

EXPERIENCING PUBLIC RELATIONS

INTERNATIONAL VOICES



EDITED BY

ELIZABETH BRIDGEN AND DEJAN VERČIČ

'What a great idea this book is. It presents thorough soul-searching by seasoned scholars to reveal an interesting array of flip sides to concepts and practices of public relations as they are not commonly known by students, teachers, professionals or anyone else interested in the world of public relations.'

Betteke van Ruler, *Professor Emerita in Communication Science, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands*

'This collection's chapters are enlightening and enlivening. Fun and serious, diverse and internationally informed, their authors bring fresh air and insight into previously neglected arenas of PR experience.'

David McKie, *Professor of Strategic Leadership and Transformation, Waikato Management School, New Zealand*

Experiencing Public Relations examines the everyday experiences of PR practitioners in order to better understand how public relations is perceived by those both outside and within the field. The book aims to provoke debate around the nature of public relations by looking at how it is defined at a theoretical level, compared to how it is lived and represented in the real world.

Chapters feature work from some of the world's leading public relations scholars. They cover a diverse range of subjects, such as representations of PR in fiction and film, terrorist use of public relations, the impact of social media on this medium and a study of 'dirty work' within the PR industry. The book also explores international PR practices, presenting analysis from contributors based in Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Germany, India, Mexico, New Zealand, Norway, Poland, Russia, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Sweden, Taiwan, UAE, UