

Historical evolution of public relations psychology in Europe and the United States

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Abstract

The study provides a chronological review of public relations (PR) analysed from the perspective of psychology, highlighting milestones, concepts, theories and models. It offers a synthesis of its origins in Europe and how it was imported to the United States, where it was strongly implemented at the academic, political and business levels. The foundations of the emergence and development of PR have psychology as a fundamental pillar (Bernays, 1928) in understanding the propagandistic effects on people's social behaviour. Therefore, it seems that it would be practically impossible to understand and apply this construct throughout history without this joint interdisciplinary work, both in explaining individual and collective response and in diachronically changing behaviour in organizations (Grunig, 1976). An in-depth exploration is carried out of the international manuscripts published to date which highlight the interactions of PR with psychology in terms of public behaviour, leadership and behaviour within organizations. The results bring to light an international perspective of basic contributions and some historic gaps along the way. The identification of several key events from the past helps to understand better the general conceptual framework that connects PR and psychology. The research reveals that there is still a gap regarding the existence of a general theory to explain the history of PR psychology. Nevertheless, from a PR perspective, its psychological influence on the behaviours of the population and the persuasion of stakeholders seems indisputable.

Keywords: stakeholder; influence; persuasion; history; power

Resum. *Evolució històrica de la psicologia de les relacions públiques a Europa i Estats Units*

En aquest estudi es fa una revisió cronològica de les relacions públiques (RP) analitzada des del prisma de la psicologia i posant en relleu fites, conceptes, teories i models. S'hi ofereix una síntesi dels seus orígens a Europa i de com es van importar als Estats Units, on es van implementar amb força en els àmbits acadèmic, polític i empresarial. Les bases de l'aparició i desenvolupament de les RP compten amb la psicologia com a pilar fonamental (Bernays, 1928) a l'hora d'entendre els efectes propagandístics en la conducta social de les persones. Per tant, sembla que resultaria pràcticament impossible entendre i aplicar aquest constructe al llarg de la història sense aquesta labor conjunta interdisciplinària, tant a l'hora d'explicar la resposta individual i col·lectiva, com a l'hora de canviar diacrònicament el comportament de les organitzacions (Grunig, 1976). Es realitza una exploració en profunditat dels manuscrits internacionals publicats fins avui que posin de manifest les interaccions de les RP amb la psicologia en termes de comportament del públic, lideratge i conducta dins de les organitzacions. Els resultats treuen a la llum una perspectiva internacional d'aportacions bàsiques i algunes llacunes històriques en el camí. La identificació de diversos esdeveniments clau del passat ajuda a comprendre millor el marc conceptual general que connecta les relacions públiques i la psicologia. La recerca revela que encara existeix un buit quant a l'existència d'una teoria general que expliqui la història de la psicologia de les RP. No obstant això, des de la perspectiva de les RP sembla indiscutible la importància i la influència psicològica en la gestió dels comportaments de la població general, així com la persuasió i la comunicació amb els grups d'interès.

Paraules clau: grups d'interès; influència; persuasió; història; poder

Resumen. *Evolución histórica de la psicología de las relaciones públicas en Europa y Estados Unidos*

En este estudio se realiza una revisión cronológica de las relaciones públicas (RR. PP.) analizada desde el prisma de la psicología y poniendo de relieve hitos, conceptos, teorías y modelos. Se ofrece una síntesis de sus orígenes en Europa y de cómo se importaron a Estados Unidos, donde se implementaron con fuerza en los ámbitos académico, político y empresarial. Las bases de la aparición y desarrollo de las RR. PP. cuentan con la psicología como pilar fundamental (Bernays, 1928) a la hora de entender los efectos propagandísticos en la conducta social de las personas. Por tanto, parece que resultaría prácticamente imposible entender y aplicar dicho constructo a lo largo de la historia sin esta labor conjunta interdisciplinaria, tanto a la hora de explicar la respuesta individual y colectiva, como a la hora de cambiar diacrónicamente el comportamiento de las organizaciones (Grunig, 1976). Se realiza una exploración en profundidad de los manuscritos internacionales publicados hasta la fecha que pongan de manifiesto las interacciones de las RR. PP. con la psicología en términos de comportamiento del público, liderazgo y conducta dentro de las organizaciones. Los resultados sacan a la luz una perspectiva internacional de aportaciones básicas y algunas lagunas históricas en el camino. La identificación de varios acontecimientos clave del pasado ayuda a comprender mejor el marco conceptual general que conecta las relaciones públicas y la psicología. La investigación revela que todavía existe un vacío en cuanto a la existencia de una teoría general que explique la historia de la psicología de las RR. PP. No obstante, desde la perspectiva de las RR. PP. parece indiscutible la importancia y la influencia psicológica en la gestión de los comportamientos de la población general, así como la persuasión y la comunicación con los grupos de interés.

