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# Public relations as a strategic intelligence for the 21st century: Contexts, controversies, and challenges

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### ABSTRACT

This article features uncertainty as one of the dominant challenges facing society and, therefore, contemporary public relations. In looking for ways to better adapt and promote public relations to the service of fully functioning society, it revisits controversies around the notion of multiple intelligences (MIs), including emotional intelligence. It examines the stakes and status involved in claiming “ownership” of IQ or of promoting another “form” of intelligence(s). In addition, the article foregrounds the formative role played by promotional communication, especially in framing ideas and telling stories, to gain traction in academic communities and to gain acceptance among wider publics. Finally, it suggests that public relations is a disciple of strategic intelligence that could learn by adapting to, or adopting from, the growing range of subjects aspiring to be the next big intelligence. We suggest that such an adaptation has benefits: it might to better access knowledge with contemporary and future relevance rather than slowly consolidating a more insular Public Relations Body of Knowledge based on past results; it can improve the field’s impact and reputation by engaging public relations with cross-disciplinary controversies; and it can follow [Gardner’s \(2008\)](#) forward-looking view of the need for any discipline, or cluster of good intelligences, to be oriented to serving a global community.

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## 1. Contexts: contemporary life, uncertainty, and risk

Since at least [John Kenneth Galbraith’s \(1977\)](#) publication of *The Age of Uncertainty*, the notion of uncertainty was considered as an identifying characteristic of the late 20th century. Briefly disputed by Alan [Greenspan’s \(2008\)](#) nomination of the present as *The Age of Turbulence* in the 21st century, uncertainty remains a strong post-2000 contender. This is visible in two ways. The first is by the range and number of book titles, or subtitles, containing “age of uncertainty”: [Weick and Sutcliffe’s \(2007\)](#) *Resilient Performance in an Age of Uncertainty*; [Bauman’s \(2007\)](#) *Living in an Age of Uncertainty*; [Nowotny, Scott, and Gibbons \(2001\)](#) *Knowledge and the Public in an Age of Uncertainty*; and [Broocks \(2013\)](#) *Evidence for God in an Age of Uncertainty*.

Uncertainty’s claim to Zeitgeist properties is reinforced by the rise of “risk” as counterpart term for characterizing the present age. Risk supports uncertainty’s claims because the two terms are, as in [Bammer and Smithson’s \(2009\)](#) *Uncertainty and Risk* collection, so frequently linked. Risk owes much to its foregrounding by [Ulrich Beck’s \(1992\)](#) notion of risk society

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which is founded on the tensions of the uncertainties of risk. That alone was prominent enough to make risk a candidate for capturing a key essence of contemporary life – even Greenspan (2013) implicitly acknowledged this priority by inserting “Risk” rather than “Turbulence” into his later book title. Risk sharpens the edge of the notion of turbulence.

Despite these recent manifestations, it is useful to contextualize risk and uncertainty as ancient concerns at many levels. Both are central to the human condition and predictive of survival and societal viability at the most primitive (and contemporary) levels. Humans have long wondered about creation, what happens after death, and the problematics of daily life: from what sources of food can be readily obtained to how long will children (or parents) live? Such uncertainties, manifested by terrorism in this century, include the prospect of ideologically and psychologically motivated violence. These are a minute few of the uncertainties that couple the discipline of risk with matters of chance. (As in the case of Divine Right of Kings, the assumption was that by birth, survival, or military victory, God individually chose and empowered monarchs; ironically, herein occurred the great battle between church and state reconciled by at least one monarch who claimed to be both.) A world without predictability is too entropic for people to accommodate. Thus, among other conceptual/cognitive and language/symbolic tools are those available as narratives.

Giving grounding to this notion, Browning and Morris (2012) observed how, among other functions, narratives are the repositories of the events and arcs of human experience. Such conclusions can be as insightful and relevant for primitive minds as for those confronted with the uncertainties of the late modern, or “post-postmodern” (if we are there yet), conditions. Humans find it hard to tolerate randomness and chaos, no matter how much that is the nature of their world. They like, at least the illusion, of knowable patterns, predictability, and risk control. Early hunters told children hunting tales to improve the likelihood of their tribe continuing to obtain nourishment. Mothers and grandmothers told the “old wives tales” to maintain tried practices of personal and community health and safety.

