

**Activism Through the Looking Glass:
Colorado GASP, Philip Morris, and the Role of Public Relations**

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Abstract:

As a result of litigation over the past decade, tobacco companies such as Philip Morris have been forced to disclose more than four million internal documents, including public relations plans and tactics, never intended for public scrutiny. This essay draws on these documents to argue that despite industry efforts to thwart tobacco control groups, activists have been able to adopt successful counter public relations techniques. Through the use of a case study, the essay posits that disciplinary theory needs to be more inclusive of activist public relations.

The public controversy over the health hazards of smoking is not unique to the last few decades. Beginning in the 1920s, physicians met tobacco industry advertisement claims with outrage and incredulity, flooding the newspapers with editorials. In response, tobacco companies hired public relations experts to counter the rising tide of campaigns against the product. Some of these campaigns are infamous today. From Edward Bernays' organization of the Torches of Liberty parade, where women carried smoking "symbols of freedom" to publicize their suffragist demands, to his creation of a "Green Ball" to elegantly emphasize the fashionability of Lucky Strike's new green packaging, to Old Gold's promise of "Not a Cough in a Carload," the tobacco industry's efforts to legitimize its products have been varied and creative (Pollay, 1990). Equally imaginative have been activist group attempts to dissuade the public that smoking is glamorous, an acceptable stress-reliever, or an innocuous social pastime. Joining forces with medical associations, these groups have been responsible for the ban against television advertising, for persuading government to place warning labels on cigarette packaging, and for reducing the amount of smoking among Americans.

The gains of these activist groups appear even more substantial as scholars begin to realize the extent of public relations activity mobilized by the tobacco industry. As a result of litigation over the past decade, tobacco companies have been forced by court orders to disclose more than four million internal documents, including memoranda and draft documents never intended for public scrutiny. Analyses of these documents are unearthing instances of industry deception and manipulation that deepened the threat to public health posed by tobacco use. Document researchers are uncovering plans to create bogus trade associations to block local and state anti-smoking legislation. Tobacco document research is also detailing how the industry conducted systematic surveillance of tobacco control groups in an attempt to thwart criticism and exposure. For example, Ruth Malone (2002) analyzed the tobacco industry surveillance of two tobacco control organizations, STAT (Stop Teenage Addiction to Tobacco) and INFACT (formerly the Infant Formula Action Coalition). Malone uncovered, through the documents released by the settlement, that the tobacco industry used spies in tobacco control meetings and conferences, attempted to paint individual tobacco control activists as extremists, illegally audio

taped tobacco control sessions, and employed public relations firms to help gather intelligence. Clearly, as Malone (2002) asserts, “the covertness and intensity of the surveillance described here are [sic] remarkable” (p. 958). Scholars are learning that by employing tactics such as these, coupled with more typical public relations activities, the tobacco industry is continuing to exert powerful influence on public debate and policy.

Access to the documents provided by the settlement, then, provides a clear picture of ongoing tobacco industry public relations designed to protect its increasingly threatened social legitimacy. A brief history of the industry’s legitimacy challenges is in order. In 1986, Surgeon General C. Everett Koop made an announcement that got both the public’s and the tobacco industry’s attention. Koop’s report that environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) could cause lung cancer in non-smokers became a bane to the tobacco industry and ammunition for tobacco control groups. Over the years, the tobacco industry had followed a basically defensive public relations strategy, where, according to Kluger (1997), “cigarette makers had held off serious government restrictions by firming up their political alliances, challenging the scientific case, confusing the public, and reassuring their customers” (p. 734). Koop’s report, however, made cigarette smoking more than an indulgent habit; rather, it was a threat to public health. Throughout the 1990s, then, a battle began between activist groups such as Colorado GASP (Group to Alleviate Smoking Pollution) and the industry over the ETS issue. As activists tried to convince the public of the dangers of ETS, the industry responded by questioning scientific studies and reducing the tar and nicotine in their cigarettes. As a Philip Morris memo conceded, the tobacco control movement was becoming more sophisticated: “Primarily, its growing pragmatism and political savvy have provided a tremendous boost to its efforts to eliminate the use of tobacco products” (Advocacy Institute Memo, 1992, p. 4). To impede the growing success of these groups, Philip Morris began to formulate the public relations strategy of accommodation in the late 1980s-early 90s to deal with the ETS issue. A 1991 memo, for example, suggested how tobacco executives could respond to criticism by stressing accommodation, or cooperation between smokers and nonsmokers. Documents such as these also indicate that the accommodation stance was beginning to gain momentum in the company’s public relations arsenal. One message point is illustrative of this early stance:

Overall, I think the solution to the ETS is based in plain common sense and common courtesy. And that has to do with accommodation. Yes, smoking can be annoying to some. But both smokers and non-smokers should and can be accommodated by providing separate areas in restaurants, waiting rooms and other public places. Accommodation takes care of the problem in almost all situations. (Han, 1991, p. 1)

In other words, the accommodation strategy became a tactic for Philip Morris and other industry players to attempt to ward off growing restrictions regarding public smoking.

By 1993, however, the industry need for the accommodation stance heightened. That year, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) labeled ETS as a class A carcinogen, meaning that, “airborne cigarette smoke was labeled a ‘serious and substantial public health risk,’ responsible for approximately 52,000 deaths year” (Kluger, 1997, p. 737). After the announcement, tobacco companies recognized that they faced an increasingly skeptical public as well as increasingly regulatory government. Clearly, as an industry report noted, “Class A designation is a major threat to our business” (Wirthlin Group, 1993, p. 2). In light of this report, then, the tobacco industry began consumer research to test a variety of messages used in responding to the ETS issue. They discovered that the industry strategy of denying the harm of ETS along with its accommodation strategy was not effective. Indeed, focus groups revealed the

following, “At the very best, people don’t care if tobacco companies are telling the truth about the EPA manipulating data and at the worst, they believe they are purposefully lying. The bottom line is that consumers perceive tobacco companies as putting their health at risk to make a profit” (Wirthlin Group, 1993, p. 3). In essence, focus groups revealed that the message the public was most likely to support was that of accommodation. According to Wirthlin Group research, accommodation, “is the most effective at moving people to a more tolerant position towards ETS,” and “is considered the most reasonable solution to the second-hand smoke issue” (1993, p. 3).

Philip Morris thus began featuring this message when communicating with a variety of publics. Regardless of the target group, a message of reasonableness and workable solutions prevailed. Philip Morris Vice President of Corporate Affairs Ellen Merlo sums up the accommodation program stance best, “We want the public to know that we take these issues seriously, that we have reasonable proposals to address them and that workable solutions do exist” (Merlo, 1995, p. 1). Accommodation became the top strategy in fighting the proliferation of smoking bans (Merlo, 1994). Indeed, Merlo asserts, “Part of our response to the ETS issue is to shift it from a health matter to a social one by acknowledging that some people find tobacco smoke annoying. We recommend...accommodation of smokers and non-smokers as an alternative to total smoking bans” (Merlo, 1993, p. 8). This message thus becomes a primary one in Philip Morris’ public relations effort throughout the nation, but especially in the state of Colorado.

Colorado was a target state for these messages during 1993-1995 as industry plans and tactics reveal (NSA/Accommodation Program Partnership, 1993). Perhaps because Colorado was a relatively low-smoking state, coupled with the level of GASP’s activism, Philip Morris decided to counteract its increasingly non-smoking climate there. Even though activism was strong, Philip Morris saw an opportunity, as a memo indicates, “Colorado media is amenable to taking a broader view of tobacco industry issues” (Russell, Zimmerman & Head, 1995, p. 1). Philip Morris thus sought to increase activity in Colorado because a “proactive and personal approach will allow us to intercept anti-tobacco messages earlier in the pipeline, allowing us to respond to negative stories by providing balance and perspective to both media and public debate (Russell, Zimmerman & Head, 1995, p. 5). Confidential documents even show that Philip Morris spies had infiltrated Colorado activist meetings in order to respond to GASP’s efforts (Philip Morris Memos, 1992-1993).

Yet, in spite of these powerful public relations tactics, grass roots anti-smoking organizations, such as Colorado GASP are able to adopt successful communication strategies. In the face of protracted and well-financed efforts on the part of tobacco industry operatives to “neutralize” the impact of activist efforts in various health campaigns, grassroots organizations continue gain persuasive ground. Although these tobacco control groups began slowly mobilizing against the tobacco industry in the 1970s, over the years groups as California GASP and Americans for Nonsmokers’ Rights were able to pass local ordinances against smoking by portraying the tobacco industry as outsiders and appealing to public health issues. Fast-forwarding to the 1990s, we see how these efforts continued to gain momentum. California, Massachusetts, Arizona, and Oregon had all passed major tobacco control programs through tobacco tax increases. Glantz (2002) believes, for example, that, “The California Tobacco Control program prevented 2 billion packs of cigarettes (worth \$3 billion to the tobacco industry) from being smoked” (p. 368). In terms of Colorado GASP, in particular, the small group that began in 1977 encouraged Coloradoans to pass local smoking ordinances, prevented the

Colorado Restaurant Association from working with Philip Morris, and worked to expose tobacco industry deception in that state.

While there are a number of elements that likely contribute to these groups' ability to create gains against a better-funded competitor, including committed volunteers, skills in increasing membership, and efforts to mobilize communities to act, one increasingly effective activist group practice deserves closer examination. As GASP and others face continual pressure from tobacco industry tactics, it appears they are learning from these industry procedures. Like its opponent, tobacco control groups design direct mailings, secure media attention, and create effective advertising campaigns. In short, tobacco control groups are increasingly employing public relations tactics to reach their goals. Groups such as GASP illustrate that activist and social movement organizations no longer depend just on protests and petitions to push for change but are adopting the techniques used by their corporate opponents. In this essay, then, I study Colorado GASP's ability to counter tobacco industry activity in its state through the use of public relations techniques; concomitantly, I explore how a well-funded and politically connected industry attempted to deflect or quiet GASP's voice of challenge. By looking at how both GASP and Philip Morris communicate during the years 1993-1995, with the general public, with member groups, and with restaurant owners and patrons, we can begin to understand how activist groups in general are learning to use public relations tactics effectively. To provide us with a framework to analyze GASP's activities, however, it is necessary to first explore the relationship between public relations and activism.

Activism and Public Relations Theory

It is somewhat difficult to provide an activist framework for evaluating public relations as disciplinary theory operates from a management perspective. That is, the discipline continues to privilege studies that understand how corporations can benefit from skillfully communicating with their operating environments (Duffy, 2000; Karlberg, 1996; Rodino & DeLuca, 2002). Even definitions of the practice support this perspective. Wilcox et al. (1998), for example, define public relations as the "communication function of management through which organizations seek to alter, or maintain, their environment for the purpose of achieving organizational goals" (p. 4). Although this perspective is prevalent in both defining the discipline and directing its research, several scholars criticize this focus for a variety of reasons. Karlberg (1996) suggests that a management-based approach encourages instrumental, and not critical, analyses of public relations strategies. That is, by investigating only how a campaign achieved its goals, scholars miss its broader impact on society. Jones (2002) argues that there needs to be a renewed focus on the "publics" in public relations. He suggests that technologies such as the Internet have made it possible for public groups to interact with the historically elite sectors of society, meaning that it is now imperative for public relations scholars to revise their understandings of what constitutes publics and how to interact with them. Kruckeberg and Starck (1988) support this view from a slightly different perspective, suggesting that an alternative approach to public relations research should be one that "stimulates and activates attempts to restore and maintain a sense of community" (p. 26). After tracing a line of theory that attempts to develop these more inclusive perspectives, I will provide a framework that is useful in examining GASP's activist public relations.

Some scholars are trying to answer the call to conceive of public relations more broadly, but their efforts continue to reflect a management perspective. One such attempt to refocus public relations research and practices is seen in J. Grunig and L. Grunig's (1992) influential

two-way symmetric model of public relations. Instead of seeing public relations merely as persuasion or information transmission, a historically popular way at looking at public relations activity, the authors argue that communication between an organization and its public can be dialogic, symmetrical, and can work to facilitate mutually beneficial, balanced understandings. Although several scholars have called for more research and practice that follows the two-way symmetric model of public relations, public relations theory and analysis still tends to overlook how publics can participate in this process. Indeed, as Karlberg (1996) points out, the Grunig model supports citizen involvement and competition among interests groups, but, “the research that he and his colleagues have followed thus far has focused almost exclusively on corporate and state communicative practices, and not on the communicative needs, constraints, and practices of citizen groups themselves” (p. 271). He suggests that public relations scholars need to remedy this oversight in order for the concept of true symmetry to be understood, as well as practiced. Karlberg is concerned that corporations possess both the resources and skills to dominate the public sphere. He calls for the discipline to explore why citizens are often ill equipped to communicate on a symmetrical level and to concentrate on providing them with the communicative skills needed to do so.

