] would happen and the word encroachment would disappear because it would no longer be seen that way, but it would absolutely be that. I say that only because 100 percent of my history … has demonstrated that that’s what happens. Maybe it doesn’t have to happen, but I would expect it.

One public relations director offered a personal observation that she believed illustrates the issue with eventual encroachment within a combined unit:

One of the things that I think is symptomatic … is the evolution of ALDE … the Association of Lutheran Development Executives [which represented] … two groups coming together [the other was the Lutheran Public Relations and Development Guild], and public relations has just kind of gone by the wayside. I would attend their conference; finally I stopped attending and I [wrote to them], you don’t offer public relations things; it’s all primarily development and, in fact, their upcoming conference offers very few public relations-related workshops as opposed to the multitude of fund-raising workshops offered … so as we were

talking about this, all of a sudden I thought about that organization and I thought, that's exactly what would happen ... it's Association of Lutheran Development Executives; there's no public relations in there at all, even in their name, so I guess I see what's happened with ALDE as what would probably happen if we were put in the same group.

One fund-raising practitioner, who preferred a separate-but-equal structure for the two functions, agreed with these public relations practitioners that the integrated model Kelly (1998) proposed would not necessarily end fund-raising encroachment. Instead, she recommended both functions report to the CEO with a dotted-line relationship between them. Her rationale was that "you can very separately see what fund raising is spending and bringing in and ... what resources you need." Several practitioners within both fund raising and public relations commented that the primary way to end fund-raising encroachment, outside a stable separate-but-equal structure for the two functions, rested on the leadership of a potentially integrated unit in which fund raising has been reconceptualized as a specialization of public relations, discussed more fully below.

### ***Relationship Management: A Foundation?***

If there was one area in which the disconnect between theory and practice seemed most evident, it was in relationship management. Although both public relations and fund raising practitioners expressed strong support for the relational paradigm and described numerous ways in which they attempt to focus on organization-public relationships, they had little, if any, knowledge of relationship management as a theory, the identified dimensions on which relationships are built, or how the organization-public relationship might be measured. Every practitioner expressed interest in the survey tools used to

measure organization-public relationships, as well as in learning more about relationship dimensions, but cited a lack of personnel or financial resources to be able to use such survey mechanisms or to concentrate time on exploring the dimensions that could lead to better relationships. Nevertheless, because Kelly's (1998) proposed reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations rests on a relational base, it was important to examine the public relations and fund-raising practitioners' views on relationship cultivation as a method of practice, as well as data on how, in fact, they practice their respective work.

Although the public relations models on which Kelly based her fund-raising models have since been refined (see, e.g., J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 1990, 1992; J. E. Grunig, 2001) and Kelly's fund-raising models have been extended to incorporate a mixed-motive model (Kelly, 1995a; Tindall, 2007) and grouped into technician and managerial roles (Fussell, 2006), the original typologies offer a relatively easy way to assess the predominant focus of an organization's approach to public relations and fund raising. Consistent with a number of other studies (e.g., Lauzen, 1991, 1992a, 1992b; Kelly, 1991, 1993a, 1993b, 1994), this research found both public relations and fund-raising practitioners operating within predominantly asymmetrical modes, despite stated admiration for symmetrical relationships. While most of the public relations officers, either by self-report or the perception of the fund-raising practitioner in those organizations in which the senior public relations executive was not interviewed, indicated they use a mixed-motive approach, four of the 16 were perceived as primarily practicing the press agentry/publicity model designed to obtain media attention. Half of the 16 organizations' public relations departments generally practice the public

information model, often characterized as functioning as an organizational journalist. Two of the remaining four organizations reported using the press agentry/publicity and public information models equally. The two other organizations indicated use of the two-way asymmetrical approach. One, based on its employment of focus groups and other research to create communication vehicles, seemed to take that approach, but the second organization, represented by a public relations practitioner, also reported that:

We just don't have the resources to spend a whole lot of time or energy listening to the publics and defining what they want. We try to get out in the field and talk to our pastors, we talk to the employees and talk to families and so on, but it's very informal.

The statement calls into question her response to the models or, alternately, the method by which the models were explained to her. Subsequent comments by the practitioner tended to support the idea that the organization employs a public-information model. Overall, an approach based on symmetrical relationship-building was rarely used.

The fund-raising practitioners reported a greater use of two-way relationship building, generally in terms of major donor relationships, an approach Kelly (1998) indicated was typical. A quarter of the 16 organizations, by self-report of the fund-raising practitioner or by stated perception of the public relations practitioner in those organizations in which the senior fund raiser was not interviewed, practice primarily the press agentry/publicity model of fund raising, described as the use of emotion to generate a donor response. The same number, four, indicated predominant use of the public information model of fund raising, characterized as providing truthful and accurate information about organizational needs to solicit a donor response. Two organizations

reported primarily using the press agentry/publicity and public information models equally. One organization indicated it equally allocated its efforts among the press agentry/publicity, public information, and two-way symmetrical models, while another organization employed the same models but in a 40-40-20 configuration. The remaining four organizations reported what they believed was an overall mixed-motive approach. A fund-raising practitioner in one of those organizations described his use of the four models:

First of all, with our major donor relationships, yes, we absolutely try to employ two-way communication where the needs of the donors are high on the list of satisfiers for us. But I would say that—[and] it doesn't amount to the majority of the money—but we [also] spend a lot of time and energy on direct-mail fund raising, and those, you know, fives and tens and twenty-fives and fifties are important. Certainly equally important is bringing in people at the bottom of the pyramid and moving them up, in which case we use an emotion-based tactic. As far as [the public-information model], we certainly always try to communicate in a truthful way and teach people about the work that we do and the needs that are out in the community. You know, so it's difficult—I guess if I was to pick one, the emotional-based fund-raising plays a prominent role in our strategies for sure, but I wouldn't discount that enlightenment or the two-way communication, either.

He added that the organization also occasionally uses a two-way asymmetrical approach by doing research into which methods or subjects persuade donors to give or to give higher amounts or more frequently.

Although a predominant focus in both public relations and fund raising on one-way methods of communicating is generally not in keeping with adoption of a relational approach, the practitioners reported widespread interest in and some movement toward a relationship-based practice. For example, Kelly's (2000, 2001) delineation of four key stewardship-related steps in a relational approach to fund raising was lauded by the fund-raising practitioners, several of whom recounted the ways in which they currently follow the outlined approach. Those steps are defined as reciprocity, characterized at the fund-raising level as showing gratitude and meeting the needs of donors; responsibility, defined as keeping your word; reporting, informing publics and demonstrating accountability to publics affected by or that may affect the organization; and relationship nurturing, which involves keeping publics at "the forefront of the organization's consciousness" (Kelly, 2000, p.286). In line with that approach, one of the fund-raising practitioners characterized her organization's focus "as being concerned about developing friends first and then funds later."

Another of the fund-raising practitioners described her organization's relationship-based method of working with donors:

I think it's being grateful for what you have, following through on what you said you were going to do and the manner in which you said you were going to do it, the integrity of your organization, which also comes down to being accountable. Sharing outcomes and being honest with people;

sometimes it's being honest about things that happen within your organization that you might not necessarily be proud of, but yet I think that that's the kind of relationship [with which] ... you can build ... trust with a donor or stakeholder—if they know that you're going to share with them things that you're not proud of, or things that you are working on, or shortcomings you may have as an organization.

Another fund-raising practitioner said that focusing on a relationship-based approach can be challenging, but vital to the organization in the long term. She said that:

There is a dichotomy within fund raising that makes it extremely difficult because on the one hand you are constantly pressured to bring the dollars in and yet you know that the only way to bring the dollars in is to be on the schedule of the donor, which means they set the time-frames, they set the decision-making and if you try to change that and ... take control ... you will ultimately lose.

