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## **PUBLIC RELATIONS IN FILMS: AN ANALYSIS OF HOW THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS WAS REFLECTED IN A SELECTION OF HOLLYWOOD FILMS BETWEEN 1999 AND 2013**

### **Abstract**

The significance of public relations, evidenced by the increasing levels of investment allocated to it, stem from its demonstrable positive impact on the achievement of various performance indicators across a range of organizational activity(ies). However, public relations is a complex field involving a range of disciplines across a number of areas. Generally, these complexities are compounded by differences over the definition of public relations and the absence of a framework to govern its practice. These difficulties are highlighted in many academic studies. In addition, arguably, the films used in this study reflect these complexities in the way they portray this field and the people working in it. This is significant as, arguably, these films can reflect the perception of public relations in the real world. This study aims to analyze the representation of public relations in recent Hollywood films in terms of theory and practice. The study uses certain Hollywood films between 1999-2013 adopting a content analysis method. These films reflect the criticisms often levelled against public relations and its experts and at the end of this article an attempt is made to make some practical suggestions to deal with these issues.

**Key Words:** Public Relations, Public Relations Specialist, Films, Hollywood.

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## **FİLMLERDE HALKLA İLİŞKİLER: HALKLA İLİŞKİLERİN TEORİ VE PRATİKTE, 1999 VE 2013 YILLARI ARASINDA YAPILAN HOLLYWOOD FİMLERİNDE NASIL YANSITILDIĞINA İLİŞKİN BİR ANALİZ**

### **Özet**

Üretim ve hizmet kalitesi artışının yaşanması ile iletişim çalışmalarının önemi daha çok artmış ve kurumların halkla ilişkiler alanına yatırım çalışmaları çoğalmıştır. Ancak halkla ilişkilerin gerek iletişim gibi soyut bir kavram ve gerek disiplinler arası çalışmalar yapması nedeni ile çalışma alanı genişlemekte, tanım ve çerçeve konusunda sıkıntılar yaşanmaktadır. Halkla ilişkilerin ne olduğu, nasıl yapıldığı birçok akademik çalışmada bahsedildiği gibi özellikle görsel iletişimin arttığı günümüzde sinema filmlerinde ele alınmaktadır. Sinema filmleri çeşitli dönemlere ışık tutabildikleri gibi güncel gerçekleri de yansıtılabilmektedir. Özellikle mesleki konularda inandırıcı olma endişesi ile gerçek hayattaki algıya uygun bir çerçeve çizilmektedir. Çalışma, halkla ilişkiler uygulamalarının teori ve uygulama bakımından uzmanları tarafından Hollywood filmlerinde yakın geçmişte nasıl temsil edildiğini ortaya koymak için yapılmıştır. Araştırmada 1999-2013 yılları arasındaki Hollywood filmleri ele alınmış ve filmler içerik analizi yöntemi ile incelenmiştir. Filmlerde halkla ilişkiler uygulamalarına ve uzmanlarına yönelik gerçek hayatta yapılan eleştirilere rastlanmış ve bazı önerilerde bulunulmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Halkla İlişkiler, Halkla İlişkiler Uzmanları, Filmler, Hollywood.

### **INTRODUCTION**

As a starting point, it is necessary to look at the history of public relations to understand its definitional framework. Public relations historian Scott Cutlip (1994) points out that “the use of communication to influence public opinion and human behaviour is as old as civilization”. At this point, how we view the specialism is of importance. Historically, public relations gained its modern definition at the start of the industrial revolution. Core features have always included communication and interaction. Over time and due to the nature of the subject, considerable comments have been made on what exactly is public relations.

Some of these definitions can be seen below:

- As “management of communication between an organization and its publics” (Grunig, and Hunt, 1984: 6);
- As “a management function” is a “myopic focus” on PR theory particularly at organizational level (Dozier and Lauzen, 2000).
- As an applied discipline within the area of communication that uses a number of features including strategic thinking, planning, research, and practice to help an organization or person establish and manage mutually beneficial relationships and has as its purpose the interaction with an audience or audiences that ensure success or failure; position an organization, person, or issue favorably within the marketplace of ideas; and/or affect the attitudes, opinions, and behaviours of the targeted audience or audiences (Brown, 2012: 18).

- “The management function that identifies, establishes, and maintains mutually beneficial relationships between an organization and all the publics on whom its success or failure depends” (Cutlip et al.; Penning, 2008: 344).

Public relations can be used in deferent sectors. This is due to the performance of communication activity in different areas. For example, diplomats responsible for culture and public relations are expected to use their own creative capabilities to develop suitable promotional and cultural activities with the support of specific departments of the MFA (Ministry of Foreign Affairs), (Jelisić, 2010: 38).

Public relations began to be formalized as a vocation at the turn of the century. While the work was often called “publicity” and those doing the work “press agents”, the term “public relations” was evident in the early 1900s. George Parker and Ivy Lee established a firm in 1904. Their famous “Declaration of Principles” – sent to newspaper editors to promise accurate information to the press and public – was created in 1906 (Penning, 2008: 349). After this date, public relations has been applied to many areas. One such area is in the field of corporate standards and the maintenance of the same. Arguably, each area of application has influenced and contributed to its current definitional framework.