In response to Karlberg’s (1996) call for a change in perspective in public relations research, Kovacs (2001) explores how activist groups can utilize communication techniques for empowerment. In a reversal of the discipline’s tendency to suggest how a corporation can overcome the tactics generated by such non-governmental organizations (NGOs), she examines an activist group’s strategic use of public relations to develop a successful, long-term relationship with an organization. Kovacs draws on the emerging public relations literature that suggests that relationships are not only beneficial in achieving outcomes but are also intrinsically worthwhile for their symmetrical effects. In Kovacs’ study, concerned activist groups employed public relations strategies and relationship building techniques to increase the accountability of the British broadcasting system. Kovacs points out that activists can use traditional public relations techniques, such as environmental scanning and communicating with diverse targets, to influence the broadcasting system. As such, Kovacs (2001) illustrates how activists need not only use combative techniques, but can also use conciliatory ones, to achieve communicative influence. She takes issue, then, with Karlberg’s implication that the power imbalance activist groups often face calls for more aggressive public relations techniques. In other words, “any combination of nonviolent, nonaggressive asymmetrical techniques, beginning with media advocacy, may be used to move the agenda forward. Activists should revert to symmetrical strategies as soon as they achieve recognition” (Kovacs, 2001, p. 432). While I applaud Kovacs’ willingness to demonstrate how activist groups can successfully utilize public relations techniques, her analysis does not go far enough.

For Kovacs, recognition by a group in power calls for a change in public relations tactics, from asymmetrical to symmetrical. In other words, Kovacs seems to assume that *recognition* by a corporation or organization entails the possibility of building a symmetrical, mutually beneficial relationship between activist group and organization. I want to suggest, however, that this symmetric is not always possible, nor is it always desirable. In cases where activists are organizing against corporations that are deceptive, purposefully manipulative, and sometimes intentionally harmful, it is not beneficial, or even realistic, to attempt to create a symmetrical relationship. Knight and Greenberg (2002), for example, point out that forms of subpolitics, their label for activism, are often necessary to confront the “State and the market with their attempts to appropriate and exploit the normative expectations of everyday life” (p. 554). In their study,

then, antisweatshop activists did not seek to build a relationship with Nike, but rather attempted to intervene in its societal practices. For these activists, Nike had been provided with several opportunities to change its corporate behavior; its unwillingness to reform resulted in the activist's attempts to create an asymmetrical relationship in which they had the power to force Nike's hand. Duffy's (2000) critique of the Grunig model from a postmodern perspective is in keeping with Knight and Greenberg's findings. She too argues for the need for an activist understanding of public relations, as she believes the Grunig model privileges corporations and legitimizes capitalism even when the system needs interrogating.

It appears, then, that scholars are aware of need to consider how activists may seek to create asymmetrical relationships. Rodino and DeLuca (2002) provide a model that works to illustrate how these relationships might be considered. They argue, for example, that instead of assuming that Grunig and Hunt's model is a positive evolution of PR's potential, the discipline needs to consider also the addition of what they call the asymmetrical activist-advocacy model. This model focuses on activists' typical power deficit relative to corporations and argues that often public relations tactics are the only means available to adjust this imbalance. With this model, activists' have the ability to advocate not only for themselves but also for "voiceless" elements of the public. This model also recognizes non-traditional forms of public relations tactics, such as sit-ins, boycotts, protests, blockades, and the like as tools that work to communicate the groups' message.

It should be clear that there is a need to account for how public relations performs a variety of functions in our society that do not always pertain to supporting the corporate message. In other words, when dealing with groups such as the tobacco industry and clearly unethical corporations, the usual rules of public relations do not apply. This study, therefore, attempts to build on these scholars' ideas that public relations study and research needs to account for new uses, developments, and perspectives. I believe that we need to explore how activist groups utilize public relations strategies while keeping in mind that our models for understanding such activity may need to shift, as Rodino and DeLuca (2002) begin to point out. Although the work that builds on the Grunig model to understand contemporary public relations activity does represent an effort to conceive of the discipline in more equitable and just ways, there is more work to be done. A closer look at the controversy between Colorado GASP and Philip Morris begins to suggest ways that activist public relations should be considered in disciplinary research. As this analysis will show, one of the clearest lessons learned from activist public relations is that these groups are effective in building relationships with a variety of publics.

A word about method before proceeding. Although there are more than four million tobacco documents online due to the settlement, glimpses of industry public relations alone does not provide the opportunity to contrast fully the grass roots response. Further, many of the documents cited in this essay and online do not clearly indicate Philip Morris involvement at first glance¹. That is, sometimes just seeing the industry's side does not adequately illuminate the controversy. Fortunately, Colorado GASP worked to provide the other half of the equation needed. Its president, Pete Bialick, supplied me with hundreds of documents that tell GASP's side of the public relations battle. It thus becomes easier to get a clearer sense of the groups' exchanges. Due to the availability of documents and Colorado's activism background, I therefore

¹ Due to APA citation style and the lack of a universal tobacco document citation style, it is difficult sometimes to realize which are industry documents. For clarification of document origination, please consult the essay's bibliography.

examine how GASP and Philip Morris battled over the accommodation/ETS issue with the general public, with their respective activist organizations, and with the restaurant owners and patrons targeted by one facet of the program. By doing so, we see how activist groups can use public relations strategies to make gains despite confronting a better-funded opponent.

Targeting the General Public

One of the overriding goals of a given public relations campaign is to connect with audiences in order to create relationships. This too is a major concern in the tobacco public relations battle, and we find many examples of GASP and Philip Morris vying for audience acceptance. Traditionally, a number of scholars argue that the tobacco industry is more adept than tobacco control groups at connecting its values to the American public. Menashe and Siegel (1998), for example, analyze newspaper coverage of tobacco issues from 1985-1996 and argue that the tobacco industry is more successful in matching its claims with its audience's needs. Since the tobacco industry focuses consistently on American core values such as personal liberty and autonomy, the tobacco control strategy of condemning the industry's efforts to recruit young new smokers is not as compelling to many Americans. The authors argue that tobacco control groups would be more effective if they devise a consistent message that connects their concern of public health with the other core values capitalized on by the tobacco industry. Thus, for example, the authors suggest that "when the tobacco industry talks about civil liberties, public health advocates might talk about the most basic civil liberties of all: the right to breathe clean air and the right to raise one's children without the interference of an industry that is trying only to enhance its own profits" (Menashe & Siegel, 1998, p. 317). This is the strategy at work in GASP's messages to the general public over the issue of ETS/accommodation. After exploring how GASP follows this strategy when targeting the general public, we then examine how the tobacco industry counters GASP's claims in attempt to build a relationship with them.