Although several practitioners, both within fund raising and public relations, said their organizations primarily define fund-raising success as increasing numbers of dollars raised—one fund-raising executive said that “how I look at [success] is about the relationship. How they [the dominant coalition] look at it is about the dollar”—a number of others cited a focus on building relationships as a key indicator of success. One fund-raising practitioner said that:

Success is ... when you're able to connect that donor with what it is that they really are passionate about, with a particular service that ... they really feel most interested in and then just kind of stepping back and

watching those two come together ... and then seeing how both the donor and the service are enriched through that relationship, whether it be a financial contribution or whether they become a volunteer or whether they become engaged in advocating for that service ... And so much of [the relationship] ... is so complex that we really don't know what the impact of particular [donor] meetings might be ... because we might think that they really aren't that engaged in our organization because they haven't decided to volunteer or they didn't make an immediate gift, but then a couple of years later we find out that they died and they left us this massive gift, but yet they did it in a quiet, humble way.

Relationship-building also represented a key effort for the public relations practitioners. One executive described longer-term work his office had implemented:

As a Lutheran social ministry organization ... we had really become disenfranchised from the local synod for a variety of reasons ... we had a very pro-active public relations relationship-building effort [with pastors and congregations] ... and by a variety of measures have seen tremendous change ... to the positive. And that does not come through in the measure of dollars donated or units sold, but I think it's been a critical piece to establish ourselves as ... credible.

Too often, he said, constituencies that do not directly affect fund raising or sales are overlooked. "In this case we [focused on them] and it was very successful." Efforts to build more symmetrical relationships extended beyond communication to actions in the

interests of publics. One senior public relations practitioner described a step her organization had taken to address the needs of its supporters:

We have offered things like a service of managing [congregations'] endowments for them ... we [already] get a good return and we kind of share that with others ... as an individual congregation, they don't have those kinds of dollars, but if they came in with ours, they would get our return, which is much better than they would get on their own.

The effort, she said, arose from seeking "ways that we can do something for them instead of the old model of always going to the churches, we need, we need, we need; trying to look at it ... [as] what can we do for you?"

Overall, findings showed a high level of support for practicing public relations and fund raising in a relationship-cultivation model, but little awareness of the theoretical underpinning for that approach or of the various tools researchers have developed for practitioners.

### ***Refining the Model: Contingency Theory***

Kelly (1991, 1998) built her theory of donor relations on public relations excellence theory, a major tenet of which is the normative model of two-way symmetrical communication and relationships. Although the participating public relations and fund-raising practitioners expressed high regard for the goals of symmetrical communication, they reported near-universal support for the elaboration of the theory advanced by Cameron's (1997) contingency theory of accommodation. That is not to say they were familiar with either concept on a theoretical level, although the symmetrical approach to communication was recognized by several public relations practitioners. Rather, when

both were explained to the practitioners, contingency theory was more highly supported as a better representation of actual practice than pure two-way symmetrical public relations, by both public relations and fund-raising practitioners; 14 of the 15 practitioners with whom discussions allowed more extensive exploration of contingency theory expressed preference for the model. In addition, three fund-raising practitioners independently cited a fund raising-specific application of contingency theory that might demonstrate a prescriptive variable specifically related to fund raising.

One fund-raising practitioner said that the continuum within contingency theory helped to explain communication stances her organization takes with varying publics:

The theory's very right and I will give you an example ... we provide ... refugee and immigration services. Public relations-wise, it is not something—and this is not my personal opinion or strategy; this is the organization's—this is not something that we communicate about a lot externally, except with one particular audience, and that is Lutheran congregations because they are very friendly and supportive of that particular project. So we do not purposely do external communications for anything about the refugee program unless there's an issue in the community ... so we keep that quiet except for that particular audience, Lutheran congregations ... fund raising-wise, I would like to talk more about the refugee program; PR-wise, program people would like to not talk about it, because it tends to bring up negative issues in the community.

While acknowledging that both excellence and contingency theories advance two-way symmetrical relationships as their goal, a public relations executive said, “Is the reality more along that advocacy-to-accommodation continuum as opposed to a true two-way symmetry and relationship? I think my answer would be, yes, I think that’s the reality.” A public relations practitioner said the theory was helpful to her theoretically as she reviewed several projects her organization had undertaken. In situating a “detox facility” in a neighborhood, “we actually decreased the scope of service so that the community would be more comfortable” with the facility. No win-win situation was possible, as the community would have preferred not to have the service, but the contingency theory described well, she said, the way in which the organization shifted in its stance from advocacy to accommodation. Another public relations practitioner, reflecting on contingency theory, readily offered an example from her practice:

Something came to my mind that happened in our organization and that was to build HUD 202 housing in a community. To give you the background on it, the city representative, administrator, came to us, asked us to come to do this. As we’re going through this process and we are sending information out … trying to hold public meetings to explain it … because there wasn’t any of this housing in this community and we received a tremendous amount of negatives. There were some things going on … there was a misconception of what HUD 202 for seniors meant and so we tried to address all of those things but in the end we withdrew … we were going along with it the whole time as we were going to do this; it was just a matter of getting [the public] to understand the value … but

actually coming to a point where the public or the community seemed so embittered that we did not want to be part of that.

The theory, she said, helped to explain within her public relations practice the change within the organization's stance from initial advocacy for the project to accommodation of the public's view, especially in light of the positive relationship the organization sought as a community service-provider.

Other research has demonstrated the soundness and applicability of contingency theory. The focus of these discussions with practitioners was to determine the extent to which they found it reasonable to suggest incorporation of the theory within Kelly's donor relations theory. To this point, three fund-raising practitioners independently offered a situation in which contingency theory seemed to provide a theoretical underpinning for their—and consequently their organization's—stance toward a donor, in such cases representing a specific public in relationship with the organization. Kelly (1991, 1998), in fact, had described the same issue occurring in organization-donor relationships. One of the three practitioners explained:

Our philosophy here is donor-focused philanthropy, and that's [a] very, very important emphasis on what [the donor] is interested in and the donor designates. However, we would never get to the point where if a donor wanted to do something and had the resources to do that but wanted ... to do [something] contrary to our mission ... or not really in the best interests of the agency to do at a particular time, [that] we would ... accept that gift ... I know someone who wanted to give us a million dollars at one point to build a particular facility ... providing certain services and it was not in

our interest to do it at that time; there were other needs [in] which the individual was not interested, and we had to say, no thank you.

Reflecting on contingency theory, another fund-raising practitioner realized “there are times when … we can’t take a donor’s gift or contribution because of what they might be asking us to do with it.” Still another fund raiser noted that he and his staff would enter negotiations with a donor in “an advocacy position but probably wouldn’t be reasonably forthright in expressing that position, but at least come into a negotiation with a position in mind and [recognize the need] to accommodate as the discussion goes along,” provided accommodation was possible given the nature of the gift.

### ***The Relational Department Leader***

The 16 senior fund-raising and public relations practitioners delineated a number of characteristics, as well as the professional training, of the leader who might oversee the integrated “relationship management” department Kelly (1998) suggested, a public relations department in which fund raising operates as a specialization. Practitioners agreed with Kelly’s (1998) recommendations regarding cross-training and listed required education as including public relations, fund raising, brand management, strategic planning, and the theoretical and practical aspects of relationship management. One fund-raising practitioner, for example, noted that:

I think that person would have to have training in both public relations and fund raising and have an understanding of … how both of those affect or shape the individual or the business or the organization that you are trying to develop the relationship with … in addition to having technical skills …

they would absolutely need ... a fantastic understanding of interpersonal relations.

Another fund-raising executive agreed that the leader would require training in both fields, but cited “research-based planning” as even more important. Still another fund-raising practitioner described an understanding of media relations as necessary.

In terms of the proposed department’s potential for fund-raising encroachment emphasized by several public relations practitioners, one fund-raising executive said the leader would not need to have a background in fund raising or be a fund-raising practitioner, but would “certainly have to be open to how you could be most effective ... looking at relationships. I mean it’s ultimately about those relationships.” A public relations practitioner advocated that the leader know communications theory. Another public relations executive said the leader should have at least some fund-raising experience or knowledge; “otherwise, I don’t think the fund-raising professionals ... would respect the leadership.” She cautioned, however, that the leader would require primarily a public relations perspective. “Otherwise,” she said, the department “would just be a different name for fund raising with PR as a piece of it.” Still another public relations practitioner was more specific about the public relations requirement for leading the relationship management department:

It would have to be somebody who had headed up public relations and had a good 10 or 12 years of experience and the appropriate education, certification, master’s degree or whatever, in PR. But it would have to be somebody with a strong track record not only in PR but with [this] symbiosis or symbiotic relationship ... with advancement.