Yet, as observed patterns and environments change, so must narratives. Gottschall (2012) convincingly argues that humans are “wired” for story to give us an evolutionary advantage because “stories help us navigate life’s complex social problems” and, “just as flight simulators prepare pilots for difficult situations,” storytelling “has evolved, like other behaviors, to ensure our survival” (Front flap).

Humans have to handle uncertainties that are the result of complex relationships and events. So that nations (as well as other collectives) can understand complex relationships and events, they create spies. They spy on one another since surveillance is a means for bringing at least some modicum of control to complexity. The activity presumes to assert linearity on a non-linear set of events. If spies, then counterspies, counter intelligence, and misinformation. If spies, and counter spies, then counter-counter spies. Such is the search for intelligence, patterns, predictions, certainty, probabilities, and other potential dysfunctions of the desire for control.

As such, patterns tend more toward variance and randomness than uncertainty—but within allowable limits before narrative completely overwhelms fact. In the movie, “Lonely are the Brave,” the character played by Walter Matthau marvels how each day and by the same sequence and times, a dog posts his scent on the same objects. So, he (we) come to believe there are patterns that reduce uncertainty to knowability and predictability. But, if we watch a roulette wheel, the same number has exactly the same odds of coming up at every spin of the wheel. Hierarchies and elites in societies become “lofty, honored, and even worshipped” because they come to know the change of seasons as not totally random. They can predict the narrative of planting and thereby seem gifted. And, by the same token, social movement activism seeks self-empowerment through spawned disorder, as is the current case with ISIS.

## 2. Approaching uncertainty and intelligence

Uncertainty is best defined as the absence of certainty. That claim is a seeming tautology, but suggests that people operate on limited knowledge both because of their lack of “intelligence” and due to the fact that complexity confounds human knowing—for an infinite number of reasons. Thus, uncertainty is a cousin of risk, and risk management is essentially the discipline of seeking to know but otherwise coping with the unknown, or the partially (and even badly), known. And battles are waged regarding whether (think of the precautionary principle) not approving a technology does least harm (such as in the case of genetically modified organisms) or failing to “take a risk” stops progress.

By demonstration of such paradoxes, it is possible to conceptualize and teach communication as a discipline fixated on uncertainty (e.g., Grant, 2007) and to explain human communication as individual and collective uncertainty reduction. Media presume that newsgathering reduces uncertainty about events and people. All theater, even comedy, plays on the drama of uncertainty, and its reduction. Interpersonal communication scholars presume that interaction rituals are used both to reduce uncertainty because it is uncomfortable—and to create uncertainty. Berger (1975) observed how and why uncertainty refers to “the number of possible alternative ways of behaving and believing when strangers meet” (p. 35). People have ample strategies for finding out, at least within the limits and powers of their own intelligence, about one another. They have infinite ways of explaining, and narrating, disorder and thereby giving it order; so argue the logics of attribution theory.

Social anthropologist Mary Douglas (1985) answered the question of how and why humans are capable of risk acceptability, partly because humans are capable of, and predisposed to, risk and blame (Douglas, 1992). She discovered how humans are variously at odds with one another over explanations designed to cope with uncertainty and risk. Interest in such matters both motivated and augmented Douglas’ interest in the role religion plays in the human condition. The certainty of some form of religion is based on the universality of uncertainty, and its discomfort as risk. By that logic, one can define

society as organized for the collective management of risk. Each profession and occupation is intended to be a specialized branch of collective risk management, as uncertainty reduction. What is also fascinating is that often the greatest uncertainty (mystery) can be made known by the simplest explanation: God's will.

Kenneth Burke packaged concepts such as mystery, G(g)od, hierarchy, creation, account giving, meaning providing, and such as the logic of how and why people live and enact symbolism. Noting the need to avoid mystery as uncertainty and to prefer an orderliness even if it is apparently dysfunctional, Burke reasoned that if there were no god, humans would create one. God is the ultimate answer on matters of reality, relationship, and patterns of morality. Thus, even though terms begin as names for things, as they are elevated those names have moral and ultimate power implications. For that reason, gods are invariably defined as the negative or absence of positive being. They are immortal, immutable, omnipresent, unbounded, invincible, impassive, and such. But so too are the ultimate positive, such as originator, creator, and all knowing.

