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Finding Connections between Lobbying, Public Relations and Advocacy

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This study begins to connect our understanding of lobbying and public relations as communication activities. A survey of 222 registered lobbyists in Oregon reveals the range of communication activities in which they are engaged, as well as the range of organizations on whose behalf they lobby, and their description of their occupational role. Findings suggest that many lobbyists, like many public relations professionals, do think about their role as a form of advocacy. I then conclude by noting some of the contradictions and limitations of using the term advocacy as a way of describing the communication activities.

INTRODUCTION

Political scientists have long recognized the legitimate uses of lobbying in a democracy. Lobbying, as an accepted and legal process, allows the voice of citizen groups, associations, labor unions, corporations and others to be heard in the political arena. Lobbyists break down complicated issues and present the most pertinent information to legislators, staff members or committees in short documents or in quick one-on-one exchanges. This adds to the extensive research and evidence that usually accompanies proposed legislation. Increasingly, lawmakers rely on lobbyists for information.

Described in this way, lobbying is a communication function, and closely resembles the work of public relations professionals. Yet, lobbying, as a communication activity, is rarely discussed in the public relations literature. When it does appear, it is most often treated as a minor, specialized activity. Undergraduate public relations textbooks simply define lobbying as a function of public affairs: Heath and Cousino (1990) describe it as a function of issues management; Toth (1986) recognizes it as a specialized area of public relations; Guth and Marsh (2000) suggest that lobbyists pass on persuasive information to government officials; and Cutlip, Center, and Broom (2000) define it as a function of public affairs that builds and maintains relations with government primarily for the propose of influencing legislation and regulation. Cursory descriptions constitute the extent of the public relations research on lobbying.

The purpose of this study is to begin connecting our understanding of lobbying and public relations as communication activities. A survey of 222 registered lobbyists in Oregon reveals the range of communication activities in

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which they are engaged, as well as the range of organizations on whose behalf they lobby, and their description of their occupational role. Based on their responses and their descriptions of their occupational role, this article found that many lobbyists, like many public relations professionals, do think about their role as a form of advocacy.

Lobbying: A Constitutionally Protected Communication Process

Lobbying, one of the oldest professions, has always been part of our political and legislative system (Zorack, 1990). By definition, lobbying usually involves attempting to influence legislation. Zorack explains:

> Lobbying has been defined in many ways but, in essence, it is the right of any citizen or interest group to petition government or Congress and provide information designed to influence the passage or defeat of any legislation of the United States. (p. 24)

The Woodstock Theological Center, a non-profit research institute at Georgetown University, defines lobbying as “the deliberate attempt to influence political decisions through various forms of advocacy directed at policymakers on behalf of another person, organization, or group” (Arroyo, Connor, Gardner, Lacovar, & McCarthy, 2002, p. 82).

In 1960, Lester Milbrath, the so-called “father of lobbying research,” first analyzed lobbying from a communication perspective (Koeppl, 2000). Milbrath (1960) claims, “Communication is the only means of influencing or changing a perception; the lobbying process, therefore, is totally a communication process” (p. 32). Forty-five years later, Dondero and Lunch (2005) write, “Lobbying is a two-way communication process” (p. 87). They describe lobbyists as “great” communicators to legislators because they serve as liaisons between constituents and legislators.

Although it has always been a communication process, Koeppl (2000) and Terry (2001a) agree that the practice of lobbying has evolved since its inception. Koeppl (2000) defines lobbying as “the attempted or successful influence of legislative-administrative decisions by public authorities through interested representatives. The influence is intended, implies the use of communication and is targeted on legislative and executive bodies” (p. 71). According to Dondero and Lunch (2005), lobbyists perform three primary functions in the legislative arena: 1) disseminate information needed for crafting legislation to legislators and their staff, 2) aggregate public opinion around major issues affecting their clients, and 3) help set the political agenda by creating coalitions to support or oppose specific bills (p. 86). In effect, lobbyists are the eyes and ears of the public, information providers, representatives of their clients and constituents, shapers of the government agenda, movers of legislation, coalition builders, and campaign contributors (p. 87).

