

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ADVOCACY ACTIVITIES
OF NGOS WORKING IN SOUTH SUDAN: A STUDY
OF STRATEGY IN CAPACITY-BUILDING
DEVELOPMENT

by

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DEVELOPMENT

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INTRODUCTION

July 9, 2011. On this day, the world's newest nation was born. Though in infancy, the independent state of South Sudan has been a focus of capacity-building efforts dating back to 2005, when the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) was signed between the Sudanese government and the southern rebel forces, the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM), ending a costly 21-year conflict in Sudan. This case study examines the role of communication and public relations in several non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in post-conflict South Sudan. I will use secondary research to build an interdisciplinary framework that will then be used to guide content analysis of primary documents developed by NGOs for nation building. The themes developed from the content analysis will then be used to build a model for nongovernmental development organizations working in post-conflict nations.

The international community has witnessed tension and outbreak between and within Sudan and South Sudan; however, it is too early to state whether or not reconciliation and peacebuilding efforts are effective. The case study focuses on South Sudan, though Sudan and its relationship with South Sudan are essential to understanding the new state's situation. A short history of the Sudanese civil war, CPA and referendum are essential in understanding the case. A situation analysis of conflict resolution efforts in South Sudan, of reconciliation and peacebuilding, through established conflict resolution theory are equally important. Lastly, I will contextually examine communication and public relations objectives, strategies, and tactics of NGOs working in the area, to determine their effectiveness and gain insight for the formulation of a comprehensive communication framework.

My journey to this topic is interdisciplinary in nature. Strategic communication and political science are my fields of study, and when I began to consider the topic of this thesis, I sought to combine the two. My angle was one not purely of communication or political science. Because of the separate research nature of the two disciplines, however, I had to find a connector. This came while studying abroad in Florence, Italy, during the spring 2012 semester. I took a conflict resolution class, and the connector became apparent in the study of the capacity-building process in post-conflict areas. It is a process contingent upon communication and political science theory. When further researching, however, I found little published about how these two disciplines work together in this process. This thesis approaches a different vision and research risk, one that could have important implications for both disciplines.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

It is important to establish a framework and define terminology to explain the processes of creating a foundation for capacity-building development in post-conflict areas. This includes the definition and utilization of public relations, capacity-building development, civil society, social capital, NGO organizational structure, and common conflict resolution terminology. These processes are often studied within disciplinary silos or as separate processes, and some of these terms themselves have contested meanings. Initial research and background in these areas indicates that a comprehensive approach to considering these terms would be useful for building a model that takes into account the ways that these processes overlap in the real world. The role of communication as the omnipresent connector in development, especially in post-conflict situations, is important. Communication, specifically public relations, matters because it

facilitates the spark and continuation of peaceful and cooperative discourse.

Communication is engaged in almost every societal process, and it is frequently the agent for change. And true two-way communication would be an essential part of NGO work because that work itself is not a one-way delivery system of capacity building, but relies on input and feedback from all parties involved. The following literature review justifies and provides an academic foundation to the analysis.

The Public Relations Process

Public relations, in its broadest interpretation, is the process of building relationships with publics. According to the Public Relations Society of America, the basic concept of public relations is that it is “a communication process, one that is strategic in nature and emphasizing ‘mutually beneficial relationships’” (“What is public relations,” 2013). Public relations is commonly thought of within specific contexts, such as organizational, publicity, or political. It may seem like an unlikely partner in this study because of its common stigma as a device for one-way publicity or spin. However, a more historic, robust and disciplinary definition suggests otherwise. This robust definition aptly captures the context within which public relations is used. As an anonymous source once said about the process, “Everything you do or say is public relations” (“Public relations,” 2012). Public relations is particularly important for every stakeholder in development because the building of relationships allows for more open and two-way civil discourse. The “Excellence Theory” of public relations is used as the primary public relations model in this study. It is repeatedly referenced and utilized. Created by James Grunig, it identifies the ideal situations in which public relations can contribute to the effectiveness of an organization. Grunig defines the core variables, or

principles, of public relations when conducted correctly and most excellently. Table 1 below lists all eight variables of the “Excellence Theory.” Of particular interest in the model, two-way symmetrical public relations is mentioned as one of eight variables, along with a participative culture and speaking from diversity (Holtzhausen, 2012).

Table 1: Excellence Theory

1. Top management must understand the value of public relations.
2. Public relations contributes to strategic planning/strategic organizational functions.
3. Public relations should enact the managerial role by engaging in research and planning.
4. Public relations should use the two-way symmetrical model of public relations. This model emphasizes a dialogue between organizations and constituents.
5. People in the public relations department must have the skills and knowledge to enact the managerial role and engage in two-way symmetrical public relations.
6. Activist pressure can result in organizations communicating with constituents. Activist pressure is one indicator of an organization’s effect on its environment.
7. Organizations need a participative rather than an authoritarian culture and structure for Excellent public relations to flourish.
8. Public relations benefits from diversity in terms of race and gender.

Capacity-building Development

Capacity-building development gained popularity in the 1980s as a cosmopolitan approach combining many previous development approaches into one. Several of these include institution building, institutional development, human resource development, development management, and institutional strengthening (Lusthaus, Adrien & Perstinger, 1999). Though its definition is transformative and not synonymous across the field, for the purposes of this paper I use a broad UNDP definition for capacity-building development: “The process by which individuals groups, organizations, institutions and societies increase their abilities: to perform functions, solve problems and achieve objectives; to understand and deal with their development need in a broader context and in a sustainable manner” (“UNDP,” 1997, p. 3). At the heart of capacity-building development is the ideal that if processes and institutions are built and allow for the

capacity of the native people to manage and grow their abilities, there is an increased chance of sustainable success.

Civil Society

Capacity building is as much about the native people as the institutions, allowing for self-sustained growth. This requires, then, a sense among the people of social inclusiveness and voice. Civil society is the network of associations that allow for civil discourse, debate, and difference of ideas in a society, “grounded in information, communication, and relationships” (Taylor, 2010, p. 7). And applicable to the strategy of NGOs, the cultivation of this discourse is different based on culture. The cornerstone of civil society is two-way communication and discourse, which is where the practice of public relations becomes relevant.

Social Capital

Excellent public relations and the ensuing civil society build social capital among people, organizations, and institutions (Taylor, 2010). There are many types of capital in development, all established as valuable resources for the building and sustaining society. Some commonly used terms are economic capital, human capital, and cultural capital. Relevant to the study is the use of the term social capital. Social capital builds trust, disseminates information, and creates the norms of society (Taylor, 2010). According to James Coleman, social capital also creates sanctions against citizens who violate norms of society (Colman, 1988). Social capital is important to capacity-building development because it involves community-building connections between people, government, and intermediary organizations like NGOs. The accumulation of social capital over time is

the last step to a capacity-built society: people have a voice and trust one another and their institutions, society has established its norms, and justice is prevalent.

Conflict Resolution Theory

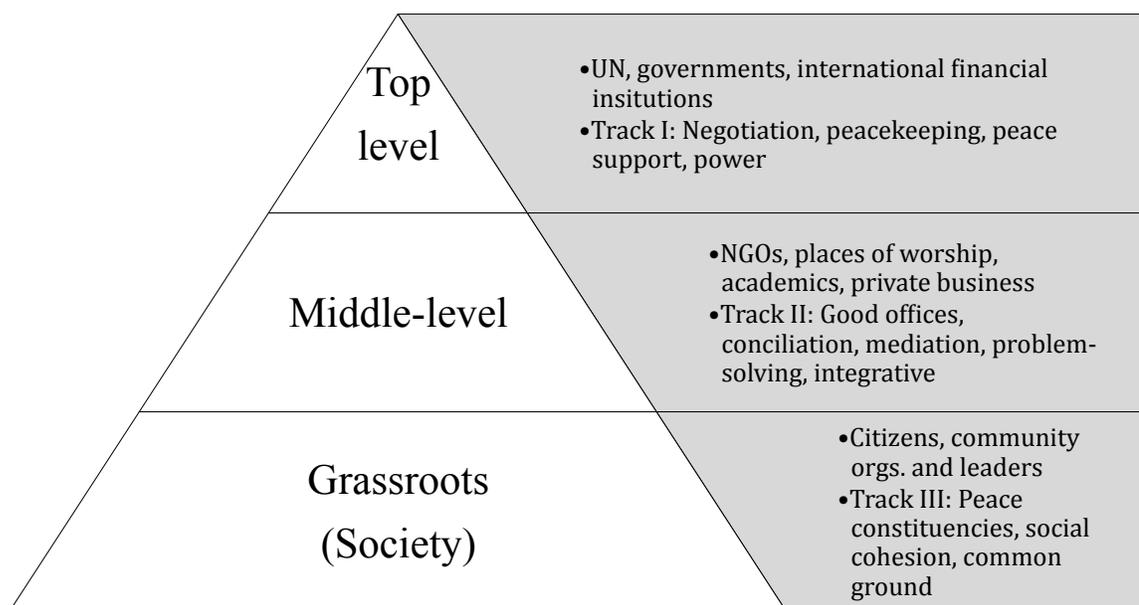
This particular study examines post-conflict development. Many public relations and similar models function under the presumption that the environment is controlled; but in post-conflict areas, this is not the case. Post-conflict environments of loss, hatred, and exposure complicate the development process explained above, with public relations and NGOs at the center. So, in an attempt to create a comprehensive approach to such situations, this study analyzes this process in combination with traditional conflict resolution theory to determine what can be learned from current NGOs working in these situations and if a combined model is beneficial.

According to traditional conflict resolution theory, post-conflict areas must undergo the reconciliation and peacebuilding processes to properly heal and create lasting peace. Cited as the ultimate goal of conflict resolution, reconciliation is defined as “restoring broken relationships and learning to live nonviolently with radical differences” (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2011, p. 246). Peacebuilding is a means to create and maintain lasting peace through reconstruction of structural, institutional, and social levels of society. It is a long process that often is confused with reconciliation. The two processes are separate, though in many cases, they are worked on together. These processes are the context in which organizations work and it is very important for organization employees and volunteers to understand the processes and how they function in their specific environment. An examination of these processes at work in South Sudan is provided in the situation analysis.

Nongovernmental Organizations

This case study analyzes the work and organization of nongovernment organizations (NGOs), particularly their communication. NGOs serve as an intermediary, assisting both the grassroots and top levels of society and tracks of conflict resolution, shown in Table 2 below (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2011, pp. 27-29). This pyramid is a general outline of the usual actors in a conflict and post-conflict situation.

Table 2: Societal Pyramid (Conflict Resolution)



NGOs are a central contributor to the process. As intermediary organizations, part of their jobs is to disseminate information, act as observers, and assist people economically, socially, or politically. Dialogue and two-way communication are extremely important between the three levels, and NGOs can help facilitate this as well. The structures of NGOs vary considerably; however, they can be grouped into three different organizational structures—local, regional, and international. Local organizations work

locally and are usually established by a community of people already working in the area. Regional and international organizations are generally run with more structure and have wider reach; though they may not all focus on just one place or people, they still carry significant resources and are relevant to capacity-building development.

Theoretical Rationale

The review of literature provides a general synopsis for the capacity-building process in the context of public relations and conflict resolution theory. In review, with public relations and conflict situation understanding at the core, NGOs can facilitate sustainable, enabling, and culturally sensitive discourse that heals injustice and builds a relationship among publics and authorities, in the goal of establishing societal processes, norms, and trust to advance the capacities of the nation and its people. This rationale leads my content analysis and discussion.

METHOD

Procedure

A process case study, utilizing the qualitative content analysis method and assisted by a topic guide, was utilized in this research. Six non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in South Sudan in the field of development, human rights or humanitarianism sometime during 2010 through 2012 were chosen—representing local, regional, and international scope.

First, secondary resources and research findings about capacity-building development, public relations engagement, civil society, social capital, and conflict resolution theory, along with communication strategy and organizational relationships, were analyzed in order to determine themes for the research questions and topics. This

work can be found in the review of literature, background, and situation analysis sections of the paper. The topic and question guide can be found in Appendix B.

Next, multiple NGO organizations were identified and researched. Six organizations were chosen for analysis based on work, access to documents, and general structure. Their website content were downloaded and coded based on several themes, including conflict resolution, public relations and civil society techniques, and the building of social capital. The list of content used for each organization can be found in Appendix A. From these themes were derived the general objectives, strategies and tactics of each organization's operations in order to compare and contrast. Lastly, the research and content analysis culminated in a discussion and communication framework rooted in experience and interdisciplinary methods.

Measurement

Content was coded in four categories related to the research: discourse, civil society, social capital, and conflict resolution. Four different colored highlighters were used to mark places the content mentioned the category or where the category fit into a process or point. Different colors were utilized to visually see how the categories fit together in the content. Table 3 below outlines the coding process.

| Table 3: Coding Process | | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|--|
| Code Theme | Color | Description |
| Discourse | Orange | Community engagement, dialogue, training, relationship with government, etc. |
| Civil Society | Green | Human rights, community and individual rights, justice |
| Social Capital | Yellow | Building of institutions, trust in authority, respect for citizen |
| Conflict Resolution | Blue | Reconciliation, peacebuilding, peacekeeping, contextual knowledge |

Selection of NGOs

Selection Criteria. The selection criteria for the NGOs included the basic work the organization does, accessibility of its content, and its general structure. A combination of organizations was chosen based on different types of focus, such as human rights, humanitarian assistance, advocacy, law, and community engagement. Second, the organizations chosen had accessible content that would provide general information, specific process, and evaluation. Another requirement was for the content to demonstrate experience. Lastly, the organizations represented three NGO structures—local, regional, and international.

Description of NGOs. The six organizations chosen to analyze were Oxfam International, Pact, Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch, the Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD), and the South Sudan Law Society (SSLS).

Oxfam International is an international confederation of 15 organizations working directly with communities to improve the lives of impoverished people and ensure they have a say in decisions that involve them. The texts from Oxfam come primarily from its website. They include “Papers and reports” and “Corporate documents” sections, where they place reports on specific work in South Sudan, as well as context, research reports, fact sheets, and progress documents. Additionally, it has a press section with links to stories on South Sudan.

Pact is an international NGO that works to be a true intermediary by providing assistance and networks to grassroots organizations and individuals in order to increase the capacity of people to become self-sustaining and participate in society. The

organization's website provides a multitude of content on what it does and how it engages with communities, other organizations, and governments. The content includes specific work in South Sudan, project implementation, and civil society building.

Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch are both international organizations that report on human rights issues globally. They have extensive resources that help them determine the issues specific to one nation or region. They both urge citizens, government officials, and global leaders to provide justice and human rights to all. The content from Amnesty International include country reports, blog posts, news releases, and general website information. The texts from Human Rights Watch include similar media, with the addition of documental resources.

ACORD is an international organization that primarily functions as a regional body in Africa. Its vision for Africa is focused on capacity building to the fulfillment of rights and citizen engagement. The texts from ACORD come primarily from its website. ACORD lists its ongoing projects in the area, a fact sheet section, a place for communities in South Sudan to tell their stories, and links to multimedia and publications about South Sudan. It also has a resources section that aggregates its publications and documents.

The South Sudan Law Society is a local organization located in South Sudan. It strives for justice, human rights, and the establishment and upholding of law. Its work includes legal training, awareness campaigns, and capacity building for legal professionals, local authorities and government bodies. It does not have a website, but provides a comprehensive training guide.

BACKGROUND

The Civil Wars

The history of Sudan's struggles begins with its independence from its former colonial powers Great Britain and Egypt in 1956. The state was unstable from the beginning, however, with disagreement between the Arab-influenced north and the more secular, Christian-influenced south. This led to 17 years of civil war (1955-1972). After Colonel Gaafar Muhammad Nimeiri and his supporters seized power in 1969, he entered into negotiations with the South with a promise to grant autonomy to the region. When oil was discovered in the south in 1983, however, Northern pressure to sever the financial provisions of autonomy of the South grew and Nimeiri dissolved the Southern region, declaring Arabic the official language of the South, and shifting control of Southern forces to the central government. This spurred a second civil war in January 1983, intensified by Nimeiri's Islamicization campaign in late 1983 to incorporate into the penal code traditional Islamic punishments drawn from the Islamic law known as Shariah. This civil war, now predominantly defined by religious ties, lasted for 21 years until the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed in 2005 ("U.S. relations with Sudan," 2012).

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement and Referendum

The Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA), signed in Nairobi, Kenya, in January 2005, was a sequence of six agreements ranging from July 2002 until May 2004 ("CPA," 2013). This agreement created the opening of an "unprecedented window of opportunity to turn the devastation of years of war, displacement, and underdevelopment into a new era of peace and prosperity" ("Sudan country"). The protocol most prevalent

to this case analysis is the Protocol of Machakos. Signed in Machakos, Kenya, in July 2002, it includes a structure for governance, the transition period and religion as it relates to the state. The protocol called for an interim period of six years (2.2), in which institutions and mechanisms created would be made operational and negotiations relating to the ceasefire would be finalized (2.3) (*The Comprehensive Peace Agreement*, 2005). At the end of the interim period, there would be an internationally monitored referendum for South Sudan to: “confirm the unity of the Sudan by voting to adopt the system of government established under the Peace Agreement; or to vote for secession (2.5)” (*The Comprehensive Peace Agreement*, 2005, p. 19). This provision for the self-determinacy of South Sudan materialized in a 98.8% vote for secession in January 2011, laying the foundation for the July 2011 independence (Dagne, 2011). The CPA set the stage for post-conflict capacity building through reconciliation and peacebuilding. Each component of the CPA is geared toward eliminating conflict and building bridges between the two parties involved. From the interim period through post-referendum, reconciliation efforts began first, followed shortly by peacebuilding.

SITUATION ANALYSIS

Reconciliation

The aftereffects of the Sudanese conflict were disastrous and the situation is very susceptible to recurring violence. Reconciliation between the two sides of the conflict is necessary to create understanding, forgiveness and lasting peace, especially because the wounds cut so deep among the Sudanese people. According to a 2010 “Sudan Vitals Statistics” Amnesty International background brief, the civil war in Sudan killed at least 2 million people and displaced at least 4 million people. And in the Darfur Genocide, 2.7

million people were forced to flee their homes and villages and still live as refugees (“Sudan vital statistics,” 2010). Furthermore, reconciliation is a long-term and difficult process, and in this case, it becomes increasingly difficult because the conflict was ethnic in nature. It was a war catalyzed by religion, pitting the Muslim-influenced North against the Christian-influenced South. In fact, one of the major factors in the outbreak of civil war was the then-President Jafaar Numeiri’s declaration of the implementation of Shariah Islamic law (“Sudan profile,” 2012). When differences are this radical and deep-rooted in society, the simple bridging of disparity is impossible and additional measures must be taken.

In order to continue the de-escalation process after the cessation of direct violence, it is necessary for the people affected and involved to recover from trauma and establish justice. This is the heart of reconciliation after violent conflict. According to *Contemporary Conflict Resolution*, after acknowledging trauma, those impacted should deal with the past publically and collectively by seeking public justice. Justice is the connection between negative peace, just the absence of violence, and positive peace, which adds to it the overcoming of structural and cultural violence (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2011, pp. 248-251). Rama Mani outlines three dimensions of public justice—legal justice, distributive justice, and rectificatory justice (Mani, 2002). In terms of capacity building, these dimensions can also be equated to civil society. Efforts in South Sudan have made headway in the legal and distributive dimensions of justice, but is lacking in the rectificatory dimension. The first is legal justice, the rebuilding of the judicial system and rule of law. Established in May 2006, the Ministry of Legal Affairs and Constitutional Development (MoLACD), in coordination with the United Nations

Development Programme (UNDP), has been repairing and building up the judicial structure of South Sudan. The initiative has been highly successful, with projects including workshops, the building of a law library, and various law commissions and tours (“Institutional support,” 2012). One of the organizations being analyzed, the South Sudan Law Society, is a nongovernmental organization working on this dimension as well. The second dimension of public justice is distributive justice, or equalizing structural and systemic power. During the interim period, this justice was demonstrated in the Protocol of Machakos section of the CPA, which guaranteed the South autonomy and “the right to control and govern affairs in their region and participate equitably in the National Government (1.2)” (*The Comprehensive Peace Agreement*, 2005, p. 17). The most prevalent example of this justice, however, was the vote to become independent and completely sovereign. Yet lastly, the third is rectificatory justice, or making right the past mistreatment of people in relation to human rights violations and war crimes. This is where the reconciliation effort has its toughest test. The relationship between the North and South, and more importantly within South Sudan, is still tense, culminating in intense rhetoric over disputed land, inter-ethnic attacks, and militia attacks. Furthermore, tension between host communities and the estimated two million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) and 350,000 refugees who have returned to the South since 2005 complicates efforts at reconciliation (Chichaya, 2012). There cannot be rectificatory justice if the mistreatments still occur. And partly because of this, full reconciliation has not been achieved and will remain an issue.

Peacebuilding

Most peacebuilding situations exist in fragile conditions, like in South Sudan. In fact, after violent conflict ends, conflict will erupt again within five years nearly 50 percent of the time (Biersteker, 2007). Peacebuilding, then, becomes a very important component for preventing future conflicts as well. Though this case focuses on middle-level NGOs, the analysis of South Sudan peacebuilding efforts is comprehensive, in order to establish relationship, and examines each of the three tracks of conflict resolution shown in Table 2—grassroots, middle, and top—in context of Dan Smith’s “peacebuilding palette.” The peacebuilding palette includes four sectors—security, political framework, socio-economic foundations, and reconciliation/justice (Ramsbotham, Woodhouse & Miall, 2011, p. 229). The idea is to combine the colors to create a painting particular to the case, mixing the range of options instead of following a standard protocol.

The first track of conflict resolution is the top leaders track. The top leaders include the United Nations, governments, and other international and regional organizations. The United Nations uses its resources mostly for security and socio-economic development. In addition to peacebuilding forces in the country, the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (PBF) has focused on two areas—food security and the reintegration of southerners returning from the north. In order to support this, the PBF has given \$2 million to a UN World Food Programme (WFP) and an additional \$2 million to the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), International Labour Organization (ILO), and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) (“United Nations peacebuilding fund,” n.d.). The government of South Sudan should be focusing on political framework and

reconciliation. However, as discussed in the reconciliation, there are obstacles to reconciliation if the governments of Sudan and South Sudan continue to intensify rhetoric and mistreatments. As for political framework, a constitution was established in South Sudan, but there are apparent violations from the government. One of these, the freedom of press, is discussed in more detail later in track three analysis.

The second track is the middle level, specifically international non-governmental organizations (NGOs). NGOs in South Sudan range from humanitarian organizations (religious and secular in nature) to development organizations, and various others in-between. NGOs serve mostly in the socio-economic and reconciliation/justice sectors of Smith's palettes. This includes relationship building, starting discourse, ensuring justice, protecting human rights, and facilitating the establishment of trust. In conflict resolution, this is where peacebuilding and reconciliation cross. By giving citizens a voice, they become more engaged in the political framework and system through discourse. The current conversation between South Sudan and NGOs is that since the end of the civil war, NGOs have continued to serve as the primary providers for basic humanitarian need and human rights principles. Despite South Sudan's reliance on these NGOs, officials have restricted them and their work. There are concerns that the country will continue to ignore, in a sense, the humanitarian needs of the people, pushing the responsibility off on NGOs. The goal of many organizations working in South Sudan is to instill human rights and humanitarian principles in the people and government of the country. There is a real opportunity to create a stabilized system respecting human rights, but without the support of the government and citizens, South Sudan could become a problem spot for such organizations and the international community (Brunwasser, 2011). There must be a

balanced and agreed desire for stable change among the government and people.

The third track in conflict resolution includes grassroots organizations and leaders. These organizations and leaders are arguably the most important actors in the sociological and reconciliation sectors. They, more than outside actors, can build social cohesion and find common ground to work from the bottom up. One key component of grassroots organizing is communication and the freedom of press. The grassroots track should in theory be supported in this way by the two upper tracks. In a recent *New York Times* article, titled “In a Fledging Country, Perils for the Press,” author Benno Muchler speaks of the hardships and dangers of producing publications in South Sudan. He says, “The country is twice the size of Arizona and 80 percent of its roughly 10 million people are illiterate. Power losses, a scarcity of paved roads, scattershot Internet access and increasing tribal violence make it that much harder.” In addition, newspapers and other publications face the challenge of military leadership. Though South Sudan provides freedom of the press in its constitution, papers have been shut down or censored if they print anything critical to the government (Muchler, 2012). This is important because without proper communication, grassroots movements—and their ability to keep the government accountable—weaken and vanish. Furthermore, grassroots structures, at some point, should be enabled, encouraged and empowered by the other levels in order to sustain progress. And NGOs are important actors in facilitating and providing capacity for this empowerment and encouragement through the capacity building and public relations process.

FINDINGS

After analyzing each organization's content, I have outlined general and specific findings about the role of public relations in the capacity-building process in the context of South Sudan. Public relations discourse was present in both one-way and two-way channels. My analysis affirmed that the public relations process and nongovernmental organizations are central to the building a civil society and social capital, both essential elements to capacity building. The common public relations principles of planning and evaluation were present in all of the organizations, as most organizations clearly defined the process as cyclical in nature. Specific findings for each organization are provided below along with their strategic goals, followed by a review of terminology. These findings guide the discussion and conclusion.

Joint NGO Briefings

The findings are best understood through the document titled *Getting it Right from the Start: Priorities for South Sudan*, published by a combination of 38 NGOs working in the country. This document underscores the importance of collaboration between NGOs to the success of capacity building. The primary message from this document is the concept of accountability. The report states that "a strong civil society facilitates good governance by increasing the likelihood of local authorities being held accountable to the people." This concept is defined differently but found in all organizations. The report further notes that "implications of this are exacerbated by the fact that decades of war and the resulting disruption to communities has in many areas left behind a civil society that has limited capacity to collectively organize and hold

government to account,” resulting in “downward accountability” that must be reversed (Barber, 2011, pp. 11-12).

Oxfam International

Oxfam International’s content was the most accessible because its database was extensive in documents and reports. A general overview of work in South Sudan, a case study, three organization research reports, one program evaluation, and one academic report were analyzed.

The Oxfam documents outline and affirm the nature of the capacity-building process. It is described as an intertwined process with discourse at the center (“Oxfam in South Sudan,” 2012). It is also defined as an iterative process that warrants constant reassessment (Abikok, 2000, p. 501). Furthermore, the people of South Sudan largely used the term “civil society” to mean national and local NGOs, placing these organizations at the center of the process (Hughes, 2012, p. 12).

The stages of the process and the order outlined in literature are affirmed as well. In *Within and Without the State*, civil society is said to be a necessary for the building of social capital, or state legitimacy. Legitimacy is defined in two-fold: in terms of the state’s role of authority, security, and providing services and also of the citizens’ perceptions of and engagement with it. According to the research report, “it is not possible to strengthen the legitimacy of the state, a necessary precursor to effective government, without strengthening citizens’ capacity and interest to engage with it, and thereby increase the legitimacy of the state in their eyes” (Hughes, 2012, p. 8). Thus, civil society building, discourse, and the role of public relations in building engagement and accountability also become essential in these stages.

The process is also cyclical. In the Oxfam case study on the empowerment of pastoralist women, Oxfam helped establish a community organization called PEAKS (Pastoralist Environment Association in Kassala State). Once PEAKS became legitimate and self-sustaining, it then represented the voice of the pastoralists at the Kassala State level. This process of building legitimacy led to a new cycle of discourse and civil society, with the citizens in capacity (van Dijk, 2012, p. 2). Additionally, the Local Capacities for Peace Project (LCPP) in Sudan learned that collaboration among those involved with the LCPP allowed for even more dialogue, demonstrating the ability of mutual relationships and their facilitation of a new cycle of discourse (Abikok, 2000, p. 503).

More technically, Oxfam documents highlighted the need for community involvement at local levels and training and guidance for employees and volunteers of Oxfam as well as communities. The report in *Development in Practice* even suggests community involvement (churches, open advertising, committee input) in the hiring of community staff (Abikok, 2000, p. 502). These are tied together in the Oxfam content by conflict sensitization and respect for cultural differences, in particular the protection of human rights (Odhiambo & Oyoo, 2007, p. 33). In regard to conflict sensitization, it is accepted that communication is not merely a public relations exercise and that protection and credibility are also important, underlying the need for conflict resolution knowledge and theory (Kahn, 2010, p. 21). And human rights protection is seen as an element to bring about confident agency in citizens, empowering organizations and individuals to promote or prevent change (Hughes, 2012, p. 13).

Strategic Goal #1: Establish state legitimacy through both state action and citizen willingness to engage.

Strategic Goal #2: Ensure the capacity-building process remains cyclical, allowing for self-sustained growth and discourse.

Strategic Goal #3: Training and guidance at the local level, with conflict sensitization and human rights protection at heart.

Pact

The Pact website “How We Engage” section, a document on the organization’s network strengthening practice, and a description of the South Sudan Transition Initiative was analyzed. Pact is focused mostly on developing local organizational capacity and citizen action.

Pact engages in civil society in four categories. The first is organizational development. This is the planning stage. This builds organizational capacity in societies by utilizes situation analysis techniques and assessments, training, mentoring, and technical assistance. Recurring themes of transparency and context for NGOs appear. The second category is network strengthening. Pact has developed the Pact Organizational Network Analysis (ONA) to bring groups together to “map a network, understand the relationships between different groups, and provide a forum for coordination, collaboration, and mutual goal-setting” (“Pact organizational network analysis,” 2013). The map looks much like a conflict map used in conflict resolution. The third category is advocacy. According to Pact, 25 percent of their projects include advocacy (“Pact: How we engage,” 2013). This involves community dynamic and empowering citizens to speak with one voice. The final category is knowledge management, based on the idea that

empowered citizens must have access to quality information. This is based in context and ties back to transparency.

Pact was also involved with the South Sudan Transition Initiative. This program was designed to “transition from a culture of war to one of peace and good governance” (“South Sudan transition initiative,” 2013). The objectives of the program include local dialogue, accountable and transparent civil authority, empowered and active civil society, and quality information. These objectives are in agreement with findings from other organizations as well.

Strategic Goal #1: Develop organizational capacity through training, mentoring, assistance and network strengthening.

Strategic Goal #2: Empower citizen voice and action through advocacy and knowledge management.

Amnesty International

Amnesty International is a campaign NGO, or an NGO focused on advocacy and information sharing. Amnesty International’s website and a joint report with Human Rights Watch were analyzed.

The website included many testimonies, blog reports, and statistics. It also highlighted action-demand style statements. More concerned with state action, Amnesty developed a one-way approach to communication (“Amnesty international,” 2013).

Strategic Goal #1: Demand state action to establish human rights protections and rectify injustices of the past and present.

Strategic Goal #2: Inform stakeholders and the global community of the human rights situation in South Sudan.

Human Rights Watch

Human Rights Watch was analyzed through its website, a briefing paper on Sudan, two reports on South Sudan, and also the joint report with Amnesty International. Human Rights Watch is very similar to Amnesty International in its approach to capacity building, but had more content available.

The organization calls for state accountability in the discourse about human rights violations and restoring of public confidence. Furthermore, one report asserts that just talking is not enough and there must be state action. This is a necessarily component to the accountability complex (“No one to intervene,” 2009, p. 13).

Strategic Goal #1: Call for state accountability in action on human rights protections and violations to restore public confidence.

Strategic Goal #2: Inform stakeholders and the global community of the human rights situation in South Sudan.

ACORD

ACORD’s content came from its website and one report on the cycles of violence in conflict-affected situations. ACORD is primarily concerned with the social development sector of capacity building, focusing on citizen involvement and culture.

A few highlights from the ACORD content include the African narrative, gender rights, and vulnerability. In South Sudan, ACORD works to ensure the African narrative is present in dialogue and discourse. This special attention to culture is not as specifically mentioned in any other organization. Of particular focus for ACORD are gender relations and rights. According to the “Cycles of Violence” report, war has “provided space in which a redefinition of social relations is possible” (El-Bushra, & Sahl, 2005, p. 41). This

leads into the concept of vulnerability as well, as it relates to contextual knowledge and conflict resolution. Vulnerability is defined as meaning the “depletion of a community’s capital (social, physical, political and psycho-social)” that results in a “reduced resilience to external shocks” (El-Bushra & Sahl, 2005, p. 100). This is important to understand because the level of vulnerability a community has may disguise differences between groups.

Strategic Goal #1: Ensure the African narrative is present in work with South Sudanese to protect culture and established community discourse processes.

Strategic Goal #2: Create space for gender equality in communities.

Strategic Goal #3: Know the level of vulnerability in each community to better prepare and strategically plan.

South Sudan Law Society (SSLS)

For the South Sudan Law Society (SSLS), a handbook on community engagement for property law education was analyzed. The handbook begins with key concepts, including the definition of traditional authorities. The term refers to “various institutions of community leadership that exist at the local level in South Sudan” that are always changing and “sorely in need of training and capacity building to support their decision-making in the post-independence context” (Deng, 2012, p. 12). These authorities generally already have a high legitimacy among South Sudanese.

The handbook also outlines the organization’s community engagement process, which is broken down into four principles as they relate to capacity building. The first is to be transparent. In this, the organization claims that accountability flows from transparency. It leads to stronger relationships and more sustainability. The second

principle is to engage early. The third principle is to strive for maximum inclusivity. This includes human rights protections, gender rights, community mapping techniques, and inclusive discourse. The fourth principle is to negotiate in good faith, which means that negotiations be free from coercion or intimidation, flexible, informed, and legitimate (Deng, 2012).

Strategic Goal #1: Respect the changing nature of traditional authorities and empower them utilize their legitimacy.

Strategic Goal #2: Be transparent in information sharing, which leads to more accountability and trust.

DISCUSSION

The discussion is based on a combination of the review of literature, situation analysis, and research findings. It includes an overview of organization effectiveness, the Public Relations and Capacity-Building Communication Model (5 Es), and an account of validity and limitations.

Organization Effectiveness

Part of this study was to examine each NGO in terms of its effectiveness in public relations and capacity-building activity. This included its organizational structure, access to content, and methods of practice and evaluation. Every organization contributed greatly to the research, but one exceptional organization was Oxfam International (with most content from the Oxfam Great Britain branch). Oxfam's content was very accessible and it provided its practice and evaluation criteria in detail. The organization is large, but in most cases this did not seem to hinder the individual work being done. Pact did not have much documentation, but published its methodology on its webpage in good detail.

It did not provide much evaluation for its work, however. Amnesty International seems to be locked into a rhetoric-based system. Its communication was largely one-way and activist-oriented. There wasn't much content past the webpage. The same is true for Human Rights Watch, though it published relevant reports that proved to be beneficial. Though there is a need for activist communication, there is concern with its effectiveness in an area that has demonstrated a need for dialogue. ACORD outlined its goals and foci very clearly. Its focus on African narrative was the most straightforward of all the organizations in relation to culture and its focus on gender rights was the most detailed. The South Sudan Law Society is a small local (state) organization, which produced an impressive handbook. The book is written in English and the native language of the Sudanese. Furthermore, it clearly outlined processes and steps.

The Public Relations and Capacity-Building Communication Model (5 Es)

Based on this case study, I have developed a five-part communication model for NGO practitioners to facilitate capacity-building initiatives in post-conflict developing areas. Called the Public Relations and Capacity-Building Communication Model, it is built on the foundation of the "5 Es," representing the five steps: Envision (Knowledge Management), Engage (Community Agency), Enable (Relationship Accountability), Establish (Symmetrical Partnership), and Evaluate (Societal Assessment).

1. Envision (Knowledge Management). The Envision step is the research and planning stage, a process familiar to the public relations process. In fact, variables three and five of the excellence theory suggest research, planning, and knowledge. Good research and planning is invaluable throughout any process. Succeeding at this step requires knowledge management, or the organizational collection and distribution of

context and information in a complete and managerially effective way. This knowledge is essential to understand the working environment, people, and organizational strategy. It makes for a more cohesive organization dynamic and field strategy; when employees and volunteers all know the situation and work toward the same goals (or vision), work can be completed more effectively. Knowledge management is rooted in context and training, bringing in concepts of conflict resolution, culture, and the important component of training. Research indicates that this process must be developed on at the local level, with as much community involvement as possible to truly understand the situation. As an outside organization coming into an area rich in tradition, NGOs must import local knowledges, wisdom, and cultural rituals into their systems of understanding. If not, the citizens' trust cannot be gained or guaranteed. This is an important component of knowledge management because too much outside knowledge without the incorporation of local knowledge can be problematic to the capacity-building process.

To comprehend and navigate the confusing and difficult situation of a post-conflict area and how the NGO fits in to this, I suggest the process of communication mapping. This is a combination of a few concept-mapping techniques, which include conflict mapping that is utilized in conflict resolution and determines the root causes and results of the conflict and how the various actors in the conflict factor together. A second is network mapping, like Pact's Organizational Network Analysis, which examines network NGOs and other key organizations in the capacity-building process for collaboration and combining of resources. A third is community mapping, which is modeled after network mapping but with key community actors and groups. Conflict, network and community mapping bring together conflict situation, key organizational

allies and community knowledge to build a comprehensive map for reference when planning communication and capacity-building efforts. This makes knowledge management more complete and effective.

Additionally, the analysis repeatedly noted the acknowledgement that the situation and actors in post-conflict areas are always changing, particularly in the discussion of traditional authorities in the handbook from the South Sudan Law Society. Because of this, research and planning are constantly needed to remain current in the situation. In the model, then, “Envision (Knowledge Management)” is placed as a necessary launching point and a continual band around the process.

2. Engage (Community Agency). The second step is “Engage,” and it is the largest commitment. This stage results in community agency, a process in which the community is empowered and become agents for change and advocacy. This empowerment is demonstrated in language, or discourse, and is rooted in local culture and voice. This is connected to variables seven and eight in the excellence theory on establishing a participative culture and benefiting from diversity of thought.

The key to this step is to engage early, even as early as the researching and planning “Envision” step. The NGO must establish trust among the community first in order to be allowed to help facilitate the building of its discourse and relationships; the community has to understand and buy in to the organization’s work and vision. Citizens will trust an NGO if they see it has listened to them and uses their own wisdom as part of capacity building. And this trust is established through transparent information sharing, community training, two-way communication, and cultural respect. As the South Sudan Law Society handbook notes quite simply, transparency leads to accountability, which

creates trust between the organization and the people. Accountability will reappear in terms of civil society in the next step as well. In the “Envision” step, the NGO trains its employees and volunteers to understand the situation, stakeholders, and vision of the work. In this step, the NGO trains the community to help build their agency and institutional strength. This training includes things such as basic education, sustainable living practices, and conflict understanding. Furthermore, two-way symmetrical communication should be established and practiced in all facets in order to facilitate positive discourse and trust. Two-way communication shows the community that the NGO is listening too and empowers them further to be heard. However, this step also calls to leave room for culture. Organizations must be aware of cultural norms and peaceful methods of solving conflict and allow the community to lead the way in what is most comfortable to them. For example, the Palaper Tree method of discourse is very common in the Horn of Africa, where leaders gather under a tree and freely discuss issues for hours (Sopova, 1999).

Community agency is important to establish first because it lays the foundation necessary for the other steps to be effective. Meaningful participation in society relates greatly to access to voice. It is crucial for a NGO to engage in the community, empower and its citizens, and gain their trust and support before the next step can occur. It lessens the vulnerability of the community (defined by ACORD) and gives them a sense of inclusivity and empowerment to speak up with one voice and advocate.

3. Enable (Relationship Accountability). The “Enable” step is when civil society is established. Once the NGO engages in the community and empowers its citizens to speak with one voice, the community is enabled to develop two-way

symmetrical discourse with the state (with the help of the NGO). This corresponds to variables four and five of the excellence theory on the two-way symmetrical communication model, with relevance to variable six on activist pressure as well. There are two actions taken in this step, as pointed out in the Oxfam argument for the building of state legitimacy: state action and citizen activity based on its perception of the state.

In this step, relationship accountability must be created, meaning that the relationship between the state and the citizen must be mutual and accountable to each other. The *Within and Without the State* report notes the importance of relationship building between the state and the citizen, and the condition of trust involved for this to take place effectively (Hughes, 2012). Some campaigning NGOs, like Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch, approach this from the activist campaign angle, utilizing one-way communication to pressure the state into action. Operational NGOs, like Oxfam, approach it as part of the process to build state legitimacy, including citizen action and perception in addition to state action. This is a two-way approach that keeps both actors accountable to each other and is more participative. Though both approaches are necessary to a degree, the two-way relationship accountability approach is more effective because it allows for citizens to voice their concerns and the state to respond and do the same. It cements accountability into the norms of the society and builds trust. The core of accountability, like in the step before, is transparency and information sharing—this time from the state and citizens themselves.

Relationship accountability factors heavily into the reconciliation process of conflict resolution as well. Civil society cannot be completely established without justice and human rights. The greater focus should be on civil and political human rights in this

stage. Relationship accountability enables the community to speak up about past and present injustice through their two-way dialogue and pressure the state into respecting human rights. Community voice and dialogue is essential in seeking public justice, overcoming structural and cultural violence, and working toward the three types of justice found in theory. In a two-way discourse, the state will be held accountable for these things publically. The NGO can speak about injustice and protection of human rights, but the citizen voice is much stronger and effective.

4. Establish (Symmetrical Partnership). The next step is “Establish,” the step in which social capital is assembled. Once relationship accountability and two-way discourse is in place, trust is built toward this goal. Here, trust is strong enough between the state and citizen that state legitimacy is established. This step is also called symmetrical partnership because the state and citizen have finally become symmetrical and equal partners in building the society. This reflects a balanced and agreed desire for stable change between the government and people. Because it is structural in nature and trust must be built from almost nothing, this takes a long time. The two-way communication created in the previous step must occur consistently and repeatedly to build enough trust and perception for state legitimacy. This is comparable to peacebuilding, its counterpart in conflict resolution theory, working in great length to solidify the four palettes of peacebuilding (security, political framework, socio-economic foundations, and reconciliation/justice).

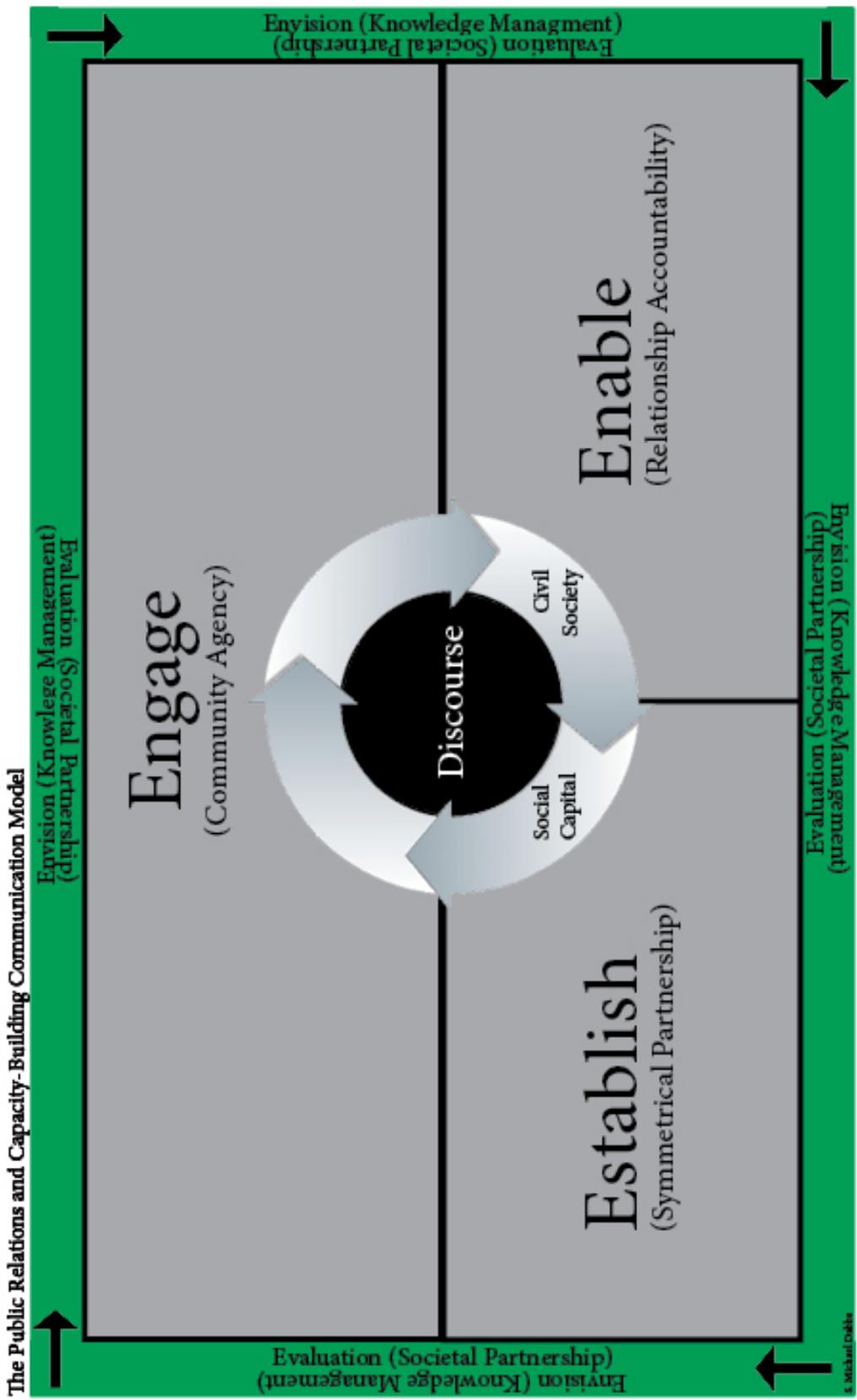
The work doesn't end here, however. Ideally, once the state becomes structurally and perceptually legitimate, it would then become the leader in facilitating the cycle by envisioning their society, engaging in communities (because it would have their trust),

and enabling the communities physically and through communication to keep accountability concrete. The NGO would still be involved, but take a lesser role. It then becomes a sustainable and cyclical process to a society of self-capacity.

5. Evaluate (Societal Assessment). This step, essential to the public relations process, is also necessary in this model. This step is also called societal assessment because the NGO and the society itself must always be assessing the society and the situation. If the final goal is a sustainable, just, and balanced society, the condition of the society must always be evaluated.

The “Evaluate” step is like the “Envision” step in that it is needed continually throughout the process because of the changing nature of the post-conflict situation. It is necessary at every step—envisioning, engaging, enabling, and establishing. Thus in the model, this is also represented as a continual band around the process. It is represented in an opposite direction than “Envision,” however, because the friction of the two together is what creates procedural change. The two tie back into one another, with research and planning needing evaluation and evaluation needing further research and suggestion for change. This keeps an organization, state, and community current in its vision and work.

| Table 4: Terminology | |
|-----------------------------|--|
| Term | Definition |
| Knowledge Management | The organizational collection and distribution of context and information in a complete and managerially effective way |
| Community Agency | A process in which the community is empowered and become agents for change and advocacy |
| Relationship Accountability | A relationship between the state and the citizen in which each is mutual and accountable to one other |
| Symmetrical Partnership | A partnership in which the state and citizen become symmetrical and equal partners in building the society |
| Societal Assessment | The process in which the NGO and the society assesses the society and the situation |



The Public Relations and Capacity-Building Communication Model

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Validity and Limitations

Internally, the framework and model created are valid in the secondary research and findings. A combination of information from conflict resolution theory, public relations theory, capacity-building development literature, and primary content analysis findings are collected into a comprehensive model for the communications process in post-conflict areas, using work in South Sudan as a case study.

Additionally, external validity shows that there are acknowledgements and demand for a framework or model of communication in situations like South Sudan. Many of the documents analyzed included a framework summary, demonstrating the use of this technique in the field. More specifically, the World Bank, in its report on its Communication for Governance and Accountability Program, acknowledges that “despite its importance, the media and communication sector is frequently an afterthought in post-conflict reconstruction” and “calls for a new model in post-conflict and fragile states, one that prioritizes communication's role in governance and peacebuilding” (Kalathil, Langlois & Kaplan, 2008). A similar report notes that the current state building practice is too narrowly focused and fragmented, and that “capturing the connective processes requires a new framework, one based on the public sphere” (von Kaltenborn-Stachau , 2008). This underscores the need for a comprehensive approach. The same source also emphasizes the need for a well-planned and strategic approach (von Kaltenborn-Stachau , 2008). These are all demands that my framework and model meet.

There are a few limitations to the research. First, because it is a qualitative study, it is not generalizable. However, through well-planned and executed content analysis and coding, hints of patterns were found that led to the conclusions. Further, only six

organizations and their content were analyzed. Again, clear patterns that presented themselves in the content analysis process were relied upon. Lastly, this is a case study based in South Sudan, and though the model is designed to be comprehensive and includes space for differences in context, each area is unique and has a different structure.

Recommendations and Future Research Suggestions

These findings and model join the important conversation about capacity building in South Sudan and other post-conflict nations. The model is specifically designed for others to easily understand and teach it. It all could be used in an academic setting in subjects such as conflict resolution, public relations and development, just to name a few. It could also be used to help organizations strategize and train organization employees and volunteers on the theory behind their strategy and work. Because of some of the limitations mentioned earlier, it would be beneficial to conduct more research to analyze more organizations, complete interviews along with content analysis and research similar situations in other countries and areas to compare the results. Inserting a quantifiable component to future research would make it more generalizable as well. Another suggestion would be to research the resulting model's applicability in situations other than post-conflict.

CONCLUSION

The research into the public relations and advocacy activities of NGOs in South Sudan, the international community's youngest country, began with the rationale that there was a process to capacity-building development in post-conflict nations and that public relations principles together with conflict resolution theory and development practice would play central roles. Specifically, I theorized that with public relations and

conflict situation understanding at the core, NGOs can facilitate sustainable, enabling, and culturally sensitive discourse that heals injustice and builds a relationship among publics and authorities, in the goal of establishing societal processes, norms, and trust to advance the capacities of the nation and its people. Out of this logic and NGO content analysis of six organizations working in South Sudan, a pattern emerged and I constructed the Public Relations and Capacity-Building Communication Model. This is a comprehensive process to facilitate the building of capacity in a conflict-torn nation, with public relations principles at its heart. In fields abounding with models and frameworks, this framework stands out as a grounded (yet flexible) and engaging process.

Beyond the immediate implications, this study fits into a broader conversation of cross-disciplinary research and application as well. For the two disciplines, communication and political science, lessons can be learned from this study. South Sudan allows for active and usable documents, which were researched qualitatively. A typical political science study would be quantitative, but that is very difficult to achieve when looking at a process as it is happening, something crucial to this research. Reflexively, however, this qualitative study lays the foundation for a possible quantitative study in the following years. Acknowledging and appreciating this research connection between the two disciplines can optimistically bring them together more often. When I merged these two disciplines, I not only gained insight into my specific topic but also into how repeatedly they affect each other. The different vision and risk that this study represents provides an escape from disciplinary silos and a closer look at disciplinary connections in real-world application.

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<http://www.acordinternational.org/our-work/where/southsudan/>

APPENDIX A: CONTENT ANALYSIS DOCUMENTS

Joint NGO Briefings:

“Getting it Right from the Start: Priorities for South Sudan,” 2011; Barber, R.

“Rescuing the Peace in Southern Sudan,” 2010

Oxfam International:

“Empowerment of Pastoralist Women,” 2012; van Dijk, K.

“Engaging with Communities: The Next Challenge for Peacekeeping,” 2010; Kahn, C.

“Evaluation of Sustainable Livelihoods Recovery Project in the Lakes State, Sudan,”
2007; Odhiambo, C., & Oyoo, P.

“Oxfam in South Sudan,” 2012

“The Local Capacities for Peace Project: The Sudan Experience,” 2000; Abikok, R.

“Within and Without the State: Strengthening Civil Society in Conflict-Affected and
Fragile Settings,” 2012; Hughes, L.

Pact:

“Pact: How We Engage” (webpage), 2013

“Pact Organizational Network Analysis,” 2013

“South Sudan Transition Initiative” (webpage), 2013

Amnesty International:

“Amnesty International: South Sudan” (webpage), 2013

Human Rights Watch:

“Democracy on Hold,” 2010

“No One to Intervene,” 2009

“South Sudan: A Human Rights Agenda,” 2011

“Sudan: Human Rights and Political Inclusion must be a part of Sudan Peace Agreement,” 2003

ACORD:

“Cycles of Violence: Gender Relations and Armed Conflict,” 2005;

El-Bushra, J. & Sahl, I.

“Where We Work: South Sudan” (webpage), 2013

South Sudan Law Society:

“Handbook on Community Engagement,” 2012; Deng, D.

APPENDIX B: TOPIC GUIDE & QUESTION GUIDE

The following list of topics and questions guided my secondary and primary research. I have included it below as further insight to my methodology.

1. Conflict Resolution/Situation Analysis
 - Capacity-building development: definition
 - What kind of development is the organization doing?
 - How does the organization ensure sustainability of projects?
 - What is going on in South Sudan? What is the situation?
 - How is this different than other situations of need or even post-conflict?
2. Management of NGO
 - Internal communication within organization/between departments
 - What are a few challenges and opportunities to this structure?
 - Field management structure
 - What are a few challenges and opportunities to this structure?
 - How are people rallied around a common goal?
 - Are these structures universally applicable? If not, how and why is this different?
3. Civil Society/Communications
 - Civil society: definition
 - Civil society and communication
 - How is discourse established?
 - How are the people being communicated to?
 - What avenues of communication are being utilized?
 - How is the organization building relationship with the people and societal groups?
 - How does the organization consider conflict sensibility?
 - How is the organization helping to protect and ensure human rights and justice?
 - What are a few challenges and opportunities to the structure?
 - Are these methods universally applicable? If not, how and why is this different?
 - Print resources
 - How is the work of the organization being presented in print?
 - Who is the audience?
 - What are a few challenges and opportunities associated with print media representation?
 - Online resources
 - How is the work of the organization being presented online?
 - Who is the audience?
 - How does the organization incorporate social media?
 - What are a few challenges and opportunities associated with online media representation?

3. Social Capital/Leadership

- Social capital: definition
- How is the organization helping build social capital among the people?
 - Leadership
 - Societal structures
 - Political framework
- How is the organization helping establish trust between institutions and citizens?
- Is this process cyclical?
- Are these methods universally applicable? If not, how and why is this different?

ABSTRACT

This study explores the communication techniques of NGOs in the sphere of capacity-building development, with a focus on South Sudan. Research indicates the importance of communication in establishing civil society in developing countries, especially those in post-conflict situations. Multiple theoretical frameworks are employed, including the excellence theory of public relations, the capacity-building development process, and conflict resolution theory. The thesis utilizes the content analysis technique for several local, regional and international organizations to evaluate their work in the country and develop a comprehensive model called the Public Relations and Capacity-Building Communication Model. It is comprised of five steps (also known as the five Es): Envision (Knowledge Management), Engage (Community Agency), Enable (Relationship Accountability), Establish (Symmetrical Partnership), and Evaluate (Societal Assessment). These steps guide a NGO through the capacity-building process with disciplinary public relations principles at the core. The findings and model join the important conversation about capacity building in South Sudan and other post-conflict nations, and the model is specifically designed for others to easily understand and teach it. Furthermore, this research supports cross-disciplinary collaboration and application, in this particular case communication and political science.