Another practitioner said that “it would probably be difficult to find somebody with all those skills, but I would think an emphasis in public relations with experience in developing relationships” would be critical.

Overall, practitioners cited the need for CEO and dominant coalition commitment to the model, as well as an emphasis on collegiality and cooperation within the relationship management department. Three of the public relations practitioners and two of the fund-raising executives called for the leader to have, foremost, strong public relations skills and experience to ensure a focus on relationships with all organization publics at the expense of none. Underscoring their point of view, a public relations practitioner described her subordinate role within her organization’s fund-raising office, citing the effects of encroachment as the reason that “for a while the two functions were separated. So I think, yeah, there’s a danger of it [the integrated department] being communications as just the handmaiden of the fund raisers.”

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **Discussion and Conclusions**

This qualitative research encompassed six primary aims. The first was to learn whether, within the group of participating organizations, fund-raising encroachment of public relations had occurred and, if so, to what extent. This goal updated research first conducted some 15 years ago. The second goal was to examine organizational structures related to public relations and fund raising and to determine if public relations and fund-raising practitioners believed a particular model functions more effectively than others, especially in defending against encroachment of public relations by fund raising. The third goal was to determine whether fund-raising practitioners accepted Kelly's (1991) contention that fund raising is a specialization of public relations. To expand inquiry into this topic, the opinions of the participating public relations practitioners also were sought. A fourth aim was to explore with practitioners whether they agreed with Kelly (1998) that relationship management theory would serve as a model of practice for an integrated relational unit in which fund raising functions as a specialization of public relations. The fifth aim was to examine how recent advances in public relations research might elaborate on the ways in which Kelly conceptualized portions of her theory of donor relations on public relations excellence theory. Finally, a sixth and related area of inquiry involved discussions on the professional background and characteristics practitioners believed are needed by the leader of a potential "relationship management" department, if such a moniker may be proffered.

Although the research focused primarily on the broad topic areas of the organizational structure of fund raising and public relations, fund-raising encroachment

of public relations, and Kelly's reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations, it was important as well to understand a number of related items, including practitioners' participation in the organizational dominant coalition, role enactment of the senior public relations practitioners, and perceived use of models of public relations and fund-raising behavior. In the fifth area of inquiry, related to Kelly's (1991, 1998) use of excellence theory in constructing the theory of donor relations, it was incumbent to develop a better understanding of practitioners' response to the pre-eminent focus of that theory—two-way symmetrical communication regarded as the normative model for practice and argued to be the most effective and ethical approach to public relations (e.g., J. E. Grunig & L. A. Grunig, 1989)—against current concerns about or elaborations of the excellence model, in particular contingency theory.

### ***Overview of Findings***

In summary, this study found fund-raising encroachment of public relations to be occurring in the research sample at a rate roughly comparable to that documented by three studies Kelly conducted approximately 15 or more years ago. Because of its qualitative nature, the present research is best compared with Kelly's qualitative study of 19 charitable organizations. The level of fund-raising encroachment found in this study—31%—compares to 37% found in that case. Two additional studies by Kelly, one qualitative and one quantitative, documented encroachment of public relations by fund raising in 40% and 23% of the participating organizations. The present findings re-emphasize the need for public relations to develop or have in place defenses against encroachment because fund-raising encroachment of public relations has been shown to tend to (1) assign public relations to a tactical rather than strategic role, (2) make public

relations a supportive function serving the communication-product needs of the fund-raising department, (3) remove senior public relations practitioners from inclusion in their organizations' dominant coalitions, and (4) focus public relations efforts primarily on the donor public, at the potential expense of other key organizational stakeholders. As Kelly (1991) and other scholars have argued, that focus on one public leaves the organization open to crises involving other strategic publics that have the potential to constrain organizational autonomy.

Within the 16 participating organizations, 75% of the fund-raising practitioners and 62% of the public relations practitioners cited a separate-but-equal structure for the public relations and fund-raising departments as their preferred structure and, by extension, the best current defense against encroachment. A modification of this structure was described by two practitioners, one each from the fund-raising and public relations disciplines. This modification involved having a communications professional dedicated solely to the needs of the fund-raising department. In the case of the structure cited by the fund raiser, that professional was located within the fund-raising department and reported to the senior fund-raising practitioner, but also had a dotted-line relationship to the organization's public relations officer. In the second case, the public relations professional dedicated to communication-related fund-raising projects was based in the public relations office and supervised by the senior public relations executive while working closely with fund-raising executives. Both practitioners indicated that this structure provided the fund-raising department with the communications support it sought, while also allowing the public relations department to focus on overarching

organizational needs and issues. The structure also allowed for coordination of messages and consistent branding.

Two primary concerns arise, however, over the separate-but-equal structure for the fund-raising and public relations departments. The first is that the structure does not tend to lead to reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations and therefore does not put into practice Kelly's (1991, 1998) theory of donor relations, which among other tenets described fund raising as the management of the relationship between an organization and its donors rather than the more tactical definition of raising financial resources for an organization. The second concern revolves around the stability of the separate-but-equal structure. As several public relations and fund-raising practitioners described, that structure within their organizations was sometimes put in place by a chief executive officer worried that encroachment would, as several practitioners noted, lead to an emphasis on the donor public with little regard to other organizational needs and stakeholders. As CEOs or dominant coalitions change, so, too, can that separate-but-equal structure that has, to that point, guarded against fund-raising encroachment of public relations. Underscoring this lack of stability, findings showed that public relations departments in a majority of the participating organizations had experienced fund-raising encroachment in the past.

Kelly (1991) reconceptualized fund raising as a specialization of public relations partly as a defense against fund-raising encroachment. However, only one of the 16 practitioners identified without prompting a structure similar to that advanced by Kelly, in which the fund-raising function is located within a larger public relations department. Contrary to Kelly's contention that an issue with her theory of donor relations would be a

lack of practitioner acceptance of the model, six of the eight fund raisers in the research sample described some level of support for the reconceptualization of fund raising, while an equal number of the public relations practitioners immediately agreed with the idea. Moreover, only three of the eight fund-raising practitioners agreed with Kelly that, in general, fund-raising practitioners would reject the idea that fund raising is a specialization of public relations. Perhaps more encouraging to those who would advocate Kelly's model, only one of the eight fund-raising practitioners expressed strong support for the encroachment model, in which public relations is assigned a subservient and supportive role to fund raising and is tasked with executing communication-related products and events for donors.

Although practitioners within both fields demonstrated little knowledge of relationship management theory or awareness of the scholarly work surrounding measurement of the organization-public relationship, there was extensive support for transitioning public relations and fund raising into a relational mode of practice. Practitioners cited a number of efforts and programs in which they have attempted to establish mutually beneficial relationships with organizational publics, frequently donors. Such efforts are important if the model Kelly envisioned for a public relations department incorporating fund raising as a specialization is to be put into practice. Contrary to stated goals of building relational practices, the research found extensive use within both public relations and fund-raising operations of an asymmetrical approach to communication and donor solicitation. There seemed to be a general comfort level among the public relations practitioners with use of the public information model. Among fund-raising practitioners, there was some preference for the press agency/publicity model, the result of a focus on

using emotions to solicit a donor response, as well as on the public information model that describes organizational needs to donors. Fund-raising practitioners also reported use of two-way symmetrical models of relationship building, particularly with longer-term and larger donors. More effort to employ two-way communication practices would be required for Kelly's model to serve successfully as a relationship-based department in which fund raising operates as a specialization of public relations.

Practitioners also outlined the characteristics they believed a leader of this relationship management department would require, including research capabilities, basic fund-raising knowledge, brand management, strategic management, and—noted by several practitioners—an extensive background in and understanding of public relations. Finally, practitioners expressed near-universal support for contingency theory as a more accurate representation of their practice than excellence theory's prescription of symmetrical relationships as always the most effective and ethical. Several fund-raising practitioners described specific instances in which what seemed to be a proscriptive variable was operating in their relationship with potential donors.

### ***Theoretical Implications***

This research found practitioner support for the portion of Kelly's (1991, 1998) theory of donor relations in which fund raising is reconceptualized as a specialization of public relations in a public relations department committed to relationship management. While only one of the 16 senior fund raising and public relations practitioners initially identified the model as an ideal structure for the two departments, 12 of the practitioners agreed, to varying extents, that fund raising is a subset of public relations. Few of the practitioners agreed with Kelly's contention that fund-raising practitioners would most

likely not accept her reconceptualization of fund raising. Although no agreement was reached on the ideal organizational structure for public relations and fund raising, the concept of fund raising as a specialization of public relations, outlined as part of Kelly's theory of donor relations, was supported.

The theory of donor relations is partially conceptualized on several major tenets of public relations excellence theory, including the normative model of two-way symmetrical communication. Although practitioners expressed admiration for the goals of symmetrical communication and reported numerous efforts to establish two-way relationships with publics such as donors, all but one of the practitioners with whom contingency theory was discussed said it offered a more accurate representation of the ways in which their organizations interact with publics. In discussing his potential use of the theory, a fund-raising practitioner referenced development of a neighborhood-based halfway house for former prisoners. With neighbors, "you begin in kind of an advocacy phase but, ultimately, you really need to be accommodating in your relationships." Three fund-raising practitioners, moreover, independently cited an application of contingency theory that might demonstrate a prescriptive variable related to fund raising.

Cameron et al. (2001) identified six prescriptive variables that can constrain an organization's ability to accommodate a public: moral conviction, multiple publics, regulatory constraints, management pressure, jurisdictional issues, and legal constraints. Among the 86 contingent variables that can affect an organization's stance are the external variable of "the public's willingness to dilute its cause/request/claim" (Cameron et al., 2001, p. 258) and the internal threat of "economic loss or gain from implementing various stances" (p. 259). These two contingent variables, as well as the prescriptive

variable of management pressure, which describes the potential for “indiscriminate adoption of accommodative public relations” (Cameron et al., 2001, p. 248), also described as “dominant coalition prohibit[ing] an accommodative stance” (Pang et al., 2006, p. 376), could be applied to these fund-raising situations, in which negotiations with a donor might result in alternative and mutually acceptable uses of a donation the organization could not otherwise accept. (The five other prescriptive variables, such as moral issues, multiple publics, and legal, regulatory, and jurisdictional issues do not seem to apply in this case.)

However, in fund-raising situations in which such negotiations could not take place as a result of the nature of the proposed gift, it can be argued that the prescriptive variable “management pressure” does not succinctly or comprehensively describe the issue of “mission fit” between a charitable organization and a potential donor. Non-acceptance of the gift rests not so much on management pressure or dominant coalition prohibitions as on congruence of the potential gift and donor intent with organizational mission or ability creatively to expand that mission. Whether extension of contingency theory occurs to posit a prescriptive variable specifically for fund raising or the existing prescriptive variable of “management pressure” encompasses this situation within the fund-raising arena, findings from discussions with both fund-raising and public relations practitioners on contingency theory’s elaboration of public relations excellence theory suggest Kelly’s theory of donor relations be revisited to incorporate contingency theory.

### ***Practical Implications***

A challenge to this research arose from the general lack of practitioner awareness of theories related to public relations and fund raising. Few of the participating senior

executives, if any, seemed to know of models of public relations or fund-raising practice or of the theories of donor relations, public relations excellence, or contingency. The extensive scholarly research into organization-public relationships and the dimensions of those relationships similarly represented largely unexplored terrain for the practitioners. While this challenge might be considered a limitation, the researcher believes it served more as an opportunity. Presented through carefully worded questions and detailed discussions aimed at applying aspects of theory to practice, the subjects under inquiry elicited extensive interest and even some level of excitement among participants. A senior public relations practitioner, in responding by e-mail to the request for a member check wrote that, "This is not only an accurate representation but a very engaging read. When complete, I would love to share and discuss with my CEO and VP of Development." Representing nearly 280 years of practice in the fields of public relations and fund raising, the 16 executives expressed a near-hunger for research findings that would improve their practice as well as provide affordable research tools to help them understand or measure relationships between their organizations and various publics.

While several participants acknowledged a disconnect between theory and practice or argued that the various models and theories presented represent an academic ideal difficult to implement in the practitioners' world, nearly all of the senior executives expressed a desire to learn more about the theories and their potential benefits. Even the chief development officer whose comments indicated that she, among the fund-raising practitioners interviewed, was the most opposed to Kelly's (1991) contention that fund raising is a specialization of public relations and who seemed to hold what might be argued a narrow view of public relations ("Public relations professionals," she wrote in

an e-mail response to follow-up questions to her interview, “often enter their jobs because they are ‘good writers’ and may have little or no formal training in either marketing or development.”) said that “participating in this study has made it possible for me to see a different paradigm.”

From their depth interviews with public relations practitioners over refinement of variables within contingency theory, Cameron et al. (2001) pointed out the “disconnect between interviewees’ perceptions of their role and public relations theory … [adding that] this suggests that while theory attempts to provide a framework for understanding public relations, practitioners have little need for it” (p. 255). Findings from the present study underscored that disconnect, but did not reveal a lack of need among the practitioners for a theoretical framework if made accessible and easily applied. Despite the dearth of practitioner awareness of public relations and fund-raising theories and related terminology, participants resonated with descriptions of current theory and advocated a better integration of theoretical models with practice to make their work more effective or to broaden their perspectives. “I really rather enjoyed this; it was stimulating,” said one of the fund-raising executives. Gower’s (2006) position seems to encapsulate the basic motivation for the present research: “Understanding the reality of the practice today … [will] help us deal with the apparent disconnect that exists between the public relations research literature and the practice” (p. 185).

If public relations is to assume a leadership role in managing or overseeing the cultivation of all organization-public relationships, regardless of whether fund raising is conceptualized as a public relations specialization, it needs to take concrete steps to position itself for that strategic effort. Definitions of the practice and perceptions held of

the field by others need to be systematically addressed. Comments from practitioners of both public relations and fund raising underscored this need. Public relations was rarely defined as the strategic management of organization-public relationships by practitioners from either field, although one fund raiser did describe it as “the relationship between the organization and the public—all the stakeholders and any activities related to that.” Many of the descriptions defined the function as one devoted to increasing organizational awareness. For example, one of the fund-raising practitioners characterized it as “heightening the awareness of the overall organization and the individual programs in the minds of our constituents.” A public relations practitioner seemed to echo that approach, saying, “The way I have always functioned is telling the organization’s story to various audiences in the way that they most want to hear it.” Similarly, a fund-raising executive characterized public relations’ role as “telling our story, communicating the … little miracles that happen in and around [the organization] to our prospect and donor base …and then there’s the occasional fire that needs to be put out.” Such comments underscore a basically asymmetrical approach to public relations.

Frequently, public relations was equated with marketing. As one fund-raising practitioner put it: “I guess I define it as internal and external communications, media relations, marketing strategies—both advertising and marketing.” Several definitions, however, were more encompassing. One of the fund-raising executives said, “I guess I think that public relations is really every visible aspect of your organization.” Another definition, however, underscores the asymmetrical approach: Public relations “would be, I guess, the art of influencing the publics that we’re attempting to move … from maybe slightly interested in us to become raving fans.” Another fund-raising practitioner said,

simply: "I guess I would define it in terms of how our donor and prospect base feels about the organization." Still another fund raiser outlined what she expected from public relations: "People have to know who we are and know what we do and care about what we do, so that when we go and ask them to support what we do, they are already aware of us." Several public relations practitioners tended to underscore this supportive role for their department:

I think [public relations is] a critical support for fund raising. We help them define and refine the message. It's not unusual for our fund-raising team to contact us and say, we need stories about this program, or I need to go see a donor in this area and we want to share something about ... [a] program, and so we help them; we contact the program folks to get that, so that we have something heart-warming to share with our potential donors.