Add the origins of scapegoating. When humans have trouble dealing with some aspect of their reality, that uncertainty can be resolved by heaping faults onto a scapegoat that can be killed symbolically or actually (Heath, 1986). Adherence to a godly justification can account for the impoverished and enslaved. It can justify burning heretics. Monarchs serve by divine right. They prosper by their god-given talents which also justify various kinds of sacrifice to achieve certainty. Such logics answer the question of whether the inanimate has spiritual power. And, god is the ultimate term and ultimate motive; what cannot humans do and achieve in the name of god? Gottschall (2012) adds an additional question: "Why would you ever want to stop being god? Humans evolved to create story" (p. 197). Story becomes god!

### 3. Evolving controversies: from "Seven Talents" to MI and intelligence wars

Storytellers who wish to have influence seek attention for their stories and often strive for influence by claiming to tell the story of the age in which they live. To do so, they augment the emphasis on how their narrative about the age matters. Around the same time as Galbraith (1977) was expounding on uncertainty as a macro-story of his times, Howard Gardner – in retrospective reflections – was starting to think in micro-story terms about "multiple intelligences" (MI) (Gardner, 2010, p. xiii) as a "line of research on the structure and development of the mind as relevant primarily to psychologists – particularly those in the specialties of cognitive psychology, development psychology, and neuropsychology" (p. xiii). Much to Gardner's (2010) surprise, interest "came chiefly from the educational sector, rather than from colleagues in psychology. Yet fairly soon it became evident that, for a variety of reasons, the idea of multiple intelligences could be useful to many educators" (p. xiii), although, for a variety of other reasons, "it proved threatening or destabilizing to many psychologists" (p. xiii). It is notable Gardner's (2010) retrospective reflections locate the genesis of MI close to his own development psychology discipline, albeit it widened out to draw from other areas of brain research.

Although many in cognitive neuroscience still do not agree that intelligence is divisible and multiple, the idea of plural intelligences became an important narrative as the popularity of MI spread internationally – see Chen, Moran, and Gardner (2009) *Multiple Intelligences Around the World* – and crossed to other fields – see Riggio, Murphy, and Pirozzolo (2013) *Multiple Intelligences and Leadership*. Translated into several languages, Gardner's (1983) *Frames of Mind* continued to sell enough to be reprinted in 2011, with a new introduction by Gardner. Looking back on the first thirty years of MI, Gardner (2011) recalls how the book resulted from a grant project designed to chronicle "what had been established about human cognition through discoveries in the biological and behavioral sciences" (p. x). In this way, he situates the research project, and his 1983 *Frames of Mind* book that it informed, as consciously evolving in response to environmental changes in the form of new research findings, especially around human cognition.

More importantly for communication scholars, wider publics, and this article, Gardner (2011) identifies one of his book's "crucial turning points" (p. xi) for attaining wider success as the choice of the term "multiple intelligences" rather than "assorted abilities" or "sundry gifts" (p. xi). He observes how this "seemingly minor lexical substitution proved important" (p. ix). It is hard to disagree when he adds that he was "quite confident that if I had written a book called *Seven Talents* it would not have received the attention that *Frames of Mind* achieved" (p. xi). In other words, words and how they frame ideas (Fairhurst, 2011), matter in material ways. We make this point to highlight how communication helps constitute reality. In this case Gardner's effective framing of his research as multiple intelligence (MI), positioned it for widespread adoption beyond its planned market. Ironically, the popularity and recognitions of MI's value in taking informed action in classrooms and beyond helped MI to resist cognitive scientists' claims to be the sole proprietors of one single intelligence – IQ – in the academy and in the public discourse of books.

Although MIs were well established in education by the mid-1990s, Albrecht (2007) considers Daniel Goleman's (1995) publishing blockbuster *Emotional Intelligence*, or EI or EQ as it quickly became known, as "the first step in bringing the MI concept out of the academic realm and into the lives of ordinary civilians. . . [and] deserves credit for crystallizing the idea of an 'intelligence' as a useful focus of attention" (p. 33). Goleman must have further upset what, for convenience, we'll call the IQ camp with his book's unapologetic subtitle *Why It [EQ] Can Matter More Than IQ*. His accompanying blurb, in promoting the work as "The Groundbreaking Book that Redefines What It Means to Be Smart," upped the demarcation stakes not just by calling EQ another intelligence but by arguing for its superiority to IQ. Goleman's strategic branding of EQ as overtaking the existing IQ brand contributed to its marketing appeal. It simultaneously confronted neuroscientists' claims to hold proprietary rights over the one true intelligence and ignited a promotional battle for the hearts and minds of multiple disciplines and publics interested in the term.

#### 4. Interrogating intelligences: objects of absurdity or objects of desire?

Most of the cognitive and psychological opposition's objections are founded on declarations of stronger scientific research or superior cognitive psychology skills. Macnamara (2015) has not only usefully synthesized them but added observations on how one clinical psychologist, Stephen Briers (2012), responded with the provocative book title, *Psychobabble: Exploding the Myths of the Self-Help Generation*. Through this illustration, Macnamara (2015) draws attention to ways that the IQ camp boosted their own credibility through discursive marketing practices. In communication terms, there is a certain irony in that Briers' (2009) previous book – the immodestly titled *Brilliant Cognitive Behavioural Therapy: How to Use CBT to Improve Your Mind and Your Life* – carries an accompanying “self-help” blurb to the effect that it was “specially written to help give readers the insight, tools and confidence they need to understand and use CBT in their own lives” ([http://www.amazon.com/Brilliant-Cognitive-Behavioral-Therapy-Improve/dp/0273777734/ref=dp\\_ob\\_title\\_bk](http://www.amazon.com/Brilliant-Cognitive-Behavioral-Therapy-Improve/dp/0273777734/ref=dp_ob_title_bk)).

While Briers (2009) seeks credibility by foregrounding his qualifications and experiences, Gardner and Goleman have records as scholars and research to hold up well in such comparisons. This is not to claim that Gardner and Goleman are superior to Briers. Nor is it to say that EQ is better than CBT – both approaches have considerable merit depending on what the user is attempting to do. The point is made to draw attention to the deployment of semantic weapons (e.g., the use of derogatory terms such as “psychobabble” to dismiss opposing arguments) and the use of professional and scholarly reputation in the struggles for greater academic and public credibility (and, subsequently, to promote larger sales) for different ideas. There is also a tendency to be dismissive of self-help writings as though the university system should be the source of all trustworthy learning.

Among those in the IQ camp invoking science, or the status of science, to discredit the EQ camp, is the well-known psychologist Hans Eysenck. Eysenck, who had previously attracted controversy for his linkages of race with intelligence (see Pearson, 1997, *Race, Intelligence and Bias in Academe*), saw Goleman as exemplifying

more clearly than most the fundamental absurdity of the tendency to class almost any type of a behavior as an “intelligence” . . . If these [Goleman's] five “abilities” define “emotional intelligence”, we would expect some evidence that they are highly correlated; Goleman admits that they might be quite uncorrelated, and in any case if we cannot measure them, how do we know they are related? So the whole theory is built on quicksand: there is no sound scientific basis. (Eysenck, 2000, p. 109)

In effect Eysenck refuses to categorize anything as intelligence other than the abstract intelligence of IQ, or something that fits with IQ methods and measurements and so tries to keep the power to name what counts as an intelligence within psychological discourse. Eight years on, by 2015, we can comfortably follow Albrecht's (2007) summary assessment “not to belabor the ‘IQ debate’ much further, considering that the multiple intelligence perspective is already rather widely accepted . . . it's only necessary to put the dimension of *abstract intelligence* – the IQ kind – into perspective with the other intelligences” [italics in original] (p. 27).