Making the Connection: Lobbying, Public Relations and Advocacy

As players in the political arena, lobbyists represent, educate, and advocate on behalf of their clients' interests. Mayhew (1997) succinctly describes lobbying as "a process of influence that travels along routes sustained by exchanges of information" in which "both parties have an opportunity to make their message influential as well as informative" (p. 218). Therefore, lobbyists develop various methods, strategies, and tactics to gain access, inform, influence, and pressure policymakers who make policy decisions that affect the well being of their clients, the local, national, and international communities, and present and future generations of citizens. Lobbying efforts have become highly sophisticated and multidimensional, relying on a complex array of persuasive devices.

Multiple case studies explaining methods, practices and models have been written to demonstrate the functional nature of lobbying. Browne (1998) finds this sort of research necessary because as he explains:

> "Their techniques are many. This certainly seems a big change, at least at first glance, from the early days of American government when lobbyists were named for their simple penchant for hanging out in congressional lobbies – the halls – waiting to corral a passing legislator. Modern lobbying involves far more. In reality, it always did – more than most people realize. Its techniques include not only the contacts made to advocate issues, and the research needed to make any deal, there's also a great amount of what might best be called lobbying foreplay." (p. 62)

Furthermore, he stresses that lobbyists need to be ready at all times to cover every base because "it is much more than just a pleasant interlude between a lobbyist and a public official" (Browne, 1998, p. 63). Current theories and social science models agree that information is at the heart of the lobbying process (Mayhew, 1997, p. 219). Dondero and Lunch (2005) note, "lobbyists today rely on more businesslike relationships built on delivering credible information" (p. 89).

The above definitions reveal that lobbying is a communicative process, similar to public relations, that attempts to persuade a target audience, in this case public policy makers, on behalf of a client, oftentimes interest groups. This research defines lobbying as "the act of publicly representing an individual, organization, or idea with the object of persuading targeted audiences to look favorably on – or accept the point of view of – the individual, the organization, or the idea" (Edgett, 2002, p. 1).

The words advocacy and advocate are frequently found in discussions, definitions, and descriptions of both lobbying and public relations. For instance, the American League of Lobbyists, the national professional association dedicated exclusively to lobbying, and the Capitol Club, a professional association of state lobbyists in Oregon, uses the terms advocacy and lobbying interchangeably. The American League of Lobbyists defines lobbying as “advocacy of a point of view, either by groups or individuals,” (ALL, n.d.) and the Capitol Club describes itself as “an organization of professional advocates” (Capitol Club, n.d.). Additionally, advocacy is one of the professional values included in the Public Relations Society of America’s “Member Code of Ethics.” Upon joining PRSA, the world’s largest organization for public relations practitioners, members pledge to serve the public interest by acting as responsible advocates for those they represent by providing a voice in the marketplace of ideas, facts, and viewpoints to aid informed public debate (PRSA, n.d.).

To differentiate between lobbying and advocacy, Ezell (2001) considers lobbying one of many advocacy tactics that seek to make a difference. Advocacy consists of purposive efforts to change specifically existing and/or purposed policies or practices on behalf of or with a specific client or group of clients (Ezell, 2001). This research defines advocacy as such. In their book on argumentation, Rybacki and Rybacki (1991) also note the primacy of enacting change. They define advocates as individuals who argue in favor of a change in belief or behavior. In her framework for ethically desirable public relations advocacy, Edgett (2002) defines advocacy as “the act of publicly representing an individual, organization, or idea with the object of persuading targeted audiences to look favorably on – or accept the point of view of – the individual, the organization, or the idea” (p. 1). Thus, advocacy is a central function of both public relations and lobbying.

Public Relations Roles Research

A stream of research grounded in a functional approach to communication has chronicled the roles public relations practitioners perform and the effects these roles have on a public relations practitioner’s professional development (Acharya, 1985; Broom, 1982; Broom & Dozier, 1986; Broom & Smith, 1979; Dozier, 1992; Dozier & Broom, 1995; Gordon & Kelly, 1999; Jackson, 1982; Leitchy & Springston, 1996; Marshall, 1980; Terry, 2001b; Toth, Serini, Wright, & Emig, 1998). Broom and Smith’s (1979) seminal role study triggered this line of roles research when they asked the following research questions: How do public relations clients view their consultants? What type of performance will earn high ratings and what type will rate low?