At the present time, taking the above into account, a working definition of public relations is a management discipline used to represent any institution having interactions with different target audiences, carrying out works to support the institution's image and reputation. In addition, it contains proactive and reactive works for crises, risks, etc., constantly analyzing the nature and extent of communications and sharing their analysis in reports written by people with strong communications skills. “It is obvious that the public relations discipline is rooted in different disciplinary fields, like mass communication, interpersonal/speech communication, (social) psychology, economics, sociology, and in different schools of thought, like functionalistic, constructivist, feminist, Marxist, or cultural schools. For some it might be a curse, because they believe it could lead to disarray and confusion about what public relations is or could be”(Ihlen and Ruler, 2007: 244). “Even though public relations is of value to society, academic studies have found that journalists have consistently used the term public relations in negative contexts” (White and Park, 2010: 320). In 1993, Spicer analyzed 84 articles that contained the term public relations, and found the term was used in a negatively embedded context more than 80% of the time (White and Park, 2010: 320). In addition, in their book, Coombs and Holladay (2007) commented that the term “public relations” is misunderstood, tainted negatively, and suggested that it is regarded with suspicion by the public. In 1998, Henderson’s study looked at the way “public relations” is used in the popular press. It involves the analysis of 100 articles that appeared from 1995 to 1996. It revealed that only 5 percent used the term “public relations” accurately, and only 7 percent referred to public relations with a positive connotation (Henderson, 1998: 46). Gabriel Deccicco (1988) stated that frequently, public relations is seen as an attempt to cover up a negative image. While some organizations may use it for negative ends, PR is really just a way of bringing public attention to the quality of a "product" and the "services" rendered by its "producers." It is, in short, little more than a program aimed at delivering positive information to the public. Public relations is discussed in the press as well as on the television and in films. “Notwithstanding the ubiquity of public relations in contemporary society, researchers have devoted little attention to its image in popular culture, especially the nearly universal mass entertainment medium of film. While

depictions of politicians and journalists in movies have been extensively investigated and commented upon, there has been little comparable study of the public relations Professional” (Lee, 2001: 311). For example Johnston (2010) made a comprehensive analysis in this regard:

“Though it is not the most filmed profession, public relations has nevertheless found its way into dozens of movies and television series since the 1920s. This research has collated 124 films and series from the past nine decades and drawn on only a handful of these to present a potted history of public relations on screen. It has noted how film and television often reflected the written histories of the time, histories which themselves have often drawn on memory, by way of first-hand interviews and recollections. Viewing these films brings alive the temporal existence of public relations over the years, as it evolved, developed and changed. The capacity for film to reinforce what we may already know about the industry – its move from press agency to publicity to counsel, its role both in-house and in consultancies, its relationship with truth and morality – are shown time and time again in film and television series both in obvious ways and in more metaphoric representations. Many films and television episodes present several levels of discourse, notably *Miracle on 34th Street* which we see underpinned by questions of truth and morality. And though characters and roles are far from ‘squeaky clean’, many, particularly in the first half of the study period, are well intentioned and working through internal struggles which they eventually win”.

Saltzman’s study looked at the images of public relations practitioners in a variety of movies and television programs. “When we separate images of the public relations practitioner in films and television, we discover that there are far more negatives images in film than there are on television. In 224 movie examples, there are only 68 positive images as opposed to 127 negative images. In 105 television examples, there are 43 positive images as opposed to 52 negative images”(Saltzman, 2012: 377). Miller (1999) examined the portrayal of public relations and its practitioners in US film and fiction from 1930 to 1995. The analysis questioned the ability of these films to explain the roles and responsibilities of practitioners and generally its portrayal of public relations.

### **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative content analysis in order to document the representation of PR specialists and their job in Hollywood films from 1999 to 2013. The identified and one by one watched films were used to design the coding of the content analysis to illustrate how the PR profession were encoded and what type of images were portrayed. Content analysis is a complement of methodological tools and techniques applied to different discourses; researchers make use of it as an effort of controlled interpretation and a deductive ‘reading’ tool (Bilgin, 2003: 157). “The main function of the content analysis is to bring similar data together in a framework of certain concepts and themes; interpreting and organizing them in a way that the reader can easily comprehend” (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011: 227) . The explanation of these concepts make it possible to reach certain common results and unobtrusive themes.

### **Study Objective**

This study aims to demonstrate the how public relations professional and industry image represented in recent Hollywood films from 1999 to 2013.

## **Research Problem**

The research sets out to outline how public relations, public relations specialists and their jobs are portrayed or represented in the Hollywood films.

## **Data Collection Tools**

In this study, the web page of IMDb (Internet Movie Database), which is a highly credited film source on an international scale and rich in content, was used by searching the keyword of 'PR'. This web page was chosen for research since it is used in different academic research and its data is referred to in many studies.

## **Data Collection Process**

The search on IMDb web page produced a result of 111 PR related films. In addition, the keyword search of 'Public Relations Specialist' generated a further 22 results. In total, 133 films were reviewed together with their trailers and articles written related to them. As the study scrutinized the representation of PR specialists and the PR industry in films since the beginning of the millennium, a total of 10 Hollywood films were found and subsequently analysed.

As explained above, many studies have been conducted on how public relations is represented in films and other communication media. For this study, two particularly comprehensive studies and their associated models are chosen: Spicer's work on 84 articles and Miller's article on 67 movies and 51 books. The third model used: Grunig and Hunt's public relations model is a more general model which, together with Spicer's work, is intended to increase the reliability of the results and broaden the scope of the analysis. More specifically, Spicer's categorization arguably evaluates the area of public relation, Miller's categorization although related to film specifically tends towards an evaluation of the public relations specialist and Grunig and Hunt's model lends itself more towards an evaluation of the communication process in public relations generally. Therefore, the films are evaluated from three particular perspectives for this study.

## **Findings And Discussion**

The films in questions are analyzed chronologically and shown below:

### **1. Insider\*\* (1999)**

Based on Spicer's categorization, public relations is only represented as a stereotype image of PR in this film. When Miller's categorization is applied, the film only includes alienation and isolation of Wigand who is a manager and chemist at a tobacco company from other people.

Based on Grunig and Hunt's model, the film includes: "information", "one-way; accuracy is considered" and from source to receiver are all evident. Therefore, the film has the aspects of the 'Public Information Model'. Wigand shared the in-company information with the media since he thought that it was for the good of the public and he stated that he did it only because he thought that it was the right thing to do.

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\*\* The film 'The Insider' is about the life and experiences of Jeffrey Wigand who is a manager and chemist at a tobacco company. Wigand decides to disclose the harmful substances that the company put in cigarettes to cause addiction and he faces serious threats and attacks.

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Spicer's Categorization		Miller's Categorization	
It is a tool for attention	X	Blood sucker but cute	X
It is a tool for destruction	X	Sycophant; capable of satisfying the employers and ready to focus on whatever they think of	X
It is a tool for challenge	X	Cynical, nervous, angry and provoking; usually getting promotions through lies and cheating	X
It is a tool for exaggeration	X	Manipulative	X
It is a tool for distortion	X	Fond of money; considering their jobs only as a mechanism that brings cash	X
It is a tool for battle	X	Alienating and isolating themselves	✓
It is a stereotype	✓	Unsatisfied	X
		Talented but unhappy with their jobs	X

Grunig and Hunt's Four Model of Public Relations		
Model Name	Type of Communication	Assessment
Press agency/publicity	Propaganda	X
	One-way; no condition of accuracy	X
	Source → Receiver	X
Public information model	Information	✓
	One-way; accuracy is considered	✓
	Source → Receiver	✓
Two-way asymmetrical model	Scientific Persuasion	X
	Two-way; mutually unbalanced	X
	Source → Receiver ← Feedback	X
Two-way symmetrical model	Compatibility	X
	Two-way; mutually balanced	X
	Source → ← Receiver	X

**2. America's Sweethearts\* (2001)**

Based on Spicer's Categorization, it can be put forward that this film uses public relations only as a tool for distortion. Lee Phillips who is a film publicist tasked with promoting a film tries to hide the break-up of Gwen and Eddie, who were once sweethearts, from the public eye and he distorts the truth.

Regarding Miller's Categorization, the film includes findings only related to manipulation.

When applying the Grunig and Hunt's Model, Lee's efforts to revive the old relationship in front of the media indicates that there is a one-way communication, hence there is a likelihood no information accuracy, as the press agency is subject to persuasive form. Based on the public information model, it is determined that there is one-way information disregarding the accuracy while the information is conveyed from the source to the receiver.

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\* The film tells the story of the widely-acclaimed Hollywood celebrity couple Gwen and Eddie. Gwen cheats on Eddie with another actor; they part their ways and begin to hate each other. However, they are supposed to come together for the gala of their latest film. Lee decides to manage this process and he shows what a communication specialist should and should not do in various scenes.

Spicer's Categorization		Miller's Categorization	
It is a tool for attention	X	Blood sucker but cute	X
It is a tool for destruction	X	Sycophant; capable of satisfying the employers and ready to focus on whatever they think of	X
It is a tool for challenge	X	Cynical, nervous, angry and provoking; usually getting promotions through lies and cheating	X
It is a tool for exaggeration	X	Manipulative	✓
It is a tool for distortion	✓	Fond of money; considering their jobs only as a mechanism that brings cash	X
It is a tool for battle	X	Alienating and isolating themselves	X
It is a stereotype	X	Unsatisfied	X
		Talented but unhappy with their jobs	X

Grunig and Hunt's Four Model of Public Relations		
Model Name	Type of Communication	Assessment
Press agency/publicity	Propaganda	X
	One-way; no condition of accuracy	✓
	Source → Receiver	✓
Public information model	Information	✓
	One-way; accuracy is considered	X
	Source → Receiver	✓
Two-way asymmetrical model	Scientific Persuasion	X
	Two-way; mutually unbalanced	X
	Source → Receiver ← Feedback	X
Two-way symmetrical model	Compatibility	X
	Two-way; mutually balanced	X
	Source → ← Receiver	X

### 3. Thank You For Smoking\* (2005)

Based on Spicer's Categorization, it is identified that the protagonist Nick who is the spokesman of a tobacco company draws the attention of the public through his activities implying that smoking might not be as harmful as it is thought to be. In this respect, the film emphasizes that he regards public relations as a tool to draw people's attention. Nick asks certain questions about the dangers of smoking such as "Are there any researches about it?" or "Are there any scientific outcomes related to it?"; these questions are aimed at changing people's beliefs that smoking is harmful and they can be regarded as an effort to 'destroy' their perceptions. On the other hand, the TV program that Nick attends is a challenge against the other participants since Nick claims that what he does is true and smoking is harmless. In some scenes, Nick has been seen defending himself and his ideas confidently without any supportive scientific facts, but he emphasised and produced differing discourse statements, which implies an exaggeration in his behaviour. Moreover, he provides that the statements about smoking are tackled in different ways, distorting the questions and statements directly. Nick regards public relations as a tool for battle that aims to destroy the main perceptions of people (about

\* The film tells the story of Nick Naylor; he is the spokesman of a tobacco company and starts a new campaign to recreate the negative image of cigarette. However, he is confronted by health organizations and a very strict congressman in this process. Although he manages to manage this process professionally, he is confused by his son's questions about cigarettes, which causes a battle between his heart and mind. Naylor's heart wins the battle at the end of the film.

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smoking). Nick’s physical appearance (always presentable, elegant and well-groomed) and his successful communication with everyone around him also make him a stereotype of Spicer’s Categorization.

When the film “Thank You for Smoking” is analysed depending on Miller’s Categorization, Nick is seen as a character that can endanger human health as he presents smoking as a harmless habit; however, this does not occur as an intentional attempt. Nick is a character that can satisfy employers and be orientated with their thoughts. This is implied by the fact that his employers direct Nick to defend smoking. However, Nick can also orientate his employers for certain things using his mind. Still, his orientation creates benefits for his employers anyway. Nick develops his career mainly by being cynical, provoking, lying and cheating. He also has a strong talent of manipulation and he frequently makes use of it. Nick does not regard his job only as a mechanism that brings in cash; in contrast, he loves his job. He does not alienate himself yet he chooses to be in continuous communication with others. He is satisfied and happy with his job.

Based on Grunig and Hunt’s model, Nick Naylor appears to be using propaganda directly in his campaigns. He uses public relations as a tool for destruction in all of his projects and he tries to change the negative opinions about smoking that people already have. What Nick cares about is to convey information directly to the receiver.

Spicer’s Categorization		Miller’s Categorization	
It is a tool for attention	✓	Blood sucker but cute	✓
It is a tool for destruction	✓	Sycophant; capable of satisfying the employers and ready to focus on whatever they think of	✓
It is a tool for challenge	✓	Cynical, nervous, angry and provoking; usually getting promotions through lies and cheating	✓
It is a tool for exaggeration	✓	Manipulative	✓
It is a tool for distortion	✓	Fond of money; considering their jobs only as a mechanism that brings cash	X
It is a tool for battle	✓	Alienating and isolating themselves	X
It is a stereotype	✓	Unsatisfied	X
		Talented but unhappy with their jobs	X

Grunig and Hunt’s Four Model of Public Relations		
Model Name	Type of Communication	Assessment
Press agency/publicity	Propaganda	✓
	One-way; no condition of accuracy	✓
	Source → Receiver	✓
Public information model	Information	✓
	One-way; accuracy is considered	X
	Source → Receiver	✓
Two-way asymmetrical model	Scientific Persuasion	✓
	Two-way; mutually unbalanced	X
	Source → Receiver ← Feedback	✓
Two-way symmetrical model	Compatibility	X
	Two-way; mutually balanced	X



	Source → ← Receiver	X
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**4. The Queen\* (2006)**

Regarding Spicer’s Categorization, the film reflects public relations as a tool for exaggeration. The Princess Diana who is not a princess legally, named the people’s princess by communication specialist.

Based on Miller’s Categorization, it is observed that the communication expert is only reflected in a manipulative way. The communication consultant continuously orientates the Prime Minister and determines the course of events.

Based on Grunig and Hunt’s Model, the statement of the Prime Minister’s consultant in the film “We need to inform the Prime Minister as soon as possible” and the Prime Minister will inform the public, confirms that the film features the public information model. Regarding the two-way symmetrical model, information is conveyed from the source to the receiver and from the receiver to the source.

Spicer’s Categorization		Miller’s Categorization	
It is a tool for attention	X	Blood sucker but cute	X
It is a tool for destruction	X	Sycophant; capable of satisfying the employers and ready to focus on whatever they think of	X
It is a tool for challenge	X	Cynical, nervous, angry and provoking; usually getting promotions through lies and cheating	X
It is a tool for exaggeration	✓	Manipulative	✓
It is a tool for distortion	X	Fond of money; considering their jobs only as a mechanism that brings cash	X
It is a tool for battle	X	Alienating and isolating themselves	X
It is a stereotype	X	Unsatisfied	X
		Talented but unhappy with their jobs	X

Grunig and Hunt’s Four Model of Public Relations		
Model Name	Type of Communication	Assessment
Press agency/publicity	Propaganda	X
	One-way; no condition of accuracy	X
	Source → Receiver	X
Public information model	Information	✓
	One-way; accuracy is considered	X
	Source → Receiver	X
Two-way asymmetrical model	Scientific Persuasion	X
	Two-way; mutually unbalanced	X
	Source → Receiver ← Feedback	X
Two-way symmetrical model	Compatibility	X
	Two-way; mutually balanced	X
	Source → ← Receiver	✓

\* The film analyzes the Royal family of England. Princess Diana is called the “People’s Princess” in the film. She dies after a traffic accident in Paris and then the media begins to follow every act of the Queen and the Royal family. However, they choose to stay at Balmoral Castle during the mourning period. This is difficult to understand for the common people in England and they expect an explanation. It also creates pressure on the newly-elected Prime Minister Tony Blair. The film also tells how the Queen and the family manages the process after the accident.

**5.99 Francs\* (2007)\*\***

Based on Spicer’s Categorization, it is determined that the protagonist of the film, Octave who is a copywriter at a very famous agency, regards advertisements as a corporate tool for drawing attention; he also claims that advertisements are striking and creative with the purpose of drawing people’s attention to this field. Moreover, he claims that advertisements are supposed to change people’s stereotyped ideas and re-build their minds with new thoughts. According to Octave, advertisements are “a tool for challenging the existing order and people’s habit of not consuming”; thus, it is necessary that certain elements such as sarcasm, colour or intonation are supposed to be exaggerated to make people buy that product. The film also emphasizes that advertisements might distort reality. This is implied by Octave’s own words: “We transform the reality and present it to you with a new identity”.

Based on Miller’s Categorization, it is possible to say that Octave is not a blood sucker or a friendly hero. He only tries to have fun with his life. The sub-meaning of the dialogues between Octave and his manager implies that Octave is -involuntarily perhaps- inclined to be orientated by his manager. He is capable of manipulating facts by using decorated sentences in advertisements. This is clearly seen in Octave’s explanations, too. Octave gradually loses his friends and moves away from his social circle. In addition, he is quite dissatisfied with his job. He regards his projects only as professional work and he takes drugs to get happy. Octave is a respected employee at the agency since he is very talented; however, he is not happy with his life.

Based on Grunig and Hunt’s model, it is determined that Octave’s projects include many contents addressed to make propaganda. He usually produces one-way projects that are aimed at speaking to the target group. The primary consideration is to make the individuals in this group to like the product and persuade them to buy it. Octave briefs the target group; however, he has a propagandist attitude. He builds a one-way communication without caring for accuracy. He only conveys information from the source to the receiver.

Spicer’s Categorization		Miller’s Categorization	
It is a tool for attention	✓	Blood sucker but cute	X
It is a tool for destruction	✓	Sycophant; capable of satisfying the employers and ready to focus on whatever they think of	✓
It is a tool for challenge	✓	Cynical, nervous, angry and provoking; usually getting promotions through lies and cheating	X
It is a tool for exaggeration	✓	Manipulative	✓
It is a tool for distortion	✓	Fond of money; considering their jobs only as a mechanism that brings cash	X
It is a tool for battle	X	Alienating and isolating themselves	✓
It is a stereotype	X	Unsatisfied	✓
		Talented but unhappy with their jobs	✓
<b>Grunig and Hunt’s Four Model of Public Relations</b>			

\* The film tells about the life and experiences of Octave, who is a copywriter at a very famous agency, along with the relationship between the publicity agents and customers. The emphasis is on the perception created in this process. The unsteadiness that Octave experiences in his both professional and private lives are also shown in detail.

\*\* The film tells the story of a copywriter; however, it was still not excluded from the assessment list since it is one of the search results on IMDb with the tag “PR” and the professional activities of the protagonist are directly related to public relations implementations.

Model Name	Type of Communication	Assessment
Press agency/publicity	Propaganda	✓
	One-way; no condition of accuracy	✓
	Source → Receiver	✓
Public information model	Information	✓
	One-way; accuracy is considered	X
	Source → Receiver	✓
Two-way asymmetrical model	Scientific Persuasion	X
	Two-way; mutually unbalanced	X
	Source → Receiver ← Feedback	X
Two-way symmetrical model	Compatibility	X
	Two-way; mutually balanced	X
	Source → ← Receiver	X

### 6. Frost Nixon\* (2008)\*\*

When Spencer’s Categorization is regarded, it is determined that the consultant of Richard Nixon, who was the 37th President of the United States, makes generalizations of President’s speeches and he tries to draw the attention this way, which implies that public relations is used as a tool for attention. It is seen that the consultant asks Frost to distort the statements of the President. The consultant is reflected as a stereotype since he is presentable, well-groomed and decisive in all of his scenes.

Based on Miller’s Categorization, it is found that Nixon’s consultant shows only features of the two categories’ titles. He is a person that provides professional satisfaction for his employer and can be orientated by his thoughts. In addition, he tries to protect Nixon even though he is aware of his mistakes. In a specific scene, the consultant sees that Frost puts Nixon in a difficult situation with his questions; then he interrupts the interview and tries to change the course of it, which is a manipulative act.

In the film, his consultant says to Nixon that he should speak in a propagandist way in order to persuade the common people. He wants Nixon to build a one-way and target-oriented communication. There is one-way information disregarding accuracy. The information is conveyed from the source to the receiver.

Spicer’s Categorization	
It is a tool for attention	✓
It is a tool for destruction	X
It is a tool for challenge	X

Miller’s Categorization	
Blood sucker but cute	X
Sycophant; capable of satisfying the employers and ready to focus on whatever they think of	✓
Cynical, nervous, angry and provoking; usually getting promotions through lies and cheating	X

\* In the film; Richard Nixon left (in fact he was forced from) the US presidency three years ago; now David Frost, an ambitious journalist, requests an interview with Nixon about his experiences as a president. This is a great opportunity for Nixon to save his legacy along with the high amount of money he would receive. On the other hand, he is supposed to get on TV, answer the questions about the Watergate scandal that ended his presidency and show a successful management of this process.

\*\* The film focuses on the interview of a journalist and a former US President; yet, the analysis was made mainly regarding the consultant of Nixon.

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It is a tool for exaggeration	X
It is a tool for distortion	✓
It is a tool for battle	X
It is a stereotype	✓

Manipulative	✓
Fond of money; considering their jobs only as a mechanism that brings cash	X
Alienating and isolating themselves	X
Unsatisfied	X
Talented but unhappy with their jobs	X

<b>Grunig and Hunt's Four Model of Public Relations</b>		
Model Name	Type of Communication	Assessment
Press agency/publicity	Propaganda	✓
	One-way; no condition of accuracy	✓
	Source → Receiver	✓
Public information model	Information	X
	One-way; accuracy is considered	X
	Source → Receiver	✓
Two-way asymmetrical model	Scientific Persuasion	X
	Two-way; mutually unbalanced	X
	Source → Receiver ← Feedback	X
Two-way symmetrical model	Compatibility	X
	Two-way; mutually balanced	X
	Source → ← Receiver	X

## 7. The Joneses\* (2009)

The film tackles the public relations field in respect with the dimension of experiential marketing. Communication activities including experiential marketing contain certain details that should be regarded all through our lives. Accordingly, public relations activities in the film include exaggeration based on Spicer's Categorization. In some scenes, it is emphasized that it is not what people think of that matters; but what they are made to think through communication activities. This is connected to the destructive aspect of communication. A communication activity that is demonstrated in the film is people's challenging to each other with their money. Their actions are based on the thought: "I can consume more and I can show it to you obviously." Therefore, the public relations activities in the film include challenge. The content of the film is mainly based on exaggeration and the thought "You cannot sell if you do not exaggerate." is analyzed. The element of distortion is reflected through the situation that a non-existing family pretends to be a real family. In accordance with these facts, the film tackles public relations regarding all the titles in Spicer's Categorization only except for being a tool for battle.

In Miller's Categorization, communication specialists are people that are friendly yet capable of taking everything you have from you. Their lifestyles barely display it. In the film, it is a significant detail that employees are criticized for their monthly percentages of sales and they are oriented by their top managers. It is clearly observed that communication specialists try to develop their careers and get promotions by exhibiting cynical and provoking behaviours

\* The Jones family have an adorable life with the spacious and elegantly-designed house they live in, expensive and stylish clothes they wear and the technological devices they have. Steve and Kate look like a flawless couple; yet, they only pretend to be a happy couple for the campaign of a corporation. The film puts forward another dimension of public relations, reflecting the alternative ways of communication that corporations build between their target groups and themselves along with a comprehensive analysis of this process.

besides lying and cheating. It is supported by the fact that all leading characters present themselves with fake identities, expose the products barely and they are motivated to be the bingo family in their monthly assessments. Members of the family encourage all their friends and neighbours to buy the products. They are focused on money while doing their job and they are comfortable with explaining it to each other. Individuals do not alienate themselves from real life yet they directly take part in it instead with the aim of transforming it. Thus, they do not isolate themselves but participate in life and social circumstances. It is observed that they are dissatisfied since they have sales and profit targets. They have a restless psychology although their mark-up percentages increase. Depending on Miller’s Categorization, the film includes all subtitles excluding the one that relates to alienation and isolation.

Considering Grunig and Hunt’s Model, it is determined that The Jones family makes propaganda campaign to increase the sales. They persuade many families to buy the products; this enhances their monthly sales chart and earns them more points. They have a one-way and unrealistic communication. Information is conveyed from the source directly to the receiver. The public information model indicates that the target group should be briefed about the products. This kind of a briefing is incentive, one-way and inaccurate. It is from the source to the receiver. The sales activities are based on incentive campaigns rather than persuasion through scientific facts. The communication is two-way and mutual but unbalanced. The Jones family uses the information they receive for themselves instead of using it for the benefit of the receiver.

Spicer’s Categorization		Miller’s Categorization	
It is a tool for attention	✓	Blood sucker but cute	✓
It is a tool for destruction	✓	Sycophant; capable of satisfying the employers and ready to focus on whatever they think of	✓
It is a tool for challenge	✓	Cynical, nervous, angry and provoking; usually getting promotions through lies and cheating	✓
It is a tool for exaggeration	✓	Manipulative	✓
It is a tool for distortion	✓	Fond of money; considering their jobs only as a mechanism that brings cash	✓
It is a tool for battle	X	Alienating and isolating themselves	X
It is a stereotype	✓	Unsatisfied	✓
		Talented but unhappy with their jobs	✓

Grunig and Hunt’s Four Model of Public Relations		
Model Name	Type of Communication	Assessment
Press agency/publicity	Propaganda	✓
	One-way; no condition of accuracy	✓
	Source → Receiver	X
Public information model	Information	✓
	One-way; accuracy is considered	X
	Source → Receiver	✓
Two-way asymmetrical model	Scientific Persuasion	X
	Two-way; mutually unbalanced	✓
	Source → Receiver ← Feedback	✓
Two-way symmetrical model	Compatibility	X
	Two-way; mutually balanced	X

	Source → ← Receiver	X
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### 8. Sex and the City\* I-II (2008-2010)

The film does not directly display public relations activities; however, the protagonist, Samantha, who is a public relations specialist, creates a perception of it since she is a specialist in this field. Depending on Spicer's Categorization, it is determined that the film reflects public relations as a stereotype that includes exaggeration, distortion and standing as a tool for battle. In the film, Samantha has an exaggerated attitude in general. She claims that in media communication, success is based on a different reflection of the truth rather than the truth itself. With this explanation, she emphasizes that public relations has an aspect of exaggerated reflection. In this respect, she distorts and exaggerates an event at her office. This is supported by her gestures and mimics. In the film, Samantha travels to the Arabian Peninsula and her unrestricted behaviour causes them to be kicked out of the hotel and be deported from the country. In return, she applies a quota to the hotel and ends their promotion campaign when she goes back to the USA. This causes her a big financial loss since her partnership with the Arabian hotel is terminated. Arguably, Samantha used his public relations speciality as a battle tool. Samantha is a stereotype of public relations. She is also very expensive and carefully picked. Samantha fits Spicer's stereotype that is "a beautiful woman" and "a woman with strong communication skills".

Regarding Miller's Categorization, the film indicates only the aspect of manipulation. Samantha is capable of exposing her thoughts to those around her and manipulates them in many ways.

When the film is tackled regarding Grunig and Hunt's Model, it is determined that it only indicates the press agency/publicity model.

Spicer's Categorization		Miller's Categorization	
It is a tool for attention	X	Blood sucker but cute	X
It is a tool for destruction	X	Sycophant; capable of satisfying the employers and ready to focus on whatever they think of	X
It is a tool for challenge	X	Cynical, nervous, angry and provoking; usually getting promotions through lies and cheating	X
It is a tool for exaggeration	✓	Manipulative	✓
It is a tool for distortion	✓	Fond of money; considering their jobs only as a mechanism that brings cash	X
It is a tool for battle	✓	Alienating and isolating themselves	X
It is a stereotype	✓	Unsatisfied	X
		Talented but unhappy with their jobs	X

Grunig and Hunt's Four Model of Public Relations		
Model Name	Type of Communication	Assessment
Press agency/publicity	Propaganda	✓
	One-way; no condition of accuracy	✓
	Source → Receiver	✓
Public information model	Information	X
	One-way; accuracy is considered	X

\* The film tells the story of four women that are successful at their jobs and from the elite circle. The leading character Samantha is a public relations specialist and she frequently mentions about this profession.

	Source → Receiver	X
Two-way asymmetrical model	Scientific Persuasion	X
	Two-way; mutually unbalanced	X
	Source → Receiver ← Feedback	X
Two-way symmetrical model	Compatibility	X
	Two-way; mutually balanced	X
	Source → ← Receiver	X

**9. The Ides of March\* (2011)**

Based on Spicer’s Categorization, the film tackles public relations as a tool for attention. It tries to draw the community’s attention manipulatively and orientates it by giving messages. The speech texts of the candidate (Mike Morris) imply that public relations is a tool for destruction. The texts include challenge (to the other candidate), exaggeration (in the scene that the candidate claims everyone above 18 will have a job) and distortion (the candidate says that all of his activities are based on honesty). The presidential candidate uses communication as a tool for battle; however, it is not found that he does it directly using public relations. The communication consultant is always presentable, serious and his expressions are noticeable, which all indicate that he can be assessed to be a stereotype.

The titles in Miller’s Categorization are not featured in the film.

According to Grunig and Hunt Model, It is understood that communication works are related to propaganda because of the presidential candidate’s texts. Communication does not indicate the condition of accuracy; yet, it is not one-way since the president and his assistants follow the poll results and they keep up with the common people. Communication is built from the source to the receiver and from the receiver to the source. When the film is analyzed regarding the public information model, it is determined that people are briefed about the current and future activities. There is a two-way communication that is both from the source to the receiver and from the receiver to the source. The film does not feature any findings of scientific persuasion regarding the two-way asymmetrical model. Communication is two-way and mutual yet unbalanced. The source uses the feedback to impress the receiver again. For the two-way symmetrical model, it can be stated that the communication is not compatible, not mutual or balanced. However, it is built from the source to the receiver and from the receiver to the source.

Spicer’s Categorization		Miller’s Categorization	
It is a tool for attention	X	Blood sucker but cute	X
It is a tool for destruction	✓	Sycophant; capable of satisfying the employers and ready to focus on whatever they think of	X
It is a tool for challenge	✓	Cynical, nervous, angry and provoking; usually getting promotions through lies and cheating	X
It is a tool for exaggeration	✓	Manipulative	X
It is a tool for distortion	✓	Fond of money; considering their jobs only as a mechanism that brings cash	X
It is a tool for battle	X	Alienating and isolating themselves	X
It is a stereotype	✓	Unsatisfied	X

\* The film tells about the final part of the presidential campaign in Ohio State and the propaganda of the politicians. Stephen Meyers is the spokesman of Mike Morris, one of the presidential candidates, finds himself right in the middle of a scandal. The rest is a period of communication activities aimed at taking people’s support.

		Talented but unhappy with their jobs	X
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<b>Grunig and Hunt's Four Model of Public Relations</b>		
Model Name	Type of Communication	Assessment
Press agency/publicity	Propaganda	✓
	One-way; no condition of accuracy	X
	Source → Receiver	X
Public information model	Information	✓
	One-way; accuracy is considered	X
	Source → Receiver	✓
Two-way asymmetrical model	Scientific Persuasion	X
	Two-way; mutually unbalanced	✓
	Source → Receiver ← Feedback	✓
Two-way symmetrical model	Compatibility	X
	Two-way; mutually balanced	X
	Source → ← Receiver	✓

### 10.No\* (2012)

Regarding Spicer's Categorization, it is determined that public relations is reflected as a tool for attention. The campaign workers are given only 15 minutes during a TV broadcast to speak to public and change their minds. Public relations is used as a tool for destruction addressed to those that would vote as "Yes" for Augusto Pinochet (the presidential candidate) in the referendum. It can be said that public relations is used to challenge the competitors during the propaganda.

The film does not feature any of the aspects in Miller's Categorization.

Certain aspects of Grunig and Hunt's model are included in the film. In some scenes, the propaganda activities are observed on the election videos. These videos are broadcasted without regarding accuracy and in a one-way form. The information is conveyed from the source to the receiver. Depending on the public information model, it is seen that people are informed; however, accuracy is still disregarded. The communication is from the source to the receiver. The two-way asymmetrical model indicates that the campaign is two-way and mutually unbalanced. The information is conveyed from the source to the receiver and the acquired information is again used to change the receivers' ideas.

<b>Spicer's Categorization</b>		<b>Miller's Categorization</b>	
It is a tool for attention	✓	Blood sucker but cute	X
It is a tool for destruction	✓	Sycophant; capable of satisfying the employers and ready to focus on whatever they think of	X
It is a tool for challenge	✓	Cynical, nervous, angry and provoking; usually getting promotions through lies and cheating	X
It is a tool for exaggeration	X	Manipulative	X

\* The film tells about the referendum in Chili in 1988. A young advertisement executive tries to change the perception of the community and persuade them to vote as "No". He runs a large public relations campaign and reveals the mass communication that specialists build.



It is a tool for distortion	X	Fond of money; considering their jobs only as a mechanism that brings cash	X
It is a tool for battle	X	Alienating and isolating themselves	X
It is a stereotype	X	Unsatisfied	X
		Talented but unhappy with their jobs	X

Grunig and Hunt's Four Model of Public Relations		
Model Name	Type of Communication	Assessment
Press agency/publicity	Propaganda	✓
	One-way; no condition of accuracy	✓
	Source → Receiver	✓
Public information model	Information	✓
	One-way; accuracy is considered	X
	Source → Receiver	✓
Two-way asymmetrical model	Scientific Persuasion	X
	Two-way; mutually unbalanced	✓
	Source → Receiver ← Feedback	✓
Two-way symmetrical model	Compatibility	X
	Two-way; mutually balanced	X
	Source → ← Receiver	X

### CONCLUSION

In this study, three different models were used to evaluate the practice of the public relations industry as portrayed in ten films.

Analysis of the 10 films covered in this study are as follows:

Spicer's Categorization		Miller's Categorization	
It is a tool for attention	5	Blood sucker but cute	2
It is a tool for destruction	5	Sycophant; capable of satisfying the employers and ready to focus on whatever they think of	4
It is a tool for challenge	5	Cynical, nervous, angry and provoking; usually getting promotions through lies and cheating	2
It is a tool for exaggeration	6	Manipulative	7
It is a tool for distortion	7	Fond of money; considering their jobs only as a mechanism that brings cash	1
It is a tool for battle	2	Alienating and isolating themselves	2
It is a stereotype	6	Unsatisfied	2
		Talented but unhappy with their jobs	2

Applying Spicer's categorization, half of the films studied represent the practice of public relations as a tool of attention, destruction and challenge. The majority of the films studied reflected the practice of public relations as a tool of exaggeration, distortion and stereotype. In addition, the negative feature of distortion was common to seven of the films studied, further reflecting the negative perception portrayed of public relations and its practice, especially its honesty and integrity. On the other hand, the 'battle' with opposing views was only evident in two films. Arguably, this reflects common held views of public relations practice as less about confrontational and polemical views.

***Public Relations In Films: An Analysis Of How The Theory And Practice Of Public Relations Was Reflected In A Selection Of Hollywood Films Between 1999 And 2013***

According to the Miller categorization, ‘manipulation’ was evident in a very high number of films. This is arguably parallel with modern day perceptions of the public relations industry, especially, for example, in the political arena.

Another aspect of the categorization, is described as ‘Sycophant, capable of satisfying their employers and ready to focus on whatever they think of’ has the second highest number of films with four films displaying this aspect. Arguably, this recognizes the close role of the public relations specialist with their employer and sometimes this may mean a reduction in impartial advice and a tendency to agree with their employer rather than disagree.

The title of “fond of money; considering their jobs only as a mechanism that brings cash” has the lowest score. One explanation for this is that the public relations specialist’s primary goal is to increase the profile of their organization rather than to earn money.

It is worth noting that in respect of those aspects which appeared in a small number of films, one film out of ten accounted for a number of aspects especially those aspects which were less widely portrayed. Therefore, one could argue that one film has had a disproportionate impact on the occurrence of a number of the less occurring aspects of the model in films since 1999.

<b>Grunig and Hunt’s Four Model of Public Relations</b>		
Model Name	Type of Communication	Assessment
Press agency/publicity	Propaganda	7
	One-way; no condition of accuracy	7
	Source → Receiver	6
Public information model	Information	8
	One-way; accuracy is considered	1
	Source → Receiver	8
Two-way asymmetrical model	Scientific Persuasion	1
	Two-way; mutually unbalanced	3
	Source → Receiver ← Feedback	4
Two-way symmetrical model	Compatibility	0
	Two-way; mutually balanced	0
	Source → ← Receiver	2

According to the Grunig and Hunt’s Model, the information from source to receiver has the highest points (8 points). The transfer of information is very important for the definitional framework of public relations. However, how the information is exchanged is of importance. In the analysis, transferring information from source to receiver (according to the title of Press agency/publicity) has 6 points, Information 8 points, asymmetric information with feedback from source to receiver has 4 points and symmetric information with feedback from source to receiver has 2 points. This situation could show that public relations in terms of communications directed to the audience in the films occurs without much importance being attached to feedback as in the two way symmetrical model. In films, it might also show that public relations specialists care more for their company than their targeted audience because the titles of propaganda, one-way; and no condition of accuracy have 7 points.

One of the most significant topics in the area of public relations is persuasion. Persuasive studies need to be supported with rational and scientific studies. Only one of the movies has a scientific supported persuasive argument. Hence the tendency is for public relations not to use scientific studies to support and strengthen their persuasion positions. It might also be concluded that communications with target audiences are not balanced as there is an absence of what Miller terms compatibility and two-way information together with a mutuality of balance

in the films chosen. The results obtained for the problematic of the study is that public relations specialists are mostly manipulative (7 in 10 movies).

As a result, where the categorization relates to public relations practice generally a high number of films conform to the identifiable features of that category; however, where the categorization relates, in particular, to the public relations professional's personality as with Miller's categorization, the number of films conforming to the different features of this categorization is, in the main, low. One tentative explanation for this is that there is a distinct difference between the personality of the public relations professional and their practice. For example, a public relations specialist may undertake an activity as part of practice which is negative, for example, because his employer requests it, but the films do not attribute this negative conduct direct to the public relations specialist themselves.

A number of these points, evidenced aptly in the films chosen for this study, are suggestive of the absence of an embedded system of ethics or code of conduct pervading all aspects of public relations whether in the form of a professional's framework of practice or otherwise. It is contended that any such professional framework in this area should be defined clearly through an examination of the key roles and responsibilities of participants by key, experienced professionals. With clarity over, for example, specific job descriptions and application criteria together with a defined code of conduct, the subsequent ten films with a public relations genre may score very differently in any subsequent analysis.

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