Palabras clave: grupos de interés; influencia; persuasión; historia; poder

1. Introduction

Difficulties in establishing a unanimous and plausible definition of public relations by academic experts in the field is still an undeniable challenge for researchers. Nevertheless, reviewing the studies directly relating to this matter, it is a fact that psychological factors are mentioned on several occasions. The communication process to create and leverage relationships with different stakeholders involves having extensive knowledge of human behaviour and how to deal with people. To do so, it is essential to work on a clearer conception of the multidisciplinary term “psychology of public relations”.

Within this context, the historical progression of the old Europe and the opportunities movement for expatriated pioneers in the United States may offer important data and reflections on this issue.

2. Objectives

The present research aims to produce a scientific synthesis of the main international texts published throughout history on the concomitances between the discipline of public relations (PR) and the different branches of psychology.

Special attention is paid to momentous events in Europe and the United States. The study aims to identify hidden relevant samples of occurrences that have taken place since the beginning of our era in terms of psychological factors that affect behaviours in organizations. These samples will be classified into a pool of four categories or societal dimensions: 1) education, 2) religion, 3) government policy and 4) entrepreneurship.

This study therefore has two key objectives:

O1: To explore, identify and synthesize previous scientific literature on the psychology of public relations as a multidisciplinary synergic concept.

O2: To identify significant real examples of events throughout history in which organizational strategies were based on PR and psychological methods.

3. Theoretical framework review

3.1. *The conceptualization of public relations*

One of the main errors in defining PR seems to be its own conceptual framework (Nelson, Cutlip and Center, 1959). The discipline has been attacked for the lack of a coherent definition that can explain the real objectives of PR (L'Etang, 2013: 220), probably caused by the lack of intellectual rigor applied and the exacerbated desire to differentiate it from bare propaganda. Castillo and Xifra (2006), in their bibliometric research of doctoral theses, also illustrate a lack of academic documentation by the pioneers of applied PR. Thus, it

seems that the theoretical framework of PR has been developed while interest has been raised from public and private organizations.

Several authors point out that PR is an immature science (Xifra, 2003), without a sufficient empirical body yet, in which the clarification of its own field is one of the main problems to be solved (Grunig, 1989); and this has not been attended to by communication scientists (Pavlik, 1987) in a formal and constant manner.

Notable among the numerous attempts to conceptualize PR is the one given by Grunig (1976), who understands PR as the deliberate and sustained effort to promote mutual understanding between the organization and its publics (Cutlip and Allen, 1971).

More recently, PR has been defined as “the science that deals with the communication processes through which mutually adaptive relationships are established and managed between a publicly relevant person or organization and the publics in its environment” (Xifra, 2003: 9). But what does seem clear, reviewing the studies directly relating to the subject, is that psychological factors are appealed to on numerous occasions in the process of generating these relationships with the different stakeholders. This gives rise to the conception of the multidisciplinary term “psychology of public relations”.

3.2. *Psychology in PR*

Psychology is also considered a relatively new discipline, which emerged in 1880 as an independent derivation of philosophy and physiology (White, 2008). The literature notes informational gaps in creating a general theory of the history of PR, as well as of PR psychology itself, despite the success of studies such as Castillo (2009), Van Ruler and Verčič (2004) and Opdycke and Miller (2009), which focus on a selection of relevant milestones in the history of the pragmatic and feasible evolution of both.

The initial knowledge bases used for PR emerged from the disciplines of psychology and sociology (Bernays, 1928: 958-959), particularly those topics concerning social interaction, cultural attitudes and prejudices transferred intergenerationally. To break this inertia to cultural biases and psychological responsiveness, leaders – social, religious and monarchical – created the phenomenon of public opinion. This *persuasive mission* was interpreted as a new technique originating in the context of psychology with the aim of:

- a) changing people’s opinions, doctrines, beliefs and even habits; and
- b) justifying requested actions appealing to a common purpose for the good of the whole community.