In their initial study, Broom and Smith (1979) explicated the initial five practitioner role models. Dozier (1992) reduced the roles to a manager-technician dichotomy based on a series of studies that indicated these two roles were empirically and conceptually distinct, whereas the expert prescriber, communication liaison, and problem-solving process facilitator roles were not. The parenthetical notes indicate whether Broom and Smith's (1979) roles are considered managerial level or technician level.

- Communication process facilitator (manager): Practitioner operates as a source of information, an "interpreter and communication link" (Newsom and Scott, 1976, p. 22), to ensure "the parties involved have adequate information for dealing with each other and for making decisions of mutual interest" (Broom & Smith, 1979, p. 50).

- Problem-solving process facilitator (manager): Practitioner collaborates with other managers to define and solve problems. "As a member of the management team relationship in which the consultant helps the organization apply a rational problem-solving process that involves key organizational actors in public relations planning and programming" (Broom & Dozier, 1986, p. 39).

- Expert prescriber (manager): Practitioner "operates *as an authority* on both the public relations problem and the solution that should be implemented" (Broom & Smith, 1979, p. 49). The practitioner takes full responsibility for the implementation of the program while other managers get back to their usual business knowing that the "PR expert" will handle things.

- Technical services provider (technician): A practitioner is expected to produce communication materials for the public relations effort. Such practitioners are hired for their communication skills and media experiences. Communication technicians do not engage in collaboration or decision making activities.

- Acceptant legitimizer (technician): Practitioners play a "nondirective, supportive role" where they are often subordinated to this position in highly structured organizations (Broom & Smith, 1979, p. 53). While this role has been abandoned in most roles research, Terry (2001b) suggests, "there is a productive part to be played by these sympathetic listeners and empathetic supporters in the drama of public relations practice" (p. 248).

The roles public relations practitioners play are not necessarily mutually exclusive, however. For instance, various clients and multiple campaigns may demand different responsibilities from the same practitioner. But Broom and Smith (1979) note, "a practitioner develops a dominant pattern of job-related behavior through individual preference and training, and in response to others' expectations and situational constraints" (p. 48).

Although the functions remained the same, Dozier, L. A. Grunig, & J. E. Grunig, (1995) slightly altered the terminology of the four public relations roles (communication manager, senior adviser, media relations, and communication technician) when they measured excellence in public relations and communication management for the Excellence Study, a major, multi-year research project sponsored by the International Association of Business Communicators (IABC) Research Foundation. The study involved questionnaires and interviews with thousands of public relations practitioners and business executives around the world.

In her quest to “recast the roles of the public relations practitioner from functionalist approach to a interpretive perspective that is more reflective of our human nature” (p. 237), Terry (2001b) suggested that lobbyists personify all five of Broom and Smith’s original role models and embody all seven of Burke’s motivational dynamics in their public relations role performance. In addition to skewing toward either the manager or the technician role, Terry also concluded that lobbyists “enact their practitioner part more discretely rather than what appears to be a more typically integrated manager-technician enactment of the traditional public relations practitioner” (p. 252). She attributes this “either-or proposition” to variables unique to the lobbying profession: lobbyists as hired guns versus employees of organizations, the representation of issues versus organizations, the job complexity of lobbying, and the seasonality of lobbying.

Integrating Lobbying and Public Relations Roles

The concept of lobbying as an information-providing communication process is seldom discussed in the public relations body of knowledge. To date, the extant research has not examined how lobbyists conceptualize their professional work. This article seeks to clarify the apparent resemblances between the communication activities of lobbyists and public relations practitioners. Since scholarly literature does not adequately define lobbying as a communication process, the public often misconstrues the concept of lobbying and its role in a democratic society.