This overarching focus on the goal and tactics of raising awareness, particularly among donors, may arise because of the relatively small size of public relations staffs in the study sample, a situation that tends to focus practitioners on communication processes and products such as newsletters, Web sites, and news releases as opposed to longer-term strategic or two-way relationship-building efforts. However, as noted, the LSA-network organizations under study tend to be representative of charitable health care and social service organizations in general. The trend toward the tactical among charitable organizations may be widespread. While awareness-building efforts and the production of communication vehicles are staples of public relations work, the practice of concentrating on communication tactics to the exclusion of two-way relationship building will not assist the field in establishing itself as the organizational unit providing strategic

management of all organization-public relationships. Lacking that role, the field remains ripe for continuing encroachment. Any effort to solidify a more strategic role for public relations must enable those outside the field to grasp public relations' potential to add to organizational effectiveness if practiced in a relational manner.

In addition to advancing a strategic relationship-based practice, public relations must demonstrate its contribution to the bottom line; otherwise, it will continue in some organizations to lose resources and power to other departments, in this case the fund-raising department. One senior fund-raising practitioner underscored this situation, saying that her organization's dominant coalition:

Sees a direct relationship ... of money in, money out, of resources. If you hire an additional person to do fund raising, they're going to bring money in. If you hire an additional person to do public relations, they are not going to bring money in. It's pretty cut and dried.

Public relations must demonstrate more readily that it, too, adds to organizational effectiveness, including financial stability.

Although a majority of the fund-raising practitioners in the sample indicated agreement with Kelly's assertion that fund raising is a specialization of public relations and that, generally, practitioners would accept that conceptualization, three primary issues remain. The first is the pressure from organizational dominant coalitions, cited by practitioners from both fields, to evaluate fund-raising success in terms of dollars raised. That focus may not allow for a greater emphasis on relationship building, necessary if fund raising is to be reconceptualized as a specialization of public relations. The second issue revolves around organizational structure. Although practitioners may have

expressed support for the theory of donor relations, a majority also advocated the maintenance of separate-but-equal structures as the best current defense against fund-raising encroachment of public relations. That support for separate departments, however, comes with awareness that CEO changes could bring structure changes as well. Derived from several specific comments, a sense among the public relations practitioners seemed to be that for the department to function as designed, its senior leader would have to be committed to relationships with all organizational publics, something several practitioners indicated might not be accomplished by a practitioner focused, by experience, on donors. One fund-raising practitioner seemed to underscore this point by indicating that public relations practitioners would readily accept the reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations. In a combined unit, she said, “I’m not sure that they wouldn’t say, yeah, and how is [this] different?”

### ***Limitations and Directions for Future Research***

Given the high number of tax-exempt, 501(c)(3)—that is, charitable—institutions in the United States, totaled at more than 1.06 million as of 2006 (“IRS data book,” 2006), there is a need to generalize these updated findings on fund-raising encroachment of public relations as well as new investigative data on the proposed reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations. The complexity of non-profit organizations, which are categorized by the AAFRC Trust for Philanthropy (now Giving USA Foundation) (as cited by Kelly, 1998) as arts, culture, and humanities; education; health; human services; public/society benefit; and religion, underscores this need. Because of the qualitative nature of this research and the size of the sample, results cannot be generalized to a larger population. Therefore, although Pauly (1991) claimed

that “qualitative research is … generalizable to the extent that some community of readers considers a particular study representative of a wider set of concerns” (p. 11), future efforts on this inquiry should involve a quantitative study of a larger number of charitable organizations, not only to determine the current extent of fund-raising encroachment of public relations among that wider group, but also to continue the investigation into fund-raising practitioner acceptance of Kelly’s reconceptualization of fund raising as a public relations specialization.

In addition to investigating the broad topics of organizational structure of fund raising and public relations, fund-raising encroachment of public relations, and practitioner acceptance of Kelly’s contention that fund raising is a specialization of public relations, the research involved discussions with practitioners about their participation within their organizations’ dominant coalition, role enactment, and models of public relations and fund-raising behavior. It is important to emphasize that this aspect of the research was not designed to assign a causal relationship between such factors and encroachment of public relations, as some earlier studies had done, but rather to place the present research within the context of those previous studies, comparing present findings with earlier research. Technician role enactment by the public relations practitioners, an emphasis by both fields on asymmetrical approaches to communication, and a lower rate of public relations practitioner involvement in the organizational dominant coalition, as compared with the senior fund raisers’ participation, closely mirror the findings of earlier research. And because Kelly (1998) suggested relationship management as a focus of practice for the public relations department in which fund raising operates as a specialization, the research sought to determine practitioners’ understanding of

relationship management theory and whether they apply a relational approach to their work. This portion of the research, it should be noted, was not designed to test aspects of relationship management theory, measure any organization-public relationship, or elucidate factors within that relationship.

Beyond the proposed quantitative studies of fund-raising encroachment of public relations and of fund-raising practitioner acceptance of Kelly's theory of donor relations, a number of additional topics for future research are suggested. A qualitative study of a larger sample of senior fund-raising practitioners should be undertaken to gain their view of the effects they believe the theory of donor relations would have on their practice. A qualitative study should be conducted as well among fund-raising practitioners to examine their experience with public relations and why some practitioners seem to view public relations primarily as a supportive publicity-focused function designed to help them accomplish their goals rather than a strategic colleague that could help them to manage relationships. Finally, some level of research should be conducted to measure public relations practitioners' knowledge of fund raising and the theoretical linkages between the two fields.

### ***Conclusions***

As Pang et al. (2006) wrote, studies "grounded in the practitioners' world can add rich layers of context to understanding how theory and practice can integrate" (p. 373). In many respects, this research was focused on providing some modicum of that context as it attempted to determine, among other inquiries, whether Kelly's theory of donor relations was "acceptable" to practitioners of fund raising and public relations and whether, as asserted, it could end fund-raising encroachment of public relations.

Two key factors could be argued to stand in the way of the model working as envisioned, at least at this time—a ready acceptance by public relations practitioners of the technician as opposed to managerial role and fund-raising practitioners’ tendency toward emotion-based tactics, both demonstrated in the present research. Those factors, along with charitable organizations’ focus on the immediate raising of financial resources, weigh heavily against developing a long-term strategic focus on relationships or on changing dominant-coalition perceptions that fund raising is a more important organizational function than public relations—a view several of the practitioners said existed within their organization—rather than part of a public relations department charged with managing all organizational relationships for as much mutual benefit as possible for both organization and publics.

The relationship management perspective is built on that goal of mutual benefit for both organization and its key publics (Ledingham, 2003). Use of the multi-dimensional OPR scale developed by Bruning and Ledingham (1999) demonstrated that attitudes within the organization-public relationship can affect satisfaction (Bruning & Ledingham, 2002) as well as actual behavior (Bruning, 2002) of publics. Perhaps of greatest importance to organization-donor relationships, which often involve longer-term cultivation, the length of time in a relationship influences perceptions of the dimensions of the relationship as well as loyalty to the relationship (Ledingham et al., 1999). However, Bruning and Ledingham (1999) wrote that “it is one thing to conceptualize relationship management; it is quite another to know what to do as a manager of the organization-public relationship” (p. 167). Organizations, Bruning (2002) added, typically are effective at communicating to members of strategic publics what is

occurring within the organization, “but often fall short of fulfilling key public member relational communication needs (making the key public member feel they [sic] are valued in the relationship)” (p. 45). To fulfill these needs, he wrote, practitioners must be aware of the type of relationship between the organization and a key public, its nature, the length of time the relationship has existed, and its current state. Based on the practice research participants described, it seems as if Bruning was addressing them.