Efforts in explaining these psychological variables in the area of study of PR were made by several authors along the way. Some works especially stand out, such as those by Petty and Cacioppo (1986) regarding the elaboration likelihood model to explain the likelihood process between people. Worchel,

Cooper and Goethals (1988) also exceptionally worked on individual and collective psychological variables in organisational relationships. Ethical theory and the problem of the definition of PR revealed by Pearson (1990) also highlight the individual reconciliation of interests as a key driver.

Nevertheless, there are numerous fragments that focus on synergies between the art of connecting to targeted audiences and pragmatic concepts derived mainly from cognitive-behavioural psychology (Hyman and Sheatsley, 1947; Hovland, Janis and Kelley 1953; Janis, Feshbach and Hunt, 1953; Carroll, 1989; Ferguson, Weigold and Gibbs, 1984; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; L'Étang, 2009; Worchel et al., 1988; Pearson, 1990; Clarkson, 1995; Kelly, 1995; Broom, Casey and Ritchey, 1997; Chen and Chaiken, 1999; Xifra, 2003; Cialdini, 2007; Crilly, Schneider and Zollo, 2008; Berjillos et al., 2009; L'Étang, 2009; Petty and Briñol, 2014).

Social and organizational psychology seem to nurture PR as well (Bernays, 1928; Allport, 1935, Cutlip and Center, 1952; Etzioni, 1964; Cutlip and Allen, 1971; Wilson, 1975; Grunig, 1976; Bell and Bell, 1976; Carroll, 1989; Ferguson et al., 1984; Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Worchel et al., 1988; Grunig and Repper, 1992; Leakey and Lewin, 1994; Donaldson and Preston, 1995; Broom et al., 1997; Cancel et al., 1997; Mitchell, Agle and Wood, 1997; Luhmann, 1998; Chen and Chaiken, 1999; Hon and Grunig, 1999; Hallahan, 2000; Kochan and Rubinstein, 2000; Grunig and Hunt, 2003; Ledingham, 2003; Xifra, 2003; Esteno et al., 2004; Berger and Reber, 2005; Castillo and Xifra, 2006; Rawlins, 2006; White, 2008; Capriotti, 2013; Ruiz-Mora, Lugo-Ocando and Castillo-Esparcia, 2016; De Las Heras-Pedrosa, Ruiz-Mora and Paniagua, 2018; Torres-Mancera, 2021).

Over the years, an interesting holistic and systemic perspective of PR (Allport and Newcomb, 1954; Miller and Sanford, 1955; Bell and Bell, 1976; Katz and Kahn, 1978) was also developed. From this perspective, external (Bernays, 1928; Luhmann, 1998; L'Étang, 2009) and internal (Almansa, 2003; De Las Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2018) communicative strategies affect stakeholders' attitudes towards organisations.

3.3. Cognitive-behavioural psychology applied to PR

The study of people's behaviour has been a priority for PR since time immemorial, taking on an explicit role in timeless constructs such as Bernays' theory of propaganda and PR (1928). This interdisciplinary symbiosis between psychology and PR has helped both to understand individual and group responses and to improve the interaction between emitter and receiver, with the aim of informing, persuading or changing people's behaviour towards others (Grunig, 1976). This knowledge means that leaders could have certain power to bring very diverse opinions closer or to confront common attitudes to break alliances.

Among the most relevant theoretical psychological models applied to PR, the literature also emphasizes the *prosocial behaviour model* (Wilson, 1975;

Eisenberg and Mussen, 1989). This concept refers to a set of voluntary actions that are undertaken in order to correspond to an organisation, person or community for ethical reasons. Unlike altruism, in which no return of any kind is expected, such behaviour would consist of a particular action (Drezner and Huehls, 2015) that would illustrate the personal circumstances by which people choose whether to respond to a particular call.

But beyond the constructive interdisciplinary aspect, messages based on *fear and manipulation* (Janis et al., 1953) are also tools studied and available to the powerful to coerce behaviour. From this position forced by the intensity of the surrounding context and appealing to anxiety and possible aggression, the person values giving in to gain approval, power or simply to avoid danger. To help understand how to work on behaviours from a PR perspective, primary and secondary individual roles depending on attitude and interaction were identified by Clarkson (1995). In the same year, Donaldson and Preston (1995) studied instrumental and normative relationships from the behavioural angle.