To begin, on all of its communications materials, GASP pursues the notion that the right to breathe freely is one that should be available to all Coloradoans. It argues that accommodation is not the answer to the ETS issue. On each document, whether it is an ad, brochure, or other printed material, a portion of the document usually contains the following message: "GASP does not object to smoking by consenting adults in private. It's not the smoker we mind; it's the smoke. *You should not be forced to breathe secondhand smoke involuntarily, because it is hazardous to your health.* Besides, smoking is optional; breathing is not" (Dining Guide, 1994, p. 4, emphasis original). Thus, GASP clearly supports the right to breathe clean air. Yet, instead of condemning the industry outright as Menashe and Siegel (1998) suggest, GASP chooses a more subtle approach. This tactic helps the group avoid perceptions of extremism and radicalism typically directed toward tobacco control groups. GASP does not seek an end to all smoking, but focuses only on claiming clean public space. As such, it does connect its activism to basic civil liberties, as Menashe and Seigel suggest, but resists the "radical" stereotype. It thus tries to have a broader appeal.

Similarly, GASP builds on this theme in a document by stressing the benefits of joining GASP. Rather than attempting to scare people or condemn the industry, it often seeks to demonstrate how membership in the group has a number of advantages. By doing so, it can argue for smoke free policies instead of accommodating ones. In the "Top Ten Reasons to Join GASP" document, for example, we see this tactic at work. GASP is very audience-centered and stresses benefits potential members receive in a number of the different reasons listed, as in the following examples:

1. You support the only statewide organization whose number one priority is to promote smoke-free air.
2. You support the only Colorado group that uses counter-advertising to educate the public on the dangers of tobacco. Our media campaign helps counter the \$50 million the tobacco industry spends glamorizing and promoting smoking in Colorado every year.
3. You receive *smoke-free listing updates* for restaurants, events, and other places. GASP members receive new restaurant guides first.
4. *You receive action alerts on important tobacco issues.*
5. You receive GASP's informative newsletter, "The Nonsmokers' Voice." It features articles and news about new research on secondhand smoke, smoke-free policies and actions, and an inside look at the devious tactics of the tobacco industry.
8. You get a free "Welcome to Our Smoke-Free Home" sign for your door (also available for businesses, stores, restaurants, etc.)
10. You are in good company! GASP has 1,500 members and is growing. Seventy-seven percent of the adult population in Colorado does not smoke, and that number is increasing (1994, emphasis original).

Through membership, then, the public receives positive and informative materials supporting smoke free policies. Thus, while GASP's document does include some accusatory language, such as "devious tactics," and "glamorizing," on the whole, this and other documents are very audience-centered. Instead of only attacking, the group tries to answer the question of what benefits are available to the prospective member. In this way, GASP provides several reasons for the public to build a relationship with its organization.

Another common way GASP seeks to counteract the tobacco industry's claims that cigarettes are not harmful and can be solved by accommodation is through the use of advertising. As Benoit and Hartsock (1999) point out, advertising is an effective way to create presence, or the ability to make discourse conspicuous or salient to auditors. In their study of tobacco ads, the authors argue that rather than encouraging people either to quit or not take up smoking, advertisements create the most presence when they focus on creating tobacco industry offensiveness and responsibility for their products. Through a balance between visual and written elements and a focus on attempting to create presence, the advertisements constitute successful rhetorical attack. GASP's ads are in keeping with this strategy. In particular, the focus in these ads is on disputing claims about the danger of second hand smoke by questioning the industry's truthfulness. Even though GASP disputes the tobacco industry, however, it largely maintains its positive and rational tone throughout the ads. It privileges a factual approach rather than an emotional one and focuses on tobacco industry offensiveness and irresponsibility.

For example, GASP tries to persuade the public that they are being manipulated by the industry in an ad in its Dining Guide. In the ad, GASP brackets out this manipulation on three levels through careful language choices. GASP identifies three basic tactics the industry uses to cloud the smoking issue. Here, we find that GASP also adheres to Glantz and Burbach's (2002) recommendation that tobacco control advocates frame their arguments by refuting a right to smoke by taking issue with its particular elements. Similarly, as White and Katz (2002) summarize, "the rubric of a free and private choice by smokers to smoke could be framed in counterpoint to industry fraud and blackmail to conspire to addict its customers (p. 18). Thus, the ad begins with an explanation of denial on the part of the industry: "The tobacco industry continues to **deny** the scientific evidence about the dangers of smoking. There are more than 50,000 scientific studies on smoking, and more than 600 on passive smoking." The ad then

centers on the industry's distraction tactic: "The tobacco industry tries to **distract** the public attention from the health issue by bringing up other issues. The industry wraps itself in the American flag to convince the public that smoking is as American as apple pie. Yet smoking is the single greatest cause of preventable disease and death in the U.S." Finally, GASP focuses on industry deception: "The tobacco industry **deceives** the public by using half-truths, by eliminating vital information, and by quoting people out of context. The industry quotes papers which are meaningless because they are not peer-reviewed by other scientists. It uses questionable or outdated studies and statistics. The tobacco industry quotes consultants who have ties to the industry and attend industry-sponsored conferences" (GASP, 1994). By pointing out these instances of manipulation, GASP can help persuade its audience of industry offensiveness and encourage the public's involvement with its perspective.

As one of GASP's biggest concerns is communicating the dangers of ETS, it tries to get publics to question whether secondhand smoke is a problem that can be solved merely by accommodation. In a different ad, it wants publics to understand that second hand smoke is a danger, not a small thing that can be solved through courtesy and cooperation: "Secondhand smoke is not just an annoyance; it hurts more than just feelings...and it's especially harmful to children" (GASP, 1994). This claim is followed up in the ad with information communicating the specific dangers secondhand smoke imparts to children. Further, GASP ads question the tobacco industry's motives to support their stance on the dangers of ETS. There is sometimes a playful take on tobacco industry practices in doing so, as in a "warning label" drawn on a package of cigarettes used in the ad: "WARNING: WE HAVE DETERMINED THAT THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY IS HAZARDOUS TO OUR HEALTHY PROFITS" (GASP, 1994). Through these messages, then, GASP is able to suggest that accommodation is a questionable "solution" to the ETS issue. So far, we see that GASP is following symmetrical model building with the public to counteract its asymmetrical one with the industry.