Affecting satisfaction and actual behavior are key benefits to adoption of a relational perspective for both public relations and fund raising, as Kelly (1998) advocated. Moreover, for public relations practitioners, the relational perspective may itself help to fend off encroachment. Bruning (2002) noted that “when practitioners embrace the idea of managing relationships, the role of public relations managers should evolve from tactical coordinators of communication to strategic managers of organization-public relationships” (p. 44). Enacting the manager role, after all, is associated with a decrease in encroachment of public relations (Kelly, 1993, 1994; Lauzen, 1992a, 1992b). Until such time as the relational approach is widely adopted, fund-raising practitioners as a group are shown to agree that fund raising is a specialization of public relations and view themselves as part of a larger public relations whole, and public-relations practitioners embrace the managerial role, a separate-but-equal structure for the public relations and fund-raising departments—despite that structure’s inherent lack of stability—may be public relations’ only current defense against encroachment by fund raising.

## APPENDIX A

Table 1. Participant Demographics

Senior Fund-Raising Practitioners										
Participant	Years	Gender	PR	FR	Clients	Territory	Budget	Empl.	Accred	
FR01	19	F	2	7	12,000	Regional	\$65	600	CFRE	
FR02	2.5	F	1	4	70,000	Statewide	\$9	300	None	
FR03	18	F	1	9	43,000	Statewide	\$15	400	CFRE	
FR04	8	F	1	1	15,000	Regional	\$7	125	CFRE	
FR05	6	F	4	14	40,000	Statewide	\$35	1,000	None	
FR06	29	M	14*	17	35,000	National	\$850	24,000	Ph.D.	
FR07	18	F	1.5	2.5	1,000	Statewide	\$62	1,000	CFRE	
FR08	18	M	3	6	100,000+	Multi-State	\$100	2,500	None	
Senior Public Relations Practitioners										
Participant	Years	Gender	PR	FR	Clients	Territory	Budget	Empl.	Accred	
PR01	31	F	3	7	12,000	Regional	\$75	1,700	APR	
PR02	23	M	1	4	3,000	Regional	\$45	700	None	
PR03	14	F	1.5	2.5	1,800	Regional	\$40	460	None	
PR04	28	F	3.5	12	35,000	Multi-State	\$65	900	None	
PR05	8	M	16*	22	5,000	National	\$137	3,000	None	
PR06	15	F	3	6	6,000	Multi-State	\$59	1,500	None	
PR07	23	F	5	21	72,000	Statewide	\$100	2,100	None	
PR08	18	F	4	5	2,300	Regional	\$50	800	APR	

*Notes:* Years is years of practice; PR, FR refer to department size; organizational budget is in millions; empl. refers to organizational employees.

\*Number includes sales-related staff or production staff for educational training materials.

## **APPENDIX B**

### **Discussion Guide**

#### *Revisiting Fund-Raising Encroachment of Public Relations In Light of the Theory of Donor Relations*

##### **TOPIC OVERVIEW:**

Encroachment of public relations is defined as occurring when a manager from a department outside the public relations field manages the public relations department. Encroachment has been found to occur from the marketing, legal, human resources, and fund-raising departments.

In many cases, encroachment may precipitate a focus on one organizational public at the expense of others. Within charitable organizations, fund-raising encroachment of public relations may result in a primary focus on the donor.

Concerned about encroachment, Dr. Kathleen Kelly, a university professor, researcher, and public relations and fund-raising practitioner, developed a theoretical base for fund raising, with models of practice patterned on similar models developed several decades ago for public relations. Part of this theoretical construct, which she calls the theory of donor relations, includes the reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations, much the way investor relations can be viewed as a specialization of public relations in the for-profit arena.

Beyond creation of her theory of donor relations, Dr. Kelly later suggests that the reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations might be achieved within an organizational department focused on overall relationship management. Relationship management is a theory in which planning for and evaluation of public relations activities hinge primarily on the state of organization-public relationships. In relationship management, efforts focus not only on communication outputs—that is, on disseminating messages, developing publications, doing media relations, and so on—but also on creating measurable changes within the actual relationship that exists between an organization and each of its key publics.

The current research effort has been designed to investigate whether, and to what extent, fund-raising encroachment of public relations exists within a subset of the charitable organizations within Lutheran Services in America. Primarily, the research seeks to understand whether Dr. Kelly's suggestions concerning fund raising, public relations, and relationship management have “real-world” applicability.

##### **INTRODUCTION:**

Reiterate informed consent, voluntary nature of participation, and ability to end interview at any time.

- Make potential participant fully aware that responses will be taped for accuracy of transcription. Is that acceptable? (If not, thank the person for his or her time and end the process.)
- Research approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Missouri-Columbia. Explain process should concerns arise.
- Express appreciation for the participant's having earlier signed the informed consent document.

Discuss scope of research and next steps:

- Participants are being selected from within the Lutheran Services in America network because of its size and reliance on charitable giving. Participants have been selected based on their work within organizations within specific geographies or size of organizations.
- Participants include an equal number of fund-raising and public relations practitioners.
- In all cases, the senior practitioner has been asked to participate.

Additional notes:

- Your opinions count. Be truthful. No right or wrong answers.
- All comments will be anonymous. No one will be quoted by name or described in such a way as to make the person identifiable.
- Re-emphasize confidentiality (explained in informed-consent process)
- While several questions have straightforward answers, most are designed to elicit your views on key questions surrounding fund-raising encroachment of public relations, reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations, and the theory and use of relationship management.
- Explain interview is being recorded and then transcribed; names will not be appended to the transcript; identifying organization names will be marked as [omitted] in the transcript.

## **QUESTIONS:**

### **Public Relations/Fund-Raising Interaction & Structure**

1. To whom does the senior public relations practitioner report?
2. To whom does the senior fund-raising practitioner report?
3. How are the public relations and fund-raising departments administratively structured?
4. If the two units are structurally related, what field represents the training and background of the senior leader?
5. In what ways do the public relations and fund-raising departments interact?

Probe: Is this structure relatively new or long-standing?

Probe: Are there any plans to change this structure? If so, what are they? What precipitated them?

Probe: Is one department, if separate, perceived as more supportive of the other? Can one department exist without the other?

Probe: If one person is responsible for management of both functions, what is the estimated percentage of time accorded each function?

6. Do you believe there is an “ideal” structural relationship between public relations and fund raising? Explain why you believe that way. Explain details.

#### **Indicators of/Potential for Fund-Raising Encroachment**

7. Has senior management ever promoted an individual from a profession other than public relations to manage the public relations department? Explain circumstance.
8. Has senior management ever moved an individual laterally from a department other than public relations to manage the public relations department? Explain circumstance.
9. Has senior management ever hired an individual from a profession other than public relations to manage the public relations department? Explain circumstance.
10. **For the senior public relations practitioner:** Do you spend the majority of your time on news releases, writing and/or designing publications, writing speeches, taking photographs, and so on. OR ... do you spend the majority of your time planning programs, scanning the environment, identifying publics important to the organization, and making policy decisions that relate to externally oriented, long-term strategic efforts.

Probe: Can you provide a percentage?

11. **For the senior fund-raising practitioner:** In your estimation, does the senior public relations practitioner ... spend the majority of his/her time on news releases, writing and/or designing publications, writing speeches, taking photographs, and so on. OR ... on planning programs, scanning the environment, identifying publics important to the organization, and making policy decisions that relate to externally oriented, long-term strategic efforts.

Probe: Can you offer an estimated percentage of each?

12. The organizational dominant coalition is the senior-management, decision-making group that has power to make and guide strategic direction for the organization. Is the senior public relations practitioner represented on that group? Is the senior fund-raising practitioner represented on that group?

Probe: Why or why not, dependent on circumstances?

13. Which function do you believe the organizational dominant coalition believes is more important to organizational success? Why do you believe as you do?
14. Which publics do you believe your organization deems as most important? Why?  
Probe: What aspects of the way this public is treated make you believe this?

### **Perceptions of Organizational Public Relations Models/Fund-Raising Models**

15. How do you define/how do you believe your organization defines success in fund raising?

Prompt: Do you believe it defines fund-raising success primarily in terms of total dollars raised?

Prompt: Do you believe the organization defines success in fund raising primarily in terms of the development and maintenance of mutually beneficial relationships with donors?

Prompt: If both, which is viewed as more important to perceived success in fund raising? Why do you believe this?

16. How do you define public relations?

Probe: What most appeals to you about this definition? What are its drawbacks?

Probe: Do you believe others within your organization would define public relations in the same way?

Probe: Do you believe this definition helps to guide the way in which you practice public relations organizationally?

17. How do you define public relations success or effectiveness within the organization?

18. How do you define the role of public relations in terms of fund raising?

Prompt: How or in what ways do you believe these two functions are interrelated?

19. I am going to read four brief descriptions of the ways in which public relations has sometimes been characterized. I'd like you to indicate which way or ways best typifies how you conduct public relations.

- Do you spend the majority of your time promoting the organization, with a focus on seeking attention from the media?
- Do you operate more under what might be termed an "organizational journalist" model, in which you seek to provide accurate, truthful information about the organization to your various publics?

- Do you employ research to craft messages to be more effective in gaining public support for your organization, usually without any behavioral change on the part of the organization? The messages typically are used to persuade.
- Do you use what some call two-way communications. In a conflictive situation, for example, bargaining, negotiating, and conflict-resolution efforts are used to bring your organization and its publics into some form of accord, sometimes, in fact, with the organization changing in response to the needs or desires of its publics?

Probe: If mixed, percentage. Allow, also for a mixed-motives approach.

20. I am going to read four brief descriptions of the ways in which fund raising has sometimes been characterized. I'd like you to indicate which way or ways best typifies how you conduct fund raising.

- Do you use emotion-based messages and images to solicit a response to a specific cause, as if often done in direct mail?
- Do you attempt to enlighten your publics with truthful information that describes organizational needs?
- Do you attempt to persuade giving through dissemination of messages based on research?
- Do you attempt to obtain mutual understanding between the organization and your donors, employing two-way communication with effects balanced between both parties? Do you function so that you are as concerned about what you do for the donor as the donor can do for the organization?

Probe: If mixed, percentage? Also, allow for a mixed-motives approach.

21. The next question is probably the most theoretical. Some public relations scholars believe that excellence theory, from which the four models are derived, is restrictive, particularly in terms of the fact the two-way symmetrical model is offered as always being the most effective and ethical. The idea behind it is that when an organization gives up something it wants, it will also gain more of something else it wants. The idea is to be in a two-way symmetrical relationship at all times. In this model, you might act as a public relations practitioner, trying to change the mind of the organizational dominant coalition as much as the mind of a public.

An alternative theory advances the concept that all interactions between an organization and its various publics take place on a continuum between two opposite points, advocacy—not legislative advocacy; rather, it essentially means arguing for your case as an organization—and accommodation, in which you give in to the public. One example I've used relates to a shelter that you might wish to build in a neighborhood. Advocacy would focus only on the organization's

needs—that is, we'll build the shelter no matter what the public wants or feels; accommodation would give in to the public wish that you not build the shelter. Between those two points and along this continuum are numerous factors—there are 86 contingent factors, in fact—that can affect the stance or location of an organization on that continuum at a given time regarding a given public, involving different degrees of advocacy and accommodation. That is, your position in relation to the public will change based on a variety of both internal and external factors. As the situation changes, your position or stance may change. Which theory, in your opinion as a practitioner, do you believe provides a more accurate representation of your actual practice? That way, which model of practice do you believe better typifies how you experience or conduct public relations – the focus on two-way communication as always the most ethical and effective or the continuum between advocacy and accommodation?

Probes: Why? Do you believe that type of theory should be incorporated into how you practice, particularly in terms of how you manage relationships?

### **Relationship Management Understanding/Indicators**

22. In what ways would you attempt to manage or cultivate relationships?
23. What does the phrase relationship management mean to you?
24. There are a number of indicators that have been found by researchers in terms of the organization-public relationship. One set describes four elements that Dr. Kelly has incorporated into her advocacy of relational stewardship. These are, and I'd like you to discuss your agreement or disagreement with each, in terms of public relations and fund raising, and if you take any of these steps and, if not, would find them to be helpful:
  - a. Reciprocity, defined as "if you want to be helped by others, you must help them." At the fund-raising level, it's been characterized as showing gratitude.
  - b. Responsibility, defined at the basic level as keeping your word—relational responsibility.
  - c. Reporting—keeping publics informed, tied to demonstrating your accountability to those publics that are affected by or may affect the organization.
  - d. Relationship nurturing: keeping publics at the forefront of the organizational consciousness; one-way or two-way communication. Representation on advisory boards, etc.
25. Do you define relationships as the primary unit of analysis in evaluating the effectiveness of your organizational public relations/fund-raising programs? In what ways do you analyze efforts?

Probe: Did you know researchers have isolated various dimensions of the organization-public relationship?

26. Do you believe relationship-cultivation strategies form the basis for organizational public relations efforts? If so, in what ways? What do you do to enhance relationships?
27. Do you believe relationship-cultivation strategies form the basis for organizational fund-raising efforts? If so, in what ways? What do you do to enhance relationships?
28. If researchers provided survey tools to measure the state of the organization-public relationship with a variety of publics, would you use them? Would you have the resources (such as expertise) or funding to use them? In what ways?

### **Indicators on Reconceptualization of Fund Raising**

29. Dr. Kathleen Kelly wrote two books on fund raising and public relations. Essentially, she postulated a theory of donor relations, a very comprehensive theory that borrows from public relations scholarship including those models I referenced and role theory. What partially led her to do that research was some earlier work on encroachment of public relations.  
Encroachment occurs when the senior leader of the public relations department is also the manager of another department. For example, encroachment by the marketing function was documented in the early 1990s. In encroachment, public relations often becomes a technical rather than strategic function focused on supporting the unit under which it has been placed, such as marketing. Second, it tends to remove public relations from a relationship with the dominant coalition and, third, it focuses on the primary audience of the umbrella unit under which it has been placed, at times ignoring other key publics. Dr. Kelly extended the work on encroachment of public relations to fund raising. So my research is investigating further her assertion that fund raising is a specialization of public relations, just as investor relations is a subset of public relations in the for-profit world. In this reconceptualization, she says fund raising is really about the management of relationships between donors and the organizations, not specifically about raising dollars. It would be reconceptualized within a public relations unit focused on relationship management concerned with all organizational audiences. That's a preface to the next set of questions. The first one is ... do you believe fund raising is a specialization of public relations?

Probe: Why or why not?

30. What effects do you believe a reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations would have on public relations operations?

Probe: Do you believe public relations practitioners would “accept” this reconfiguration? If so, why do you believe this? If not, why not?

31. What effects do you believe a reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations would have on fund-raising operations?

Probe: Do you believe fund-raising practitioners would “accept” this reconfiguration? If so, why do you believe this? If not, why not?

32. If fund raising were reconceptualized as a specialization of public relations within an integrated department focused on relationship management, what type of training and/or experience do you believe the senior leader of this department would need to have or acquire? Would it better if the person came from public relations or fund raising?

Probe: What do you believe this person’s primary responsibilities should be?

33. Do you believe such an integrated department would stem fund-raising encroachment of public relations? If so, in what ways? If not, why not?

34. Conversely, do you believe such an integrated department might, instead, unintentionally “institutionalize” fund-raising encroachment of public relations? If so, in what ways? If not, why do you believe that?

35. Do you believe there are ways to stem fund-raising encroachment of public relations other than, as Kelly (1994) proposed, “public relations encroachment” on fund raising, that is, through reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations?

36. If fund raising and public relations were combined in a unit focused on relationship management, how do you think that combined office would function?

37. Do you believe there are instances—for example in a crisis or similar event—when the goals of public relations and fund raising might be at odds? Can you think of other, similar situations?

38. Were there any topics or thoughts that arose during this interview that we did not address? Were there other points that you would like to make?

### **Demographic Data**

*The following questions are designed for demographic purposes and categorization as appropriate to the research. Again, please feel free not to answer any about which you feel uncomfortable.*

- Years of practice.

- Focus of practice.
- Gender.
- Title.
- Number of persons supervised.
- Primary responsibilities.
- Number of persons within the public relations department
- Budget, if available, for the public relations department.
- Number of persons within the fund-raising department.
- Budget, if available, for the fund-raising department.
- Size of organization in terms of persons served.
- Size of organization in terms of geographic spread.
- Size of organization in terms of budget.
- Size of organization in terms of numbers of employees.
- Accreditation in either public relations or fund raising?

*Express appreciation for participation.*

## APPENDIX C

### Consent Form to Participate in a Research Study

**Investigator's Name:** William Swanger  
**University of Missouri Project #:** 1115397  
**Date of Project Approval:**

**Tentative Study Title:**

***Reconsidering Fund-Raising Encroachment of Public Relations In Light of Relationship Management Theory***

### **Introduction**

If there is anything you do not understand, please ask for clarification.

Encroachment of public relations is defined as occurring when a manager from a department outside the public relations field (such as marketing) manages the public relations department. In many cases, encroachment may precipitate a focus on one organizational public at the expense of others. Within charitable organizations, fund-raising encroachment of public relations may result in an overarching focus on the donor, with lessened or no attention paid to other strategic publics that can constrain the organization's ability to achieve its mission.

Encroachment has been found to reduce the effectiveness of public relations by diminishing its power or appropriating organizational resources, making its practitioners primarily supportive communication technicians, or by blocking public relations practitioners' access to organizational dominant coalitions (generally, the organization's senior decision-making leadership).

Following several studies of fund-raising encroachment of public relations, Dr. Kathleen Kelly, a university professor, researcher, and public relations and fund-raising practitioner, developed a theoretical basis for fund raising. Part of what she calls the theory of donor relations includes the proposed reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations, much the way investor relations can be viewed as a specialization of public relations in the for-profit arena. Dr. Kelly later suggested that the reconceptualization of fund raising as a specialization of public relations might be achieved most readily within an organizational department focused on overall relationship management or cultivation.

Relationship management represents one of the more recent and prominent theories of public relations under which planning for and evaluation of public relations activities hinge primarily on the state of relationships between the organization and its various publics. Public relations efforts are focused not only on communication outputs—that is, on disseminating messages, developing publications, doing media relations, and so on—

but also on creating measurable positive changes within the relationships that exist between the organization and each of its key publics.

## **WHY IS THIS STUDY BEING DONE?**

The current research effort has been designed to investigate whether, and to what extent, fund-raising encroachment of public relations currently exists within various charitable organizations, as well as knowledge and acceptance of relationship-management practices. Primarily, the research seeks to understand whether Dr. Kelly's suggestions concerning fund raising and public relations have "real-world" applicability.

This research, consisting of depth interviews, includes only people who choose to participate. As a study participant you have the right to know about this interview procedure so that you can make the decision whether or not to participate. The information presented here is simply an effort to make you better informed so that you may give or withhold your consent to participate in this research study. Please take your time to make your decision.

You are being asked to take part in this study because of your background, leadership, or other experience in public relations and/or fund raising.

In order to participate in this study, it will be necessary to give your written consent.

## **HOW MANY PEOPLE WILL TAKE PART IN THE STUDY?**

Approximately 18 to 20 people—both public relations and fund-raising practitioners—from organizations within Lutheran Services in America will be asked to participate in this study.

## **WHAT IS INVOLVED IN THE STUDY?**

Your comments and responses to a variety of questions will be recorded and analyzed with others' responses to provide potential answers to a variety of research questions related to fund-raising encroachment of public relations, relationship management, and the interrelationship of public relations and fund raising.

Participation means you agree to be interviewed for approximately one to two hours on a variety of subjects related to these research questions. Your answers will be recorded for transcription. However, all responses will be kept strictly confidential and your individual comments will be used in such a way as to minimize any possibility of connecting individuals with their comments.

## **HOW LONG WILL I BE IN THE STUDY?**

Your participation should consist only of the initial informed-consent discussion and then the depth-interview session. It is possible you may be contacted later for clarification of your comments should a question arise during transcription or thesis writing.

**You may stop participating at any time. Your decision to withdraw from the study will not affect you in any way.**

### **WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF THE STUDY?**

There appear to be minimal risks to participation in this study. The primary perceived risk is that, should comments be linked with you and those comments are regarded as negative toward a field such as public relations or fund raising, your reputation within that field might be affected. However, it is the goal of this study not to provide information that can be linked with any one individual. Further, the identity of those making responses will be kept strictly confidential by the investigator.

### **ARE THERE BENEFITS TO TAKING PART IN THE STUDY?**

The primary benefit for you is the satisfaction of adding to research that may make both public relations and fund raising more effective or enable a more seamless working relationship between the two functions. In addition, you may become more aware of current research in the fields of public relations and fund raising.

### **WHAT ABOUT CONFIDENTIALITY?**

Information produced by this study will be stored in the investigator's file and identified by a code number only. The code key connecting your name to specific information about you will be kept in a separate, secure location. Information contained in your records may not be given to anyone unaffiliated with the study in a form that could identify you without your written consent, except as required by law.

The results of this study may be published in a journal or used for teaching purposes. However, your name or other identifying information will not be used in any publication or teaching materials without your specific permission.

Electronic recordings used for transcription purposes will be erased following transcription.

### **WHAT ARE THE COSTS?**

There is no cost to you to participate in this study.

### **WHAT ARE MY RIGHTS AS A PARTICIPANT?**

**Participation in this study is voluntary. You do not have to participate in this study.**

### **WHOM DO I CALL IF I HAVE QUESTIONS OR PROBLEMS?**

If you have any questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research and/or concerns about the study, or if you feel under any pressure to enroll or to continue to participate in this study, you may contact the University of Missouri Institutional Review

Board (which is a group of people who review the research studies to protect participants' rights) at (573) 882-9585.

You may ask more questions about the study at any time. For questions about the study, contact:

William Swanger  
Principal Investigator  
[swangerb@diakon.org](mailto:swangerb@diakon.org)  
[wshcf@mizzou.edu](mailto:wshcf@mizzou.edu)  
(717) 795-0308

A copy of this consent form will be given to you to keep.

### **SIGNATURE**

I confirm that the purpose of the research, the study procedures, the possible risks and discomforts as well as potential benefits that I may experience have been explained to me. I have read this consent form and my questions have been answered. My signature below indicates my willingness to participate in this study.

---

Subject

---

Date

### **SIGNATURE OF STUDY REPRESENTATIVE**

I have explained the purpose of the research, the study procedures, the possible risks and discomforts as well as potential benefits and have answered questions regarding the study to the best of my ability.

---

Study Representative

---

Date

## **APPENDIX D**

### **Recruitment Posting**

#### *LSA Communicators Network Yahoo Group*

I am conducting thesis research for my master's degree from the University of Missouri - Columbia (School of Journalism; strategic communication focus). The work is tentatively entitled "Fund-Raising Encroachment of Public Relations Reconsidered in Light of Relationship Management Theory."

The research will touch on the topics of ...

- Various structural alignments of fund raising and public relations,
- Fund-raising encroachment of public relations (partly defined as the housing of the public relations function in a unit whose senior manager is a fund raiser [by training and responsibility]),
- The view, initially proposed by Dr. Kathleen Kelly, that fund raising is a specialization of public relations, and
- Familiarity with and use of the public relations theory of relationship management.

The research will consist of depth interviews, taking approximately one to two hours and conducted by telephone, with both senior fund-raising and public relations practitioners from within LSA organizations (the "universe" for this study). Participants' responses will be kept confidential. The proposal and research have been approved, respectively, by my thesis committee and the University of Missouri - Columbia Institutional Review Board.

Most likely, I will be contacting various LSA organizations for participation, but am extending this invitation to those within the LSA Communicators Network who would like to serve as initial contacts or who have particular interest in these subjects.

If you would like to participate in this research, please contact me as soon as possible, as noted here:

William Swanger, APR  
Vice President, Corporate Communications  
Diakon Lutheran Social Ministries

E-mail: [swangerb@diakon.org](mailto:swangerb@diakon.org)  
Telephone: (717) 795-0308 or (mobile) (717) 579-9913

Thank you.

Bill Swanger

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