Psychological barriers in communication and PR (Hyman and Sheatsley, 1947) are too important to be missed. To better understand its mechanism, Cutlip and Center (1952) focused on PR as a two-way process model that facilitates the flow of communication for mutual interests and understanding.

Almost the same year, Janis et al. (1953) studied persuasion through fear and manipulation. Other outstanding research to highlight includes: the study focusing on the emotional conditioning of feeling indebted, conducted by Leakey and Lewin (1994); the PR theoretical model based on three phases, namely relationship antecedents, the interaction process and the behavioural outcome of the contact (Broom et al., 1997); the “five audiences model” according to the degree of knowledge and involvement (Hallahan, 2000); and the behavioural prediction of attitudinal rapprochement or disengagement model (Petty and Briñol, 2014).

3.4. Social and organizational psychology in the professional PR environment

Social psychology contributes many recurring ideas in the theoretical and practical applications of PR, such as attitude and decision-making (Allport, 1935), the dynamics of expectations (Esteno et al., 2004) between organizations and people’s behaviour (Carroll, 1989), participation in projects through the connection with individual values and feelings (Crilly et al., 2008), involvement, meaning and reputation.

This branch of psychology works especially on the variables that affect or prevent conflicts in organizations (Worchel et al., 1988) due to: a) individual idiosyncrasies; b) the influence of organizations on people; c) dynamics and processes that affect relationships with stakeholders; d) the construction of leadership for management; e) negotiation skills; f) persuasion; and e) attitude towards change. Thus, it is no coincidence that PR studies seek strategic

elements (Hon and Grunig, 1999) based on the psychological perceptions, attitudes and behavioural responses of stakeholders (Berjillos et al., 2009) and targeted audiences.

Factors that affect people's performance, such as motivation, contextual idiosyncrasies, prejudices, socioeconomic conditions and other inherent intergenerational cultural beliefs (Hyman and Sheatsley, 1947; Worchel et al., 1988), are potentially strategic predictive indicators for PR work (Xifra, 2003) to understand and persuade people.

Aligned to this, professional PR pursues the research and development of predictive inferential models (Xifra, 2003) of the true deep motivations (Hyman and Sheatsley, 1947) of stakeholders. To this purpose, tools from applied social psychology are very revealing (Bernays, 1928; Allport, 1935; Castillo and Xifra, 2006).

Regarding the evolution of research into PR focused on social psychology, certain key authors have produced significant milestones. Allport (1935) identified elements of social psychology in PR facts that influence attitude and decision-making. Wilson (1975) analysed the correlation between PR and pro-social behaviour. Grunig (1976) settled on a situational approach to explain persuasion in PR, and a few years later together with Repper revealed the "theory of excellence in PR and communication management" (Grunig and Repper, 1992) to explain several facts that affect organizational ecosystems (Ferguson et al., 1984). Persuasion of stakeholders is essential for any organization that wishes to increase its funding (Kelly, 1995), and to this goal multicausal variables in the persuasive process are involved (Chen and Chaiken, 1999). Special efforts to measure the quality of PR interactions based on psychological profiles were made by Hon and Grunig (1999).

Psychology has also contributed knowledge and practices of great interest to PR in stakeholder communication and management (Mitchell et al., 1997; Kochan and Rubinstein, 2000; Ledingham, 2003; Castillo and Xifra, 2006; Ruiz-Mora et al., 2016). For instance, Etzioni (1964) worked on possible types of behaviour within organisations, while Cutlip and Allen (1971) focused on understanding the relationships between the organisation and its audiences. These dynamics of organisational-personal behaviours (Carroll, 1989) create expectations between parts.

3.5. Systemic psychology applied to PR persuasion

Persuasion is another element that has been present throughout the history of PR and psychology. From the perspective of a psychology of memory, the recording of lived experience stored as memory is seen as a key factor in the elaboration of persuasive arguments (Hovland et al., 1953; Petty, Wegener and Fabrigar, 1997) that facilitate the prediction of behaviour.

Bell and Bell (1976) created a "general systems theory applied to PR", and Luhmann (1998) reinforced the study with his "systemic theory applied to PR". Other authors, including Grunig and Hunt (2003) and Rawlins (2006),

argue for the importance of a systematic and comprehensive linkage management model to deal with publics.

Since these interactions affect the whole systemic network involving the individual and the organisation, the PR contingency theory (Cancel et al., 1997) can add value to understand all facts involved in the *persuasion process*. The multi-causal variables that influence (Capriotti, 2013) the persuasive path until a particular outcome is reached are considered in an interesting heuristic-systematic model developed by Chen and Chaiken (1999). But prior to this archetype, the likelihood model (Petty and Cacioppo, 1986; Petty and Wegener, 1999) established an outstanding milestone to understand the persuasion process. To help understand it, the model considers internal and external variables that directly affect final behaviour, and establishes as key indicators factors such as the receiver's previous experience and state of mind at that moment, their degree of attention and active listening, the structure, form and content of the message, the basis of narrative discourse, the context of the interaction, possible noises, and elements that facilitate concentration.

Petty and Briñol (2014) also present a theoretical model as a predictive behavioural instrument of collaborative attitudinal approach or withdrawal. Thus, depending on the format and content of the message and the emotion it seeks to create or appeal to, empathy, change of mind or rejection is generated depending on the freedom of thought perceived by the person or entity targeted by the message.

The connection between persuasion and emotion seems to occur because of a systemic sequence of induced expectations (Esteno et al., 2004) that is susceptible to the intention of specific persuasive actions, the emotional ecosystem, and the response. Thus, when the emotional tone of the message is matched to the receiver's state of mind, the persuasiveness of the transmitter increases considerably and facilitates participation in line with the expectations set out in the target arguments of the message.

In 2007, Cialdini explicitly speaks of a *psychology of persuasion* based on a "rule of reciprocity and a sense of obligation pervasive in the culture of society" (Torres-Mancera, 2021) that generates an emotional effect of feeling indebted (Leakey and Lewin, 1994). This anthropological gesture is an ancestral adaptive mechanism in the interdependent behavioural axis of giving-receiving-thanking, and also explains the origin of the exchange of goods or services between entities and systems made up by people.

Other models such as the *systemic* or heuristic one developed by Chen and Chaiken (1999) highlight the importance of the interactions and roles between people when it comes to structuring appropriate strategic communication. In this process, variables such as the coherence of the signals, the time of exposure and the degree of related elements play a decisive role. Another, the attributes and prominence model (Mitchell et al., 1997), identifies and classifies *stakeholders* according to the level of power exercised or desired, the relevance of interests and the urgency of the objective. *Influence and power*

(Berger and Reber, 2005; L'Étang, 2009; Capriotti, 2013) in organizations are also based on the behaviour of individuals within them, which could be classified into three typologies (Etzioni, 1964): a) physical or coercive; b) utilitarian or economic; and c) normative and symbolic. Other authors speak of the degree of social and behavioural influence (Clarkson, 1995) based on the parameters of reactivity/proactivity and defence/complacency.

4. Methodology

The methodological architecture is built up under the format of direct participant observation. A matrix is designed to collect and interpret data from documents located in one of the largest university repositories in the world: the University of Oxford and its Bodleian Library¹.

From the universe of documents available on its Search Oxford Libraries Online (SOLO) digital platform, scientific references on theories, paradigms and strategies of a psychological nature applied to PR are explored. With this purpose, in-situ research is held.

Data collection and analysis follows a preliminary content analysis. A keyword search was carried out for all SOLO publications included under the filter "psychology and public relations". Most relevant works were then selected because of their relevant contributions. Lastly, a final criterion to prioritize key outputs of each period was primarily based on the historical studies of Van Ruler and Verčič (2004), Opdycke and Miller (2009), and Castillo (2009).

5. Results

5.1. Historical milestones in psychology and PR on the Europe-US axis

A synthetic and chronological review is compiled of symbolic milestones of tactical objectives in PR matters, psychological premises, the geographical focus of the actions and the entities involved. Four key dimensions are recorded to broadly understand the development of society through the prism of PR psychology and its practical tools: religion, education, government policies and the commercial sector. For this purpose, the historical studies of Van Ruler and Verčič (2004), as well as Opdycke and Miller (2009) and Castillo (2009) are used as references.

Table 1 shows in chronological order key actions carried out by religion throughout history, particularly the Catholic and Anglican religions, with the aim of gaining followers and exerting influence on their communities.

