

rights demonstrate the resilience, commitment, and courage that remains. It is a welcome note to finish a fine addition to the literature, which will be of significant use to scholars interested in comparative perspectives on journalists' attitudes and perceptions of their belief systems.

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Lee Edwards (2018). *Understanding Public Relations: Theory, Culture and Society*. London: Sage, pp. 288, ISBN: 9781473913097, 9781473913103.

The title of this book encapsulates precisely what it is about, despite it being potentially equally misunderstood by a casual glance at the title as yet another 'how-to'-type book. This book aims to get the reader 'under the skin' of public relations, considering the wider socio-cultural aspects of the discipline and to better understand how integrated it can be on a broader political and social plane. Its messaging can also help elevate the discipline in the minds of other stakeholders and participants past a mere 'spin' or 'publicity seeking' activity, aligning it more strategically with other higher-level activities that may be interrelated to each other.

The author, Dr Lee Edwards, is an active researcher and assistant professor at the London School of Economics in the United Kingdom, and rightly notes that public relations work today is visible, boosted by technology and greater public awareness. Awareness itself does not necessarily equate to knowledge and understanding, especially correct knowledge and understanding. A lot of misapprehensions and ignorance can be extant, sometimes perpetuated by public relations actors too, and often not proactively corrected when experienced. Edwards' book can help empower and lead to change.

The principal audience for this book should be clear — researchers of public relations and communications, senior practitioners and, naturally, students of communications-related subjects. However, the book deserves more extensive circulation, being considered by those who can be impacted by public relations activities at every level. After all, the author notes that "[t]he ubiquity of public relations means that it now has an inescapable influence on us, as part of the resources we draw on both individually and collectively, when we navigate our way through life" (p. 2). In many ways, this latter group is less likely to understand this until they read this book, yet getting them to do it can be difficult — a real catch-22 situation. It is not helped by the book possibly appearing somewhat daunting, due to it being highly compressed and focussed. A light read it is not (nor does it pretend to be). It is a book that deserves your focus, and in return, your attention

should be rewarded by the sheer mass of knowledge and thought that the book dispenses and generates.

In its 224 pages of actual content (excluding the very extensive bibliography and detailed index), the book is split into 12 chapters, each capable of being a standalone guide, although there is significant value in at least one sequential read to get the most comprehensive benefit of its analytical, critical, and considerate text. The book thus starts by defining socio-cultural research in public relations before considering the subject as a promotion activity — its most visible form — and the overall production and circulation of meaning. After that, public relations is studied through the lens of discourse and power, political economy, democracy, the public sphere, and globalization. Then public relations as an occupational field is considered, looking at the role of professionalism, the state of race and class activity, and gender issues, before being rounded off by ethical considerations and a conclusion evaluating public relations beyond the organization.

Many people (and studies) tend to focus on the organizational role of public relations activity and consider it in isolation to relevant social, cultural, and political contexts. This is understandable as the organizational context is critical, yet other settings are necessary as they interact and can feed back into the broader activity and make it even more credible, persuasive, and relevant. It is all quite 'simple' on a headline level and, of course, when considered, but it is harder to do its enormity justice in a line or two within a review. Reading the book can be an eye-opener for many when its various elements are brought into focus! Perhaps so simple, so obvious, but maybe so overlooked too.

This is a book you will return to, whether to refresh your memory, seek a new perspective, or to bathe in the knowledge that will overwhelm you. This is what is meant by it being not an easy read. It is not a criticism. It is not padded out or watered down, but highly concentrated, thoughtful knowledge. Even to a seasoned public relations practitioner, a lot of this imparted knowledge may appear to be quite abstract or perceptibly less-relevant because of their prior experiences and exposures, yet when viewed as an entire object its potential should not be understated. This can be a bit of a double-edged sword, however, particularly when some of the book's prospective audiences are considered. Maybe there could have been a bit more accessible text, less compression and a slight opening up of the academically-focused language? It would especially help the early-stage researcher or student, the less-familiar but curious reader, as well as those who have English as a secondary language.

Regardless, the book remains worthy of any perceived sacrifice or struggle as the knowledge is valuable and it will permeate eventually into the reader's mind, at whatever speed, and with however many attempts. It is readable, structured, and clear, but its overwhelming nature can overload the senses of many. This is a quality, landmark book that should not be unduly diluted, but even anything that could improve its accessibility without compromising it would be excellent, as it can only enhance its attractiveness to a broader audience. If it wasn't so good, you perhaps

might overlook the need or desire to go back and re-read sections and even reading bits several times can be revealing as latterly received thoughts are brought into the mix. This can be akin to favorite fiction books or movies that have been read/seen several times, but each new consumption yields something else that was perhaps not appreciated before.

Understanding Public Relations is undoubtedly capable of being a critical reference that can lead to greater things if you invest the time and effort to get the most out of it. It does well to get under the technical, social skin of public relations to allow consideration of the broader story as well as the specifics of public relations activities. It is available in hardback and paperback (at a very affordable price) as well as through digital platforms. For researchers and practitioners who want to extend their craft, this could be a 'must read' book. For everybody else, whose activities or interests may impact on, or intersect with public relations, this could be viewed as a 'should read'. It is a lot more than a book that just looks at public relations and what it can do.

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Michał Głowacki & Alicja Jaskiernia (eds.) (2017). *Public Service Media Renewal: Adaptation to Digital Network Challenges*. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang Edition, pp. 249, ISBN: 978-3-631-67728-5.

Public Service Media (PSM) in Europe are facing, and at the same time adapting to a set of most substantial challenges in their recent history. The value of the PSM sector is being increasingly questioned in a new media and communication environment, regulatory pressures increase from the national policymakers as well as the EU, and new political choices are being made that often lead to weakening of PSM. Moreover, the rise of platform companies and changes in media use, affect conditions of PSM performance. In these volatile and unpredictable circumstances, the Editors of the edited volume *Public Service Media Renewal: Adaptation to Digital Network Challenges* chose a right angle to examine strategies and institutional developments that might lead to PSM renewal.

There are two possible ways to think about PSM. One is through the set of principles and procedures that sustain PSM values such as independence (reflected in functional independence of appointment procedures, professional autonomy, sufficient funding from public sources), universality (reflected in accessibility of PSM on various channels and platforms, including the newest ones) and diversity (reflected in remit, standards of performance, composition of the workforce). Another