Despite the long line of public relations roles research, only one study to date has examined the roles lobbyists enact in their professional activities (Terry, 2001b). Responding to a call to focus more on the individual in public relations research in the 21st century (Dozier and Lauzen, 2000; Heath, 2000), Terry (2001b) attempted to “put a human face back on public relations practitioners” by exploring what motivates them (p. 236). Shifting away from the traditional line of public relations role research that has primarily concentrated on functional activities, Terry’s research demonstrates “what may distinguish a technician from a manager, for example, and perhaps even a lobbyist from a nonprofit fundraiser, involves distinctly human motivations that drive and inspire them” (p. 241). After interviewing 37 former and current registered lobbyists in Texas, Terry concludes:

> Managers are types of teachers, governors, and defenders who are looking to cure ills such as ignorance, chaos, and conflict. Technicians are servants, pontificators, and entertainers; they serve rightful interests, lend supportive sympathy sometimes in the face of overwhelming odds, and keep a stiff upper lip when nothing else seems to be working. (p. 260)

The conception of lobbying and the public relations roles lobbyists enact can be extracted from this research, but the relationship is not explicitly discussed. The current study seeks to formalize this relationship by addressing the following research questions:

RQ1: Do lobbyists define their work as advocacy?

RQ2: What public relations roles do lobbyists enact?

RQ2a: Does role perception affect definitions of lobbying?

METHOD

This research employed quantitative research methodology because it seeks to describe the behavior of an unstudied population. Surveys are powerful tools for gathering primary data because the desired information comes directly from the people being surveyed. Thus, data were collected from self-administered questionnaires.

Even though samples seem to be a standard procedure in survey research, a census was conducted for the current study because it was practical and valuable to this particular research. Because the types of state lobbyists vary tremendously from contract lobbyists to full-time public agency employees, it was necessary to reach as many members of the population as possible. Therefore, all registered lobbyists in Oregon were invited to participate in this study. In total, 222 responses were received, resulting in a 32.5% response rate.

Of the total respondents, 66.2% were men and 33.7% were women. Nearly all of the respondents, 93.7%, identified themselves as White/Anglo. Four percent of the respondents identified themselves as either Black/African-American, Hispanic/Latino, or Asian/Pacific Islander. The majority of the respondents (60.1%) were between the ages of 40 and 60, and 76% of the respondents were over the age of 40. The respondents to the current study are well educated, with more than 90% of the respondents earning a bachelor’s degree or higher. More than half (51.8%) reported earning an advanced degree: 25.2% reported earning a master’s degree and 26.6% reported earning either a Ph.D., M.D., or J.D.

Ginny Lang, president of the Capitol Club, a professional association of state lobbyists in Oregon, agreed that this profile fits her characterization of

Oregon lobbyists. However, she recognizes that more women and younger people are entering the field. "In 1990, I was still among only a handful of women who were lobbying in Oregon," said Lang, who currently is a corporate lobbyist for Qwest Communications International, Inc. (Lang, personal communication, May 23, 2006)

More than one third of the respondents to the current survey reported their current organizational setting as a non profit organization. Other respondents identified their current organization settings as: public sector (23%), lobbying firms (13.5%), corporations (10.8%), and university (4.5%). Only five percent of the respondents reported their current organizational setting as either a public affairs agency or a public relations agency. Additionally, respondents who checked 'other' for their current organizational setting reported a range of settings: unions, law firms, trade associations, state agency, consulting firm, community college, public corporation, and health care professional association. Thus, the organizational settings of lobbyists in Oregon vary.

Twenty percent of the respondents reported being contract lobbyists and 19% reported their current job title as public affairs. Only five percent reported public relations as their current job title. Fifty-six percent of the respondents to the current survey reported 'other' as their current job title, with more than 35 different job titles being reported by respondents. The most common job title was director, including executive directors, program directors, policy directors and organizing directors. Twenty respondents specified their current job title as either governmental relations or governmental affairs. Other job titles reported include: attorneys, elected officials, university presidents, environmental advocate and radio/TV co-host and co-producer.

More than 60% of the respondents belonged to the Capitol Club. Nine respondents reported being members of PRSA while only one respondent reported being a member of the American League of Lobbyists, the national professional association dedicated exclusively to lobbying. Forty-three percent of the respondents reported being members of other professional organizations, with the Oregon State Bar being reporting the most. Respondents to the current survey also reported belonging to professional organizations that are particular to their specific line of work. For example, respondents reported being members of the following professional organizations: Association of Counties, Oregon Dental Hygienists Association, and American Fisheries Society.