1. The Bodleian Library contains a legal depository stretching back 400 years, with more than 12 million printed articles, over 80,000 electronic journals and special collections that include books and manuscripts, papyri, maps and other printed material.

Table 1. Historical overview of the first PR tactics based on psychological tools in the religion sector

Period	Religious tactics	Individual/Organisation	Origin
1st century	Audience segmentation and personalised visits	St Paul	Antioch, Turkey
10th century	Meeting and event generation, donor research	Aethelwold, Bishop of Winchester	South UK
9th-20th century	Cognitive behavioural persuasion through literature	Catholic Church/Spain	Spain, Compostela etc.
11th-13th centuries	Persuasion via propaganda and pseudo-events	Slovenian bishops and crusades	Slovenia and Europe
11th-16th centuries	Written word and sermons for cognitive behavioural change	Dunstan/Glastonbury Abbey	South UK
16th century	Press and art as tools of suggestion	Catholic Church	Italy
		Pope Clement VIII	Europe
		Council of Trent	
		Pope Pius IV	
17th century	Press office, persuasion via reputation, brochures and pamphlets	Cardenal Richelieu	France
		Pope Gregory XV	Italy
			Europe
18th century	Press releases, transatlantic letter network, indoctrinating sermons	Benjamin Colman/Isaac Watts/John Guyse	North America
	Aristotelian persuasion "pathos over logos" (emotion over reason)	George Whitefield/William Seward	Europe
19th century	Seduction with newspaper advertisements, handbills and posters	Charles Finney	Europe and North America
		Dwight Moody	
20th century	Humanistic psychology and transcendence	Maslow	North America
Early 21st century	Crisis of values and erosion of Catholicism, alternative spirituality	Open platforms	Global

Source: own elaboration.

The historical development of the education sector, especially the university sector, through key actions in PR supported by the perspective of psychology (see Table 2) aims to raise awareness of, defend and safeguard human rights, values and knowledge.

Table 2. Historical overview of the first PR tactics based on psychological tools in the education sector

Period	Educative tactics	Individual/Organisation	Origin
17th century	Searching for and securing the loyalty of intergenerational donors	Harvard University	United Kingdom North America
18th century	Appeal for cooperation through letters of request, symbolic objects (baskets, chests)	Benjamin Franklin King's College, New York (Columbia University)	North America
End of the 18th century	Cognitive behavioural change by means of brochures, relationship by means of subscription lists	Top American Universities	North America
Early 19th century	Social interventions through dances, conferences, press relations, actions and non-profit funds	American towns for Lafayette, Women's Moral Reform Society, Women's Moral Reform Society	North America and Central Europe
Middle of the 19th century	Emotional appeals, legal petitions, food and drink drives, conventions, long-term relationships built on logos/logo signs	Irish Famine Relief, temperance movement, women's rights, reform movements, "A Just Boston", support for abolition of Wendell Phillips	North America and Central Europe
Late 19th and 20th century	Speech training to influence public opinion, how to inform, supporter visits, two months' advance press notice, white/blue ribbons as a symbol of support and empathy, publications to indoctrinate children, alcohol law magazines and manuals for behaviour control, internal communication, conferences, alumni relations, persuasion through lobbying	Knights of the Templar Order, Fisk University, American Red Cross, University of Edinburgh, New York City Hospitals, Great Irish Famine Committee, Women's Suffrage, John Muir for Sierra Club, Jewish Federation, Anti-Saloon League of America	United States and Europe
21st century	Isolation and digital connectivity COVID-19	Pandemic, technology and digitalisation	Worldwide

Source: own elaboration.

Since ancient political and governmental times, PR strategies have aimed to persuade, disseminate information, appropriate territories, gain independence from oppressive regimes and increase power (see Table 3).