As authors exploring the nature and societal responsibilities of the professional discipline of public relations, we have what Bruch and Ghoshal (2004) call “a bias for action” (p. 7) to further the creation of a fully functioning society. That orientation is further reason to align with the Gardner–Goleman camp in these demarcation disputes. Their camp is not focused, as is the case in much writing in the IQ camp, on asking if a person has any abstract thinking ability and, if so, how it can be measured. Instead, Gardner and Goleman are action-oriented in their focus is on how a person is smart (i.e., what ways do people express what capabilities they have) and how might they apply those smarts/abilities/intelligences. We also seek to extend the Gardner–Goleman emphasis on the positive beyond the individual person and apply it to public relations as a field. After all, as Albrecht (2007) notes, “Having a high IQ is proof of the ability to get a high score on an IQ test, and possibly a few other things . . . IQ scores do tend to predict success in life, but *only to a small extent and within a relatively small range of scores*” [italics in original] (p. 27): “In highly controlled educational settings, performance differences on written tests may be more noticeable, but in ‘real life’ the other factors come into play in unpredictable ways” (p. 28). So for uncertain times and exploratory purposes, we opt for positively oriented, robust, and democratic approaches capable of generating real-world improvements through enlarging ideas of what is possible.

To date, while the IQ camp may have reason to celebrate victories in their disciplinary journals, they have lost the wrangle in the marketplace of ideas, and in the books in other fields (e.g., education, management). Moreover, not only have they lost specific battles but they have opened whole new opposition fronts for others to follow Eysenck's (2000) absurd “tendency to class almost any type of a behavior as an ‘intelligence’” (p. 109). Indeed the legacy of Gardner to some extent, and Goleman, to an even greater extent, is to make the focus of their attention into an academically and socially accepted “intelligence.” For their legatees, two historical trajectories of how to popularize across academic fields and create bestselling books now exist so that a new intelligence has become an object of desire for many aspirants.

Any would-be successor to EQ can quickly see the utility in starting with an equivalent style of intelligence that is well framed, well promoted, and capable of attracting a tipping point of scholars, practitioners, and audiences to establish itself into the wider public consciousness. Detractors and disputes will likely remain (as with the contributors to Bar-On & Parker, 2000, for EQ), but the commercial success and cross-disciplinary acceptance of Goleman's EQ consolidated Gardner's earlier MI victories. IQ no longer holds the fort as *the* standard benchmark but stands alongside Goleman's (1999) description of EQ as “The New Yardstick” (p. 3) in business and the workplace.

## 5. Would-be successors: Goleman, Appreciative Intelligence, and Cultural Intelligence

As a result, by 2000 the intelligence battles were less and less about IQ versus EQ and more about identifying and establishing the next influential intelligence. Academic and public juries alike may still be out on the success of the would-be successors but the aspirational trend is clear. Goleman himself published two contenders: *Social Intelligence* (Goleman, 2006), and *Ecological Intelligence* (Goleman, 2009). Many others sought to attain the desired object. Attempts range from *Aesthetic Intelligence* – trademarked as Ael© (Mucha, 2009), through *Financial Intelligence* – of three books sharing that title, one is from Harvard Business Review Press (Berman & Knight, 2013), one is an Amazon Kindle (Mertz, 2014), and one is from the Financial Planning Association Press (Lennick & Jordan, 2013) – to one attempt to promote aspects of postcolonialism as *Native Intelligence* (Bahri, 2003). While there is an entrepreneurial enthusiasm in many of these attempts to make ideas accessible to wider publics, they can also help to create a new intelligence as an actionable knowledge configuration with traction in the public sphere: “The contribution of ‘popularisers,’ while not always regarded with admiration by academic researchers, can . . . lend clarity by bringing together a number of scattered concepts into a useful body of knowledge” (Albrecht, 2007, pp. 32–33).

With this in mind we consider two attempts, which have relevance to public relations, to establish the credibility of another intelligence with similar impacts to Goleman’s EQ popularization. Thatchenkerry and Metzker’s (2006) *Appreciative Intelligence* resonates with how both Gardner and Goleman emphasize positive interventions rather than quantitative calculations. In addition, Thatchenkerry and Metzker’s approach gels with arguments to increase the field’s translation of theory to action through action research (McKie, 2008; Willis, 2015). In the *Handbook of Action Research* (Reason & Bradbury, 2001), Ludema, Cooperrider, and Barrett (2001) conclude that “Appreciative inquiry recognizes that inquiry and change are not truly separate moments, but are simultaneous. Inquiry is intervention” (p. 198) [italics in original].

This is a useful reminder not just for action researchers but also for anyone doing consultancy. The appreciative inquiry (AI) axiom, “how we question and the language that we use have impact” (Ludema et al., 2001, p. 191), adds a useful tool for introducing positive organizational psychology into public relations in mindful fashion. That said, we don’t recommend a large-scale curriculum entry for AI as appreciative intelligence lacks the heft to succeed EQ in the popularity and publishing stakes. In the nine years since its publication, Thatchenkerry and Metzker’s (2006) book has not attracted any substantial group of followers not already involved in AI.

Another would-be successor, Cultural Intelligence (CQ), appears, at least at first sight, a more promising aspirant. Like EQ, it tries to seize a Zeitgeist moment with a story that responds to a similar contemporary context. CQ’s equivalent to the expansion of neuroscience research findings, a key contextual entry point for both Gardner and Goleman, is commercial globalization. The spread of interconnectedness from factors as diverse as cheaper travel, expanding international markets, and large-scale outsourcing, have become so prevalent as to trigger a whole new way of thinking about traditional intercultural communication. One early intervention with influence was Earley and Mosakowski’s (2004) *Harvard Business Review* article entitled “Cultural Intelligence.” That title was echoed in Thomas and Inkson’s (2004) *Cultural Intelligence: People Skills for Global Business* and was followed by CQ: *Developing Cultural Intelligence at Work* (Earley, Ang, & Tan, 2006), which defined CQ as “a person’s capability for successful adaptation to new cultural settings, that is, for unfamiliar settings attributable to culture context” (Earley et al., 2006, p. 5).

Just as Thatchenkerry and Metzker (2006) had done, Earley et al. (2006) situate themselves in relation to EQ. They have had more visible success than advocates of appreciative intelligence with an increasing number of book titles using CQ or cultural intelligence: Livermore’s (2009a) *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World*; Livermore’s (2009b) *Leading with Cultural Intelligence: The New Secret to Success*; and Thomas and Inkson’s (2009) revised second edition of *Cultural Intelligence: Living and Working Globally*. The last of these makes a bid to both imitate Emotional Intelligence – in contesting IQ’s claims to exclusivity, and in the use of a similar kind of measure to IQ – and to go beyond it by claiming that CQ adds a further capability:

You have probably heard of the psychologists’ concept of intelligence, the ability to reason, and its measure, the intelligence quotient (IQ). More recently has come recognition of emotional intelligence, the concept that it is important how we handle our emotions. A measure of emotional intelligence is the emotional intelligence quotient (EQ). Cultural intelligence (or CQ as its measure might be called) is a relatively new idea that builds on these earlier concepts but that incorporates the capability to interact effectively across cultures. (Thomas & Inkson, 2009, p. 17)

Unfortunately for the CQ claimants, even when grouped together as a class action, neither the measures nor the conceptualizations have made a clear breakthrough to Zeitgeist status. While their use-by date has not yet been reached, CQ adds little to EQ other than the need to be more culturally aware. As with appreciative inquiry, this is not negligible but, unlike appreciative inquiry, the cultural dimension has already attracted much writing and is the focus of such existing fields as intercultural communication and diversity management.

## 6. Options and the role of public relations

In closing we reiterate our preference for Gardner’s and Goleman’s positive focus on working out how people are intelligent (i.e., what ways do you express what capabilities you have), and how they might use those intelligences. The virtue of such insights is not finding an intelligence of control, but knowing what intelligences offer what controls (however much

or little) and to what ends. It is not the ability to answer questions with finality, but the means by which to appreciate the illusiveness of the end, not as loss but as dimensions, layers, and texts.