FINDINGS

Advocacy and Lobbying

Research question 1 asked if lobbyists define their work as advocacy where advocacy is defined as "the act of publicly representing an individual, organization, or idea with the object of persuading targeted audiences to look favorably on – or accept the point of view of – the individual, the organization, or the idea" (Edgett, 2002, p. 1). Overall, respondents (N = 222) agreed that this definition describes their work (M = 4.18, with 5 = strongly agree and 1 = strong disagree). In fact, 36.5% of the respondents strongly agreed (i.e. responded to this question with a '5') and 50% agreed (i.e. responded to this question with a '4') that Edgett's definition of advocacy describes their work. Thus, Edgett's definition of advocacy serves as an appropriate definition of lobbying because more than 85% of respondents to the current study agreed with the statement as a description of their work.

Respondents whose full-time job is lobbying (N = 78) reported greater agreement with the definition (M = 4.29, SD = .65) than respondents who lobby part-time (N = 136, M = 4.12, SD = .84). However, the results of a *t* test for independent means did not reveal a significant statistical difference between these two groups, (*t* (212) = 1.60, p = .110). These findings indicate that both full-time and part-time lobbyists agree that Edgett's definition of advocacy defines their work.

Using Edgett's definition of advocacy to define lobbying strengthens current definitions and characterizations of lobbying found in the scholarly literature and promoted by professional organizations and institutions. Most importantly, defining lobbying as advocacy affirms its fit with the agency model of professional-client relationship, which creates a framework to discuss the ethics of lobbying.

Influence is a consistent theme in the descriptions and definitions of lobbying (Arroyo, Connor, Gardner, Lacovar, & McCarthy, 2002; Koeppl, 2002; Mayhew, 1997; Zorack, 1990). For example, the Woodstock Theological Center defines lobbying as "the deliberate attempt to *influence* [italics added] political decisions through various forms of advocacy directed at policymakers on behalf of another person, organization, or group" (Arroyo, Connor, Gardner, Lacovar, & McCarthy, 2002, p. 82). Zorack (1990) explains lobbying as "the right of any citizen or interest group to petition government or Congress and provide information designed to *influence* [italics added] the passage or defeat of any legislation of the United States" (p. 24). Defining lobbying as "the act of publicly representing an individual, organization, or idea with the object of persuading targeted audiences to look favorably on – or accept the point of view of – the individual, the organization, or the idea" (Edgett, 2002, p. 1) demonstrates the purpose and function of lobbying without specifically referring to influence.

Yet, the notion of persuasion may still create negative connotations of the practice because both scholars and practitioners argue that lobbying is much more than persuasion. For instance, Berry (1977) notes that lobbyists must serve as experts, providing both technical and legal information during the communication process, because knowledge is more important than persuasion. When given the opportunity to describe their work, some respondents to the current study compared themselves to teachers who educate legislators.

Respondents who disagreed with the statement (N = 10) were asked to describe their work in one sentence. Many of these descriptions included some type of educational component because the information lobbyists provide to legislators is crucial to the decision making process. For example, a full-time lobbyist who represents both corporate and non-profit organizations wrote, "Lobbying is very much like being a teacher; one must take very complex information and synthesize it into easily understood materials to provide legislators with facts upon which to make decisions." Another respondent who lobbies full-time for a labor union described his job as "primarily educating those who can make a decision." Other respondents felt that Edgett's definition of advocacy overemphasizes the persuasive nature of lobbying and fails to include its educational element. For example, a full-time lobbyist who works for a non-profit organization noted, "it is not just persuading but educating them on the issue at hand – or results of choices." A veteran lobbyist of 15 years who agreed with the offered definition added, "It's not all persuasion. Presenting the full range of facts and educating the public also creates a more favorable response." These statements indicate that education and persuasion often work in tandem during lobbying campaigns. Nevertheless, the habit of engaging in persuasion but calling it information raises ethical issues about the advocacy role that will be explored further in another article.