Table 3. Historical overview of the first PR tactics based on psychological tools in the political and governmental sector

Period	Political and governmental tactics	Individual/Organisation	Origin
B.C.	Social relations through messaging	Themistocles	Greece
	Press unit for persuasion	Alexander the Great	Macedonia
		Hannibal	Carthage
10th century	Information and influence through pamphlets and speeches. "Preserve power, impose or increase famine"	Öffentlichkeitsarbeit, predecessor of the US government and PR policy	Austria
9th-20th centuries	Ceremonies and pilgrimage of military units as messages of power	Catholic Church	Spain
11th-13th centuries	Incitement to development through "advanced man"	Gengis Khan	Mongolia, Chinese Empire and Europe
End of the 15th century	Promotional diaries	Emperor Maximilian	Austria
16th century	Cognitive behavioural reinforcement through imposition of medals, symbolic acts and architecture. Subjugation through propaganda of atrocities	Elizabeth I of England	United Kingdom
		Robert the Pious (Rudolf III)	France
17th century	Newspapers, theatre, music, paintings and publications translated and sent abroad.	The Sun King (Louis XIV of France)	France
18th century	Books, broadcasts, political cartoons	Benjamin Franklin	America
Middle 18th century	Behaviours and correspondences between colonies, rotating societies	"Sons of Liberty" and Boston Tea Party. "Daughters of Liberty" against the Stamp Act	North America
	Relationship-building, grassroots communities, centralised communication, collection of evidence, posters	Samuel Adams, Continental Congress for American Independence from the United Kingdom	United Kingdom
19th century	Attitudinal uplift through manifestos, target audience messaging, biography-based campaigns, distribution of speeches, recruitment of campaign leaders, anonymous writings	Napoleon, Andrew Jackson and Amos Kendall, Nicholas Biddle's (anti-Jackson) publicists, Abraham Lincoln	France, North America

Early 19th century	Interaction and information via telegraph, filtered public opinion in the press, interviews with presidents for proximity	President Zachary Taylor	Prussia North America
	Social responsibility, patronage, PR and industrialisation	Thomas Jefferson, Ivy Lee	
End of 19th century	Influence of the masses via political rallies, press office of the foreign ministry	Otto von Bismarck	Prussia
	Paid persuasion to foreign press, daily summaries	Prussian Government	Germany
	“Publicity and promotion” departments for interest groups	President Rutherford B. Hayes	North America
	Information outreach with naval press office, and road shows and exhibitions	Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz	
20th century		Gifford Pinchot	
	Public Information Committee: mass dissemination	President Woodrow Wilson Prime minister Harold Wilson	North America United Kingdom
	Social Psychology applied to PR	Bernays, George Creel	
	PR for social needs	World Wars of States	
	Depersonalisation of the individual to create wars		
	Fire-side chats bringing politics closer to the citizen	Franklin D. Roosevelt	
Early 21st century	Beginning of the golden age of psychology and neuroscience applied to PR through the media and networks	Pandemic, technology and digitalisation	Worldwide

Source: own elaboration.

Table 4. Historical overview of early PR tactics based on psychological tools in the business sector.

Period	Business tactics	Individual/Organisation	Origin
B.C.	Cognitive attention advertising (graffiti)	Small businesses	Pompeii, Italy
17th century	Persuasion through pamphlets	London Company of Virginia	Europe North America
	Attracting co-operators at events	Businesses linked to the colonies	
	Planned events		
	Trust through clerical endorsement		
18th century	Stakeholder meetings	General James Oglethorpe	Central Europe and Georgia
19th century	Editorial press releases of exhibitions	Volunteering	Europe
	Influence through bribes to the press	P.T. Barnum and scandals	North America
	Creativity and design	Cotton mills	
	Search for women's working role		
	Personal testimonial promotional biography		
	Anonymity - person writing under pseudonyms		
	Cognitive attention outdoor illuminated advertising		
Mid 19th century	Influence on press by bribery	Railroads in the U.S.	
	Cognitive behavioural targeting of speeches and stories	P. T. Barnum American Museum	Canada
	Philanthropic relationships with universities	American Medical Association, Medical Practitioners	
	"Logos over pathos" messages: reason over emotion	Travellers' insurance companies	
	Social stratification middle class messages		
	Appeal to Christian ethical values		
	Persuasion by lobbying		
	Entity-employee interaction: Internal magazines		

End of the 19th century	Social interaction via industry spokesman	Wanamaker's and Macy's	Europe and North America
	Proximity daily contact editorials published daily	Life Insurance Agents	
	Cognitive interaction with corporate magazines (internal and external)	Westinghouse Electric Company	
	"Publicity and promotion" departments for interest groups	Chicago World's Fair	
	Workplace abuse and muck-rakers		
	Behavioural persuasion integrated marketing	Thomas Lipton	
20th century	Resilience to crises and wars, revolution and democratisation of information	John Rockefeller Jr.	Europe
	Organisational globalisation, sense of cultural belonging. "Americanisation" of European behaviours	Economic crises and world wars	America
	Working conditions and human rights	Employers	
Early 21st century	Beginning of the golden age of psychology and neuroscience applied to PR	Pandemic, technology and digitalisation	Worldwide
	Isolation and digital PR, COVID-19		

Source: own elaboration.