While GASP tries to connect to the audience's core values of the right to truth and clean air, Philip Morris communicates to the general public by appealing to the value of American freedom. Although it had to rely less on its strategy of blatant denial after the EPA report was released, it made up for this loss by an even stronger emphasis on the rights to individual freedom and the right to smoke, although it approached these claims through accommodation language. Philip Morris needed to do so to counter the growing sentiment that smoking was a socially unacceptable habit. In 1994, for example, we see broad outlines of this need to change strategy in its Communication Plan. Under how to implement the idea of accommodation into public discussion, it sees the following problem and solution: "Political Correctness – through media, third parties, advance position that political correctness is out exposing hypocrisy and absurdity of 'movement.' Relate public smoking issue to other ridiculous politically correct issues..." (Philip Morris, 1994). In order to have a relationship with the public amid this climate, Philip Morris sees the need to shift its argumentative focus.

The company, therefore, creates ads in an attempt to counter its increasingly difficult climate and push its agenda. According to advertising research, the public positively responded to the accommodation message over all other test messages: "[they] appreciate that Philip Morris is 'taking a stand' to find a solution to a difficult problem. This is particularly true for the accommodation/compromise ads, which non-smokers view as 'solution-oriented'" (Young & Rubicam, 1994). A series of ads expressing variations of the message were created. One features, for example, the text, "But maybe we could figure out a lot quicker how to accommodate people

who smoke and people who don't if we kept our sense of proportion about things...and our sense of humor...Accommodation Not Confrontation...Let's work it out, O.K?...” Another ad says, “All we're asking for is a little bit of well-ventilated space where we can enjoy an occasional smoke, without getting into any hassles...Let's work it out, O.K.?” (Philip Morris, 1993) As evidenced by these ads, then, Philip Morris also follows a more rational, less accusatory tone in an attempt to persuade its audience. Concomitantly, the company tries to urge “reason” and “working it out” over increasing regulation. Philip Morris also attempts to heighten its persuasive attempt by relying on classic inclusive language strategies, such as using the words, “us,” and “we.” There are many examples of how Philip Morris tries to appeal to the American sense of freedom and non-interference in this regard, as more than 20 ads produced by the company express this theme in their titles, including, “Does Regulation Discourage Reasonable Behavior?,” “Voices of Reason, He'll Roll Down the Window If You Turn Down the Music,” “Prohibition Seemed Like a Good Idea at the Time,” and the like (Philip Morris, 1993). In all, Philip Morris suggests that a relationship with it requires no more than the support of common courtesy. In communicating with member groups, however, both organizations ask more of their members.

Targeting Members

When we compare messages that GASP and the tobacco industry use to communicate to their member groups to the ones the organizations use to communicate to the general public, there are some noticeable differences. We find less calm language and even tones regarding accommodation and more emphasis on urgency and action. In other words, because a level of commitment is assumed, Philip Morris and GASP can seek more out of their relationships. According to the social movement literature, this change in communication tactics is not surprising. Charles Stewart (1999) provides a perspective on the functions of social movements that is applicable in examining the differences in the ways in which grassroots tobacco activist groups as well as smokers' rights groups communicate with their members and the larger society. He points out that unlike the social movements such as feminism, Black Power, or gay rights, which are “self-directed” and possess an ego-supporting function, “other-directed” movements such as Pro-Life, Anti-Apartheid, and animal rights, have different communicative patterns, themes, and ego functions. In other words, a movement like feminism is self-directed as it attempts to unite women into believing they are substantial human beings who can have an impact on society. Other-directed movements, meanwhile, are “created, led, and populated primarily by those who do not perceive themselves to be dispossessed and (2) they are struggling for the freedom, equality, justice, and rights of others than selves” (Stewart, 1999, p. 92). The ego-function in these movements is thus different. This framework describes the general differences between GASP and Philip Morris memberships. GASP's communicative strategies reflect both self and other-directed themes, while Philip Morris's discourse is more self-directed. These differences lead to varying communicative styles to encourage member action.

In self-directed movements, rhetoric addresses the ego functions of activists by recognizing oppression, addressing self-esteem, helping members find a new identity, and persuading them to seek a different status level in society. On the other hand, rhetoric in other directed movements tends to affirm member self-esteem by suggesting how moral, compassionate, and committed members are. Additionally, instead of the self-directed need to get members to identify on an individual level (female, African-American, gay), other directed movement rhetoric stresses a member's collective association with a particular organization acting on behalf of others. One final tendency of other directed movements is applicable to both

tobacco control groups and smoker's rights groups. The rhetoric of other-directed movements stresses the victimage of members, where they struggle in their crusades and causes. Stewart notes that in these types of movements, "A few messages addressed movement members directly as victims of counter movements and established institutions" (p.101).

In light of Stewart's classifications, when we examine the communication tactics of GASP, its messages seem unique. GASP messages appear to be an interesting hybrid between self and other-directed rhetoric. Certainly, members struggle for the rights of others to breathe freely, but they also struggle clearly for their own right to breathe smoke-free air. The "ego-function" of these groups is thus most clearly addressed by other-directed rhetoric ("we're going to fight these companies") but their discourse also retains elements of self-directed themes. GASP, for example, asks members on its Web site, "When is the last time you ended up eating in a smoky restaurant? Let restaurant owners know your disappointment by using GASP of Colorado's newly created dining cards" (GASP, 2002).

Although there are such examples of self-directed rhetoric, GASP most often stresses the other-directed function in its messages to members. GASP encourages its members to participate in the success of the Dining Guide campaign, explaining, "When hand-delivered to an owner or manager of a restaurant, they become more effective. We are also helping distribute wallet-size cards you can give out at restaurants and bars that allow smoking" (GASP, 1994, p. 4). GASP also uses its newsletter to stress the continued need for action on behalf of members, and not just involvement in occasional activities. For example, after the infamous *Day One* program indicting the industry, GASP stresses it is not the time for celebration: "While it was thrilling to watch the tobacco industry on the run, now is **not** the time to declare victory or become complacent. We should note that the events listed above have yield **no change in policy to date**. Translation: talk is cheap; now where's the action?" (GASP, 1994, p. 14).

In keeping with Stewart's classifications, another prominent feature of GASP's membership rhetoric is its focus on painting its members as moral and virtuous and tobacco industry group members as immoral, uninformed, and manipulative. Thus, GASP tries to prepare members to rally with leaders against the growing pro-smoking groups in Colorado. It informs its members, "These groups are supported by the tobacco companies. The tobacco industry tells them to deny that the tobacco industry is behind them. These groups use the same old arguments and tactics the tobacco industry uses: denial, distraction, and deception" (GASP, Vol. 16.2, 1994, p. 2). To help GASP members respond to these arguments, it provides a number of suggestions in its newsletters. For example, to respond to Philip Morris' claim that courtesy between smokers and non-smokers solves the problem of second hand smoke, the newsletter provides this answer: "If courtesy were adequate to protect people, we wouldn't need any laws at all. Regulations do not interfere with people who are courteous; they only interfere with people who plan to be inconsiderate" (GASP, 1994, p. 14). Similarly, in response to the argument that preventing smoking in public is a limitation of freedom, GASP suggests members respond with the following argument:

Limitation of one freedom is often necessary to protect a more important freedom. In this case, health rights are more important than the "freedom" to indulge in a self-destructive habit that also harms others. Freedom of choice is no longer the best choice when that choice endangers others. Everyone accepts as good and proper the limits of many freedoms. That is why we have speed limits and many other public health laws. (GASP, 1994, p. 14)

It is clear, therefore, that GASP persuades its members to perform the role of crusader. Although it still keeps its tone fairly neutral, it encourages members to educate, guard, and take part in a relationship that is important for Colorado's public health.

If the other-directed theme dominates GASP's membership messages, the self-directed pattern is clearly visible in the messages of Colorado's Smokers' Rights Groups, groups that online documents suggest are supported by Philip Morris (Philip Morris, 1993). One early Smokers' Rights group in Colorado is the People for Smokers' Rights. Although it is unclear when the group began, or the exact ways in which it is supported by Philip Morris, a 1992 newsletter illustrates how the group feels threatened by GASP and seeks to bolster their self-esteem and identity, thus strengthening their relationships as smokers. As GASP's Dining Guide and other efforts gained ground throughout the state, the newsletter shows smokers' very different perception of the smoking problem. The editor remarks, "As we print portions of GASP's guide in the months to come, it should become clear that their little "guide" is a smokescreen to pollute the public's perception of smoking and smokers. People should ask, 'Who's really dangerous? Who's doing more harm to this country, smokers or anti-smoking zealots?'" (Cronan, 1992, p. 5). Further, the newsletter maintains an effort to reassure smokers of their identity: "We agree that certain personal freedoms are subject to restriction when they endanger the rights, health, and safety of others. Unfortunately, this is where the anti's slip everyone a curve ball. We hurt no one with our smoke. We may irritate some people – but that's the extent of the danger we pose to the public!" (Cronan, 1992, p. 5). We see efforts, therefore, to reassure smokers by describing the "zealotry" of the tobacco control forces. By the use of such language, Cronan stresses that members become involved in an "us vs. them" relationship.

This theme continues into 1994, when Philip Morris helped smokers form state chapters of the National Smoker's Alliance, which dedicated itself to protecting the rights of smokers specifically by working for accommodation programs (Philip Morris, 1993). This group is instrumental in pushing the accommodation strategy and issues press releases, provides information packets, and organizes to protect smokers right to smoke in public. Its publication, the *Smokers' Advocate*, builds on the plan to dispute political correctness and question health advocates, but also reassures members about the need for their involvement in a relationship with the Alliance as it does so. Witness this selection from a story: "The smoking war myth is propagated by the news media because stories about conflict sell more newspapers. This myth is also being driven by a small but vocal group of anti-smoking zealots who are committed to imposing their intolerance for cigarette smoking on the rest of the nation" (SA, Vol. 5.4, 1994, p. 1). By labeling tobacco control advocates as "zealots" and those "committed to imposing their intolerance," the newsletter story helps boost the self-esteem of smokers and reassure the stability of their rights to smoke. In self-directed fashion, it encourages smokers to not be content with their "oppressed" status in society and work with the Alliance for liberation.

The NSA also provides members with booklets designed to help them promote policies of accommodation, so it too possesses elements of other-directed rhetoric. These documents also stress the idea that it is political correctness, rather than potential health damage, that is causing the debate about public smoking: "Almost every day, individual freedoms are challenged at the local, state and federal levels by policymakers motivated by ideas of 'political correctness,' rather than by principles of fairness and accommodation" (NSA Booklet, 1994, p. 1). The publication thus suggests a number of ways smokers can act to have an impact on local policies, including writing and phoning legislators, and testifying at public hearings. Underlying all these communications with Alliance members, therefore, we see an emphasis on members banding

together and working against the injustice of intolerance. This theme continues, yet is altered, as the industry targets the restaurant public. Like GASP, the industry recognizes it needs to stress benefits, not victimage, in order to support its policies.

Targeting Restaurants

In light of the EPA report, state and local legislatures now had scientific evidence to back up the tobacco control groups' efforts to ban smoking in public places. Therefore, although GASP began publishing its restaurant guide in 1978, with the EPA announcement, its focus switched from using the document to inform Coloradans of smoke free restaurants to promoting smoke free policies (Bialick, 2002). Both GASP and Philip Morris thus make securing public space one of their primary battles. We will first examine how GASP uses its 1994 dining guide and "25 Reasons" publications to convince patrons to support smoke free restaurants. Then we will see how Philip Morris uses a restaurant specific program touting accommodation to argue that restaurants need to support both smokers and nonsmokers.

In response to Philip Morris' plan to target restaurants in the face of the EPA report, GASP's new focus to use the guide to promote smoke free politics functions as a counter-public relations campaign. In targeting restaurant patrons, GASP places a specific emphasis on encouraging diners to stand up for their right to breathe clean air in restaurants. GASP supports its calls for action by imparting activism techniques along with encouragement; for example, the newsletter advises, "Please express your appreciation to restaurants that provide smoke-free dining for their patrons. Consider leaving a note on your bill, and mention that you learned about them in GASP's restaurant guide" (1994). Further, GASP provides strategies for members to persuade smoking establishments to become non-smoking: "When visiting non-listed restaurants, ask for a smoke-free area, even when you know there is none. Many restaurateurs tell us they have become smoke-free due to customer demand and complaints. Ask to be seated as far away as possible from smoking areas. If smoking bothers you during the meal, be sure to complain or leave a note on your bill. Give restaurateurs a copy of the article on the benefits of becoming smoke-free on page 46 of this guide" (1994). To add to the success of the patrons' efforts, GASP provides members with additional ammunition for making restaurant owners understand the need to become smoke free:

A recent report indicates that waitpersons and bartenders breathe up to six times more secondhand smoke than office employees, and are one and a half times more likely to develop lung cancer than the general public. This information should be given to waitpersons and bartenders. GASP can provide copies of this information to you at cost GASP is also working on encouraging more restaurants to become smoke free. (Dining Guide, 1994)

GASP does not encourage its Dining Guide program only in the newsletter; it creates a television ad to support members of the public trying to have smoke-free dining experiences. This television ad supports GASP's call for the rights to breathe freely in public space in both a visual and auditory manner. The audio text of the ad is as follows: "Are you tired of dining in a cloud of smoke? Then get the new Guide to Smoke-Free Dining and discover more than 750 restaurants and cafes all over Colorado that are completely smoke free. Call GASP, the Group to Alleviate Smoking Pollution now at 444-9799 and they will send you the Guide to Smoke-Free Dining absolutely free. Get the guide and enjoy dining out again" (GASP Newsletter, 1994). According to Bialick, president of GASP, "The spot starts by showing two people smoking in a dark, gloomy restaurant. Then it switches to couple enjoying a smoke-free meal in a cheery well-lit restaurant with the mountains in the background" (GASP Newsletter, 1994). Thus, we see that

GASP is working to help the public find and support smoke-free dining policies. By focusing on the visuals of a nice dining experience along with words “enjoy dining out again,” it stresses the advantages the public receives.

In keeping with its audience-centered tactics, GASP produces the “25 Reasons to Become Smoke Free” publication to target restaurant owners specifically. GASP is particularly deft in arguing that restaurant owners and employees benefit from becoming smoke free instead of following the Accommodation Program. It creates a brochure that lists “25 Reasons to Become a Smoke-Free Restaurant in Colorado.” The brochure, along with all other materials explaining the benefits of becoming smoke free, always carries the following slogan: “Smoke-free restaurants make good health sense, good legal sense, and good dollar and cents.” The brochure begins by listing facts about smoking in Colorado, as well as broadly questioning claims that smoke-free restaurant policies cause establishments to lose revenue. Specifically, however, the brochure breaks its reasons to become smoke free into seven sub-areas, all of which appeal to the restaurant owner’s self-interest. The first tells owners that “You Save Money.” In this section, the brochure points out, for example, “Furniture lasts longer – no more burn holes in tablecloths, carpets or booths. No more repainting ceilings and walls yellowed by tobacco smoke.” Next, the brochure offers “Free Publicity and Advertising,” where it offers free inclusion in GASP’s dining guide and the possibility of making the news. The brochure also touts “A Classier-Looking, Fresher-Smelling, Cleaner Restaurant”: “No more cigarette butts in your potted plants. No more butts sticking to a dish and being served to an unsuspecting customer.” The next sections provide reasons for “Happier Customers,” “Healthier Employees and Improved Morale,” “Healthier and Safer for Everyone,” and a reminder that being smoke free is good business (all from “25 Reasons,” 1994). The point of these sections, then, is to stress the benefits restaurants receive when they become smoke free. GASP again carries out a smart public relations tactic by focusing on the positive benefits, rather than “extreme” emotional accusations against the tobacco industry, in forming a smoke free relationship with the public. By doing so, it meets the tobacco industry at its strategy, and refutes its claims of the benefits of the Accommodation Program on a point-by-point basis.

It is illustrative to focus also on the graphics the opponents use to tout their different restaurant programs. Both groups attempt to identify with the restaurant-going public and create relationships with them through this visual strategy. Since these signs are what some patrons will first see when they dine out, each has been carefully designed to attract attention and possibly influence the patrons’ decision to dine in the establishment. GASP’s Dining Program sticker features a mountain scene with a large evergreen tree, with the words “Welcome to Our Smoke-Free Restaurant” featured in the blue sky above the mountains. The graphic imparts a crisp, calm, feeling. It is also well suited to Colorado’s natural scenery and outdoor lifestyles. According to Bialick, “the new signs are a departure from the standard ‘no-smoking’ message. They enable businesses and individuals to convey the smoke-free message in a polite and positive way” (GASP, 14.2, 1992, p. 4). Philip Morris, on the other hand, seeks a different graphic message. Its symbol for its Accommodation Program features a red and green yin and yang type symbol, where the yin side pictures a lit cigarette with the yang side blank yet co-existing next to the cigarette peacefully. By drawing on the well-known Asian symbol of harmony, the ad suggests the possibility that the Accommodation Program is a peaceful solution to a workable problem.

Unlike its member-groups communication, the Philip Morris restaurant accommodation program has many similarities to GASP’s program. It is an eight-step plan for businesses to

redesign their facilities so that they are pleasing to both smokers and nonsmokers alike. In 1994, 14,000 restaurants participated in the program; by 1995, 32 restaurant associations were members (Gambini, 1994). Included in the program's free materials is a comprehensive source book with implementation suggestions, a technical bulletin with information on how to improve HVAC systems, accommodation signage, and employee training materials. In all, then, Philip Morris shows how easy it is for restaurant owners to create a relationship with both the smoking and non-smoking public.

In states without GASP's Dining Guide, Philip Morris experiences positive responses to the Accommodation Program. Some restaurateurs respond positively to Philip Morris. Ruth Fertzell of Ruth's Chris Steak House, for example, supports Philip Morris' efforts to be inclusive of all diners: "We want to welcome new customers and keep them coming back because they were treated with respect and understanding – smokers and nonsmokers alike" (*American Express*, 1993, p. 73). Similarly, Florida Restaurant Association member David Real says, "The Accommodation Program, with its colorful symbol on all the signage, tells people that I'm out to make everyone happy. I'm not mandating behavior in my restaurant, and I'm not just setting rules. Accommodation means I'm operating with each and every customer in mind" (Florida Restaurant Association, 1996, p. 1). The publication also features ads about how the accommodation program successfully works in other Florida restaurants. Even when Philip Morris is unable to push the Accommodation Program due to local legislation, as in the case of Maryland's 1994 court ruling, it provides restaurant owners with ideas and information on how to accommodate smokers in bars and separate areas of the restaurant (Accommodation Program Booklet, 1995).

Colorado, however, presents a special challenge to Philip Morris' Accommodation Program. Colorado is specifically mentioned as a threat to the program's success (1996 Communications Platform). According to the Philip Morris communication plan, Boulder, CO, represents an ongoing battle, because restaurant and bar owner overrode the city council members to petition to put a smoking ban on the ballot. The plan reveals that a "threat" to the program is the problem of new restaurants opening as smoke-free, something GASP clearly helps happen. Although the Colorado Restaurant Association rejects the program in 1992, Philip Morris tries again in 1995 to gain its acceptance. Also in 1995, Philip Morris is able to implement the program in the Denver Airport's Smoking lounges, a development fought bitterly by GASP. As it stands, however, the Colorado Restaurant Association is still not persuaded by the Accommodation Program. In this sense, then, it appears that GASP is successful in its public relations efforts with this group.

Results of the Campaigns:

From the available data, it appears that GASP's tactics are more successful than Philip Morris' Accommodation Program in Colorado. GASP specifically takes credit for the Colorado Restaurant Association's rejection of the Accommodation Program: "Much to their credit, the Colorado Restaurant Association rejected the Philip Morris campaign, thanks in great measure to Colorado GASP's informing them that this was simply a tobacco industry gimmick to keep smoking areas and that it was strongly opposed by health groups concerned about second-hand smoke" ("State News," 1995, p. 10). GASP's efforts regarding the Dining Guide are also positively received throughout the state. The GASP newsletter reports that, "The guide was mentioned in 25 newspaper stories, 80 television PSA spots, 40 paid TV spots, 13 radio news spots, more than 50 radio PSA spots, 7 newsletters, two magazines, and two computer bulletin boards" (Vol. 16, 1996, p. 3). Thus, it appears that in public relations industry terms, GASP's

Dining Guide campaign did well in the number of “impressions” it garnered. Further, GASP reports that other health departments around the country are considering copying elements of GASP’s dining guide for use in their communities.

The outcome of the campaigns at the local level, then, is unambiguous. GASP is more successful at the this level, an arena that is an ongoing challenge for Philip Morris. Generally, the corporation is strong at the national level but weaker at the local one, especially in places where tobacco control groups are working. As Merlo (1994) puts it, “At the level of the town meeting we’re almost always killed. At the board of health level, we do better. At the city council level, we do very well. And at the state level we do great” (p. 14). The Accommodation Program tries, therefore, to stave off local restrictions against smoking by creating and mobilizing an ally base at what Philip Morris calls the grassroots and grasstops level. It realizes this plan would be a challenge, however, because, as the program plans note, especially in terms of persuading restaurants, “Getting inside the industry is not easy for us, given that for the most part, we do not have a business relationship” (Accommodation Plan, 1993). In terms of public relations theory, then, it seems GASP is better at promoting the common ground needed to build relationships. In this sense, this case study points to several implications for disciplinary theory.

Implications:

In analyzing the controversy between the tobacco industry, several theorists argue that overall the battle will remain at a stalemate, because the opponents tend to “talk past one another.” Mark Moore (1996), for example, posits that the cigarette functions as an ideograph or a “one term summation of a political orientation in synecdochal form,” that shapes, reflects, and sustains the controversy between the tobacco industry and control groups over environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) (p. 47). In effect, the cigarette as ideograph encapsulates the controversy itself and directs the discourse of both sides. As both sides use different conceptions of knowledge that are judged by different sets of criteria, Moore argues that the controversy over ETS is sustained, with the opponents’ efforts to “prove” their claims repeatedly ineffective. Similarly, Ulmer and Sellnow (1997) argue that the tobacco industry communicates by using the strategy of strategic ambiguity. When tobacco executives challenge the validity of scientific evidence regarding nicotine’s addictiveness, the authors argue the public is not left with the possibility of making a decision of significant choice. In other words, the public faces two competing interpretations of nicotine and the debate over the product cannot be resolved. The authors warn that the use of strategic ambiguity in discourse can harm the public’s ability to deliberate and make decisions of significant choice in many arenas of society. While these authors’ concerns are both valid, it seems that certain types of activist public relations can improve the possibilities that publics can receive, process, and form opinions about the tobacco controversy that can move it beyond the level of stalemate. Let’s examine a few ways in which GASP’s public relations tactics can make this possible.

In this case study, GASP works to reduce locally the tobacco industry’s strategic ambiguity by using a multi-pronged attack, each prong attempting to build a relationship with a respective group. It provides the public with facts, encourages members to bring these facts to more segments of the public, and uses the Dining Guide to reduce ambiguity by providing “good reasons” smoking is harmful to business. Thus, while it does, in Moore’s and Ulmer and Sellnow’s terms, offer competing interpretations and ideograph usage, its focus on creating audience-centered, rather than accusatory, messages, seems to have a positive effect on its message persuasiveness in the local arena. That is, because GASP could provide the different target audiences with benefits publics could use to build relationships, instead of only

participating in an accusatory battle, its messages seem to be more readily accepted. Further, by focusing on benefits, GASP was able to connect to the audience's core values in a persuasive way. While there are mediating factors in GASP's success, such as the high number of Coloradans who do not smoke, I do not think we have to discount the strategic value of GASP's public relations approach. GASP illustrates that activism can move the smoking controversy beyond the level of stalemate at the local level.

In broader terms, then, this case study illustrates the benefits of conceiving of public relations from an enlarged perspective. When we examine how activist groups use public relations techniques, we learn that public relations has applicability beyond the corporate sphere. I argue that in an age of multinational corporations and corporate dominance, this finding is important. In order for different voices to be heard in our society, they must learn how to speak. Rampton & Stauber (2001) suggest that, "the positive uses of public relations do not in any way mitigate the undemocratic power of a multibillion dollar public relations industry to manipulate and propagandize on behalf of the wealth special interests dominating debate, discussion and decision making" (p. 205). The case study illustrates that this claim may be a bit overstated. The activist public relations analyzed in this study suggest that education is possible and that positive uses of public relations can have impacts on local politics and policies. Activist public relations appears to indeed help the voiceless public understand how to speak. This implication is more substantial in light of recent tobacco industry public relations efforts.

In the years following the subject of this analysis, the tobacco industry began to shift from its accommodation plan to a focus on demonstrating its corporate responsibility. According to Ong & Glantz (2001), "Publicly, the Tobacco Institute is now shifting to campaign touting responsible corporate citizenship and nominal efforts purporting to discourage youth smoking prevention" (p. 1758). Philip Morris, for example, publicizes its support of battered women's shelters, its role in helping deliver to flood victims, and its support of the arts. It seems, then, that the industry is shifting away from its local, state-bound accommodation program efforts back to more of a national public relations strategy. What this shift may point, to, therefore, is the ability for local groups to use public relations effectively so that they force corporations to rely on national campaigns. Perhaps local activists are sometimes better able to build symmetrical relationships with publics, as they can know more clearly what this process takes since they are community members. It is important, however, not to discourage asymmetrical relationships in every instance. In the controversy between Philip Morris and Colorado GASP, GASP needed to promulgate an asymmetrical relationship and the tactics therein with Philip Morris in order to build symmetrical relationships with its target publics and have more success locally. In this sense then, we should be open both to the uses of public relations strategies and tactics outside the corporate sphere, as well as noting that an asymmetrical relationship need not always turn into a symmetrical one. In today's communication climate, sometimes a combination of both roles is needed and must be sustained throughout a controversy.

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