Thus, our focus must be at a disciplinary level rather than an individual level and thereby leads to larger frame question: What is public relations? Does it have distinctive smarts that might be promoted as the next influential intelligence? If so, by what grounding is that answer provided? The answers to those questions begin by examining competition in the arena, as well as gaps in that intellectual space, and considering the breakup of public relations into component functions.

Our preliminary proposition is that, despite its substantial contribution to working with risk and uncertainty, we see no additional public desire for a rebrand of public relations as uncertainty intelligence. It is a similar story in regard to risk intelligence but compounded since Evans' (2012) *Risk Intelligence: How to Live with Uncertainty* has already been published. Public relations could contest the category, especially as Evans (2012) is more concerned with risk at an individual rather than an organizational or social level and does not pay attention to reputation risk. However, rather than being an opportunity in today's crowded *Promotional Cultures* (Davis, 2013), Evans' (2012) ability to capture public support for his suggestions about managing uncertainty poses a threat to a key area of influence for public relations. Just as EQ overtook IQ – although Goleman takes great pains to suggest that both are needed – so Evans' (2012) *Risk Intelligence*, or RQ as he calls it, has early market advantage for capturing the popular imagination and overtaking perceptions that risk belongs with public relations.

*Social Media Intelligence* (Moe & Schweidel, 2014) has the same advantage as Evans (2012) as it too is already in print. A possible media intelligence category remains unclaimed. PR certainly has proven media relations capabilities, but the term could be difficult to distinguish from media intelligence as the description of the findings of journalist research. There may be potential for mining public relations insights into categories such as issues intelligence, crises intelligence, or reputation intelligence – three currently vacant categories in books featuring “intelligence” in their titles – and repackaging them accordingly.

Our view, however, is that it is a more complete list of areas that best serves the discipline and its users. PR as a holistic configuration is greater than the sum of its parts in being able to respond appropriately to changing environments. In addition, given PR's complexity, interactional intricacies, and boundary-spanning experiences, its configuration, unlike EQ, does not fit as a packaged intelligence for a generally perceived public need, or supersede any other currently dominant intelligence.

So, what is public relations and what can it learn from the development of intelligences? The second question about what the field can learn from Gardner, Goleman, and the search for the next influential intelligence, leads in different directions. Existing public relations categories fail to distill into coherent individual intelligences. Accordingly, the 2014 Barcelona conference and this special PRR issue involved exploratory searches among already existing intelligences, and for the next big popular intelligence, looking for ways to improve, and help to future-proof, the current formations of public relations. In these uncertain times, we suggest that reviewing recent intelligence categories offers a more open and up-to-date approach than existing efforts to create a special Public Relations Body of Knowledge that tends to the insular in an age of interdisciplinarity (McKie & Munshi, 2009) and is heavily weighted to past and existing practices. These tend to be presented as nearly finished business, or as a house or edifice that needs only a few coats of paint, rather than ongoing innovation and considerable renovation to adjust to fast-changing contexts.

We propose that insights gained through the study of already-existing intelligences – EQ, for example, are slowly entering into PR curricula informed by PR-specific research. Some contributors to the Barcelona Conference and this special issue supplement the existing research and thinking. Other presenters offer such other categories as “Competitive Intelligence,” which has gathered support in other fields and could help public relations come to terms with the huge issue of Big Data. “Future Intelligence” is another candidate worth further exploration that would also assist in a more forward-looking orientation. Approaching possible knowledge clusters as intelligences not only helps in marketing them but also stimulates new ways to think. They usefully call into question now-tired categories still similar to those promoted by Bernays (1935), by Grunig and Hunt (1984), and without too much modification reappear in many subsequent public relations textbooks (see McKie, 2001). And to return to the question of self-help, no PR curriculum is ever going to be complete until several of the existing intelligences offer useful augmentations. The aforementioned three books with *Financial Intelligence* in their titles might help both students and practitioners to provide at least some discursive grounding in places that do not teach financial public relations.

One major lesson learned from both Gardner and Goleman is how they drew from recent neuroscience – both to develop underpinnings, and to show currency for their arguments – to add value to their claims. If it were not tautological, there would probably be a market for Neuroscience Intelligence. Books on neuromarketing (see Dooley, 2014; Van Praet, 2014; Zurawicki, 2010) appear with increasing velocity and the phenomena had already attracted the intellectual evaluation of Ariely and Berns' (2010) *Neuromarketing: The Hope and Hype of Neuroimaging in Business*. Despite this, neuro-public relations is in its infancy at best and a Google search on NeuroPR refers more frequently to NeuroPoker Rankings than NeuroPublic Relations.

Any next step toward connecting public relations and intelligences starts where the discipline has so often, so recently, failed. Instead of fixations on “paradigms” and their “shifts,” moves to larger combinations raise the tantalizing prospect of adding new groundings to refine, and perhaps revolutionize the discipline. The first and more foundational question concerns defining public relations, explaining its role in the human condition, and describing the types of strategic options and the rationale for them as part of a fully functioning society (Heath, 2006). We propose that public relations is a strategic intelligence for managing uncertainty reduction in ways designed to make society fully functioning. As such, the elements

of its intelligence are those that traditionally relate to certainty, power, trust, legitimacy, discourse and leadership. Some of the context-relevant conditions are those relevant to issues (public and private), risk, crisis, evaluations, proactionary commitments, and enlightened choices. As such, PR is fundamental to the human need for the intelligences of collective sense making. However much it is an individual trait or ability, it is necessarily most valued as the based for achieving collective insights.

If intelligence and problem solving are inseparable but interdependent, it is insufficient to merely suggest problem recognition and problem solving as the rationale for public relations practice and theory. If some are more intelligent and therefore better at solving problems, and generating new knowledge to recognize/understand problems and solve them, does that necessarily suggest the inevitability of an intelligent, agentic elite? Do we become committed to a Wizard of Oz sense of society, community, and humanity? If so, does that presuppose that public relations is inherently an intelligence of someone or many elites—constructing society and motivating people to “preferred” choices? Are the choices truly enlightened and democratic, or is intelligence necessarily predicted to prevail?

But, perhaps as a guard against wizards and puppeteers, Gardner (2008) argued that “Good work may begin in the bosom of the individual, but ultimately it must extend to the workplace, the nation, and the global community” (p. 151). Thus, and this is crucial to public relations, it must be more than the ability to make an organization effective, it must do so in ways that make it contribute to the culture, the society where it seeks to benefit. Who decides what benefits and logics address that goal? Perhaps that is a key intelligence, but the anchoring theme is that the intelligence must recognize and solve problems on behalf of the cultural good, the quality of the society. Thus, the goal is to opt for intelligence that does not inform the organization as to the ways to communicate or act for effectiveness. Rather, as neo-institutionalization is reasoning, the need is for strategic intelligence by which society, through narratives and enactors, becomes the intelligence of shared insights and collective benefits.

Given the trajectory of that theme, is it sound to reason that public relations is a strategic intelligence for managing uncertainty reduction needed to make society fully functioning? That definition, and thus this article, implies that uncertainty resolution is the essence of problem solving. But that is a step, an ingredient, in the intelligence that seeks to determine whether intelligence is the ability to bend reality to the human will or the ability to bend organizations to the service of society. Does it likewise presume that intelligence is the ability to bend society to the service of organizations?

Clearly, the latter paradigm seems to be a central tendency of the human condition. Monarchs battle over land and allegiance. Businesses battle over resources including consumers. Thus, we can find intelligence at play but is the essence of that play the cultural good that can be achieved by the highest critical insights, and most productive configuration, of intelligences? The human need for intelligence(s) responds to the potential offensiveness of uncertainty that may inspire a resolve that can blind judgment. The desire for short-hand solutions and comforting explanations become the rationale for many disciplines and can exhibit a bias to corporate/institutional interests. Thus, the need inspires the development and growth of disciplines to wrestle with the potential offensiveness. The challenge, in this regard, facing public relations is whether it prefers, perhaps inspired to serve an institutional master, to tell a story to serve an interest (e.g., that of the sponsor). Or, will it look more deeply and as a means for achieving a collective judgment to find—and be—an intelligence that proactively resolves as much uncertainty as possible—in the public arena—and to serve a truly public interest. That public interest is inherently the fostering of community and strengthening of society.

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