Regarding the business sector (see Table 4), the tactics used to connect with customers were mainly based on social psychology and cognitive-behavioural psychology. From these perspectives, marketing and corporate communications aimed to cultivate PR with external publics. By the end of the 19th century there is growing awareness about practicing PR within companies, appealing to an organizational psychology.

6. Discussion and conclusions

This study provides a new, conscious vision of the convergences of PR and psychology, moving from a theoretical and conceptual perspective to the praxis exemplified in real cases that have occurred in the origins and strategic-geographical growth of the world powers of Europe and North America. In line with the opening theoretical assumption that the discipline of PR has some gaps in its conceptual framework still to be filled (Nelson et al., 1959; L'Etang, 2009), the literature review undertaken for this study also reveals significant gaps in the information needed to construct a general theory of

PR psychology. Nevertheless, many psychological model-based approaches that have been used throughout history are noted in the analysis.

Cognitive-behavioural, social and organizational tactical actions are identified in the results matrices (see Tables 1-4), in alignment with the review of theoretical topics. Psychological perspectives, variables and techniques that work on idiosyncrasies, motivations, influences, trust and persuasion to achieve objectives through PR strategies are found throughout the results. Messages and tactics appeal to individual and community empathy and cooperation, through purposely-prepared documents and loyalty reward systems.

Without judging the successes or failures of the four levels analysed (government, church, academia and private enterprise), the behaviour of communities is significantly affected by the decision-making of power actors. This is sometimes achieved by fear and manipulation (Janis et al., 1953) as occurs in the processes of depersonalization required for individuals to go to war without valuing their lives; at other times it is achieved by the ambition of the species, as in the case of the massive migratory phenomena towards the United States since the 18th century.

It is not surprising, therefore, that social, religious and monarchical leaders created the phenomenon of public opinion to persuade others in a cognitive-behavioural manner (Bernays, 1928). Thus, cognitive routes with an achievement orientation and the need for community approval (Wilson, 1975; Carroll, 1989; Eisenberg and Mussen, 1989) may elicit positive behaviours of empathy and collaboration or negative behaviours of aggression, guilt, anxiety or lack of remorse (i.e. in military campaigns).

Psychosocial factors also seem to be involved in individual decision-making. This is explained by the perceived personal benefit and opportunity cost of the relational behaviour selected by the individual versus the other options of non-applied behavioural registers (Etzioni, 1964; Clarkson, 1995). For example, when adopting ideologies, fashions or new life and consumption habits, it becomes easier when some people in the community are already doing so with perceived benefits (gaining status or rewards). Accordingly, the bidirectional (Cutlip and Center, 1952; De Las Heras-Pedrosa et al., 2018), contingent (Cancel et al., 1997) and systemic (Bell and Bell, 1976; Luhmann 1998) influence between the objectives of different sources of power, the psychological tools for PR empowerment and the impact of their achievements in the axis of Europe and the United States are corroborated by the analysis data.

Finally, looking at all analysed statements (religion, education, government and business) in the current research, a clear evolution of psychology can be seen in recent centuries, and it has become a bigger tactic used to connect organizations with people. Thinking about current organizational skills, this differential and demanded human touch approach can be the definitive boost to the discipline of PR psychology. Now that most of its effects can really be measured and validated with the support of neuroscience techniques, the real golden era of applied psychology for all stakeholders has begun.

However, to generate a more global vision, further complementary research is proposed to extrapolate the model applied to the study of the reality of PR psychology in other perhaps less hypnotic but equally relevant ecosystems, such as the geographical areas of Asia, and Central and South America, or latest generation sectors such as (re)industrialization, the circular economy, artificial intelligence, neuroscience, and the parallel digital world or metaverse. Therefore, the potential benefits and dangers of PR influences on people's psyche in this new hyper-connected world become the biggest challenge ever.

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