Although lobbying is rarely described specifically as an educational activity, this function can be explicated from definitions that characterize lobbyists as information purveyors (Dondero & Lunch, 2005; Zorack, 1990). Arroyo, Connor, Gardner, Lacovar, and McCarthy (2002) describe lobbying as "a valuable educational function, because honest, well-informed lobbyists provide policymakers and their staffs with relevant information and incisive arguments and analysis bearing on matters of public debate" (p. 86). Disseminating information to legislators and their staff is a primary function of lobbying. Lobbyists often break down complex policy issues for legislators who do not have the time to thoroughly examine all of the information; therefore, lobbyists play a vital role in the formation of public policy. Nevertheless, their role as advocates could diminish the educational function of lobbying because lobbyists "make their messages influential as well as informative" (Mayhew, 1997, p. 218). This exchange of information is a crucial communication process in our democratic society, but since lobbyists have a particular end goal in mind, the passage or defeat of legislation that is in their clients' interests, labeling them as educators may be a mischaracterization.

Public Relations Roles and Lobbying

Research question 2 asked what public relations roles lobbyists enact. Respondents were asked to indicate how often they perform a range of 16 tasks in their day-to-day professional activities, based on scale anchors of 1 (never) and 7 (very frequently). The 16-item scale that was used in the Excellence Study (Dozier, L. A. Grunig, & J. E. Grunig, 1995) and in subsequent studies (O'Neil, 2003; Kelleher, 2001) was slightly adapted to measure these factors. Since four items were used to measure each of the four public relations roles (communication manager, senior adviser, media relations, and communication technician) a minimum score of 4 and a maximum score of 28 were generated for each of the four roles.

Results indicate that respondents perceived themselves performing all four public relations roles: communication manager role; senior adviser role; media relations role; and communication technician role. The mean scores of the different public relations roles are found in Table 1. Table 2 outlines the mean scores for part-time and full-time lobbyists.

While lobbyists perceive themselves performing all of the public relations roles, some roles are more readily adapted than others. For instance, a mean score of 20.35 indicates that respondents perceive themselves performing tasks of the communication manager somewhat frequently, where a mean score of 28 would indicate very frequently.
In comparison, the mean score of 13.02 for the communication technician role indicates that respondents do not perceive themselves performing such activities very often. These findings indicate that lobbyists, both full-time and part-time, more frequently engage in communication management activities than traditional communication technician tasks.

Table 1. *Mean Scores of Different Public Relations Roles*

Role	Mean Frequency*	Standard Deviation
Communication Manager	20.35	5.73
Senior Adviser	20.64	5.19
Media Relations	14.07	6.53
Communication Technician	13.02	5.63

*4 = Never, 28 = Very Frequently

Table 2. *Mean Scores of Different Public Relations Roles – Full-Time and Part-Time*

	Full-Time Lobbyists		Part-Time Lobbyists	
Role	Mean*	SD	Mean*	SD
Communication Manager	21.76	4.67	19.44	6.18
Senior Adviser	21.42	4.77	20.09	5.43
Media Relations	14.02	6.25	14.06	6.74
Communication Technician	13.76	5.29	12.58	5.80

*4 = Never, 28 = Very Frequently

Results of the current study indicate that lobbyists perceive themselves playing two different public relations roles. An a priori test was computed to determine if there is a difference between the mean scores of the four public relations roles. The findings indicate that there is not a significant difference between the mean score of the communication manager (M = 20.34) and the mean score of the senior adviser (M = 20.64 where t = -.60). Thus, lobbyists perceive they undertake both these roles on a fairly regular basis. Likewise, the mean score of the media relations role (M = 14.07) is not significantly higher than the mean score of the communication technician role (M = 13.02) where t = -1.72). However, the a priori test determined that the mean score of the senior adviser role (M = 20.64) is significantly higher (t = 10.22, p < .001) than the mean score of the media relations role (M = 10.01), indicating a dichotomy of communication management roles and communication technician roles. Again this finding indicates that lobbyists perceive they take on these roles less often than the communication manager/senior adviser roles, yet take on these roles occasionally during the lobbying process.

These findings contest Terry's (2001b) conclusion that lobbyists tend to skew toward either the manager or the technician role. "They [lobbyists] seem to enact their practitioner parts more discretely rather than what appears to be a more typically integrated manager-technician enactment of the traditional public relations roles" (p. 252). Terry suggests this "either-or proposition" may be a reflection of variables unique to the lobbying profession (p. 252). However, the strong assumptions she makes about the industry are not necessarily justified by her research. For instance, Terry suggests this "either-or proposition" reflects the jobs performed by hired guns versus the lobbyists who are employees of the organizations they represent. The majority of the respondents to the current study identified themselves as employees of organizations and corporations. Only 13.5% of respondents identified their current organizational setting as a lobbying firm and 20% reported being contract lobbyists. Furthermore, Terry describes lobbying as a product-oriented practice because lobbyists often represent issues rather than organizations. Even though issues management is a primary function of lobbying, it is fallacious to presume that lobbyists only represent issues. Terry also concludes that lobbyists are likely to enact this "either-or proposition" because of their job complexity. Although lobbying is a multifaceted profession, Terry fails to provide a standard by which to compare job complexity, which weakens her argument.

Because state legislative sessions in Oregon typically only meet during part of the year, seasonality definitely differentiates lobbying from other types of public relations. During legislative sessions, lobbyists spend the majority of their time at the capitol tracking bills, meeting with legislators and their staff, and building coalitions with groups who have similar interests. The tasks change during the interim, which is a time for lobbyists to sort out fallout from the previous session and work to set the scene for upcoming elections and sessions. The findings of the current study mirror those in a long line of public relations roles research that indicate the roles public relations practitioners perform are not mutually exclusive (Broom & Smith, 1979; Dozier, L. A. Grunig, J. E. Grunig, 1995; Terry, 2001b). “Most communicators play both manager and technician roles to varying degrees each day” (Dozier, L. A. Grunig, J. E. Grunig, 1995, p. 6).

Research Question 2a

Research question 2a examined if role perception affects definitions of lobbying. This research question was tested through the computation of a correlation between role perception and the definitions of lobbying as advocacy. A Pearson correlation coefficient measured the relationship between two variables, without distinction between the independent and dependent variables.

Strong, positive correlations (significant at the .01 level) were found between the communication manager role and the definition of lobbying as advocacy ($r = .289$, $p = .00$), between the media relations role and the definition of lobbying as advocacy ($r = .232$, $p = .001$), and between the communication technician role and the definition of lobbying as advocacy ($r = .223$, $p = .002$). Results also indicated a positive correlation (significant at the .005 level) between the senior adviser role and the definition of lobbying as advocacy ($r = .156$, $p = .030$). These correlations are positive (ranging from .00 to +1.00) because the variables changed in the same direction.

Activities associated with each of the public relations roles require lobbyists to become more vested in the organization, the client, or the issue. For example, authoritative power associated with the communication manager role (formal power to manage the communication function and make communication policy decisions) and the senior adviser role (informal power through suggestions, recommendations, and plans to the dominant coalition) contributes to practitioners defining their work as advocacy. Dozier, L. A. Grunig, and J. E. Grunig (1995) note that practitioners in the communication manager role “hold themselves accountable for the success or failure of communication programs” (p. 107). Lobbyists who enact the senior adviser role may define their work as advocacy because they work to establish the flow of two-way communication between organizations and publics. Additionally, practitioners who perform the communication technician role are responsible for the implementation of communication programs, which enables them to establish a bond to the organization. This connection may explain why lobbyists who enact the communication technician role define their work as advocacy.

The correlation between the media relations role and the definition of lobbying as advocacy indicates that lobbyists who perceive themselves as journalists-in-residence also define their work as advocacy. Dozier, L. A. Grunig, and J. E. Grunig (1995) explain, “In the media relations role, top communicators keep senior management posted about media coverage of the organization and coverage of issues important to the organization” (p. 112). The media relations role does not seem like it would easily adapt to the practice of lobbying because lobbyists are less concerned with the media and more focused on establishing relationships with legislators. However, Doug Barber, Vice President of Public Affairs at The Ulum Group, explains that the skills are the same, but the arena is different:

> At the Legislature, you don't have to know the media, you have to know politics. You have to know how the Legislature works, you have to know how a bill becomes law and where are the places you can influence it…And just like building relationships with media for public relations, you build relationships with legislators or staff or committee people to influence legislation. (D. Barber, personal communication, May 4, 2004)

Thus, lobbyists interpret this role as it relates to their professional activities in the public policy arena.

Summary of Results

This study found that both full-time and part-time lobbyists agreed that Edgett's definition of advocacy defines their work. The study also found that lobbyists more frequently engaged in communication management activities than traditional communication technician tasks. Results also indicated that lobbyists perceive themselves performing two public relations roles because findings indicate a dichotomy between the manager and technician roles. This study also found that role perception did affect the definition of lobbying as advocacy. Lobbyists who perceived themselves as communication managers, senior advisers, and communication technicians were more likely to agree with Edgett's definition of advocacy as lobbying.

IMPLICATIONS, LIMITATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to connect our understanding of lobbying and public relations as communication activities. I proposed using the concept of advocacy because it shows up as a term of analysis in both the political science and public relations literature. As the first research study investigating such a connection, this study systematically and scientifically examined attitudes and practices of a specialized group of public relations practitioners. Consequently, this study has generated numerous finding and provides directions for several areas of future research. On a theoretical level, this study supports the advocacy function of public relations and revives the long line of public relations roles research (Acharya, 1985; Broom, 1982; Broom & Dozier, 1986; Broom & Smith, 1979; Dozier, 1992; Dozier & Broom, 1995; Gordon & Kelly, 1999; Jackson, 1982; Leitchy & Springston, 1996; Marshall, 1980; Terry, 2001b; Toth, Serini, Wright, & Emig, 1998) by examining a specialized group of practitioners. This study also provides implications for practitioners because it validates the practice of lobbying as an information-providing communication activity. Moreover, the habit of engaging in persuasion but calling it information raises interesting ethical issues about the advocacy role.

A main limitation of this study is that it was conducted in a single state: Oregon. Because of its political culture, Oregon may be a special case. Thus, the results of the current study may not be generalizable to lobbyists in other states and federal lobbyists. Oregon lobbyists indicate a high sense of identification with their occupation, which Zeigler and Baer (1969) attribute to the existence of the Capitol Club.

Oregon may also be a special case because “during the last two decades of the twentieth century, Oregon’s politics became increasingly volatile, with environmental and natural-resource issues, field burning, gay rights, taxes, doctor-assisted suicide, school funding, and vote by mail elections among the more controversial matters before the public” (Robbins, 2002, Section 7, ¶ 1). At this point it is unknown how Oregon’s political culture could have affected the results of the current study because every state has a few issues that are salient to it. To be able to further generalize the results of this study, the self-administered mail survey could be sent to a random sample of registered lobbyists in multiple states.

Oregon State Law requires citizens, university presidents, CEOs and any other persons who spend more than 24 hours per year lobbying to register with the Oregon Government Standards and Practices Commission as lobbyists. Thus, the number of respondents who reported lobbying as their full time job (N = 85) limits findings from the current study as lobbying may be one of many responsibilities for respondents. It was beyond the scope of this study to assess how the part time nature of lobbying affects role performance and ethical perceptions. Memberships of state lobbying organizations should serve as populations for future research studies. This method would eliminate potential respondents who do not lobby as a practice or as a business but are registered lobbyists because of their personal interest in one particular bill.

Using established public relations job descriptions to measure the roles lobbyists perform is also a limitation of the current study because it diminishes job complexity and fails to consider the effect of seasonality. The everyday tasks lobbyists perform during a legislative session are vastly different than the activities they are involved in before elections. Even though their goals and objectives remain the same, the roles lobbyists play continually change. Furthermore, roles may also be a function of organizational setting, which varies from contract lobbyist to corporate lobbyists.

Even with these limitations, the current study has contributed to the public relations body of knowledge in several ways. First, it has examined an overlooked specialized group of public relations practitioners. It also extended the long line of public relations roles research by evaluating the roles of lobbyists and by measuring how role perception affects ethical considerations.

Furthermore, this research is important because it demonstrates that the information-providing role that lobbyists perform in the public policy arena is underplayed in academic literature while the persuasive aspects of the profession are overemphasized. McGrath (2005) points out, “Lobbyists certainly do a great deal more than pure lobbying” (p. 128). An exaggerated portrayal of lobbying that fails to embrace its theoretical, legal, and communication foundations is most often accepted in public vernacular. Public relations scholars should claim lobbying as its own and continue to develop research that addresses the theoretical, ethical and communication implications of this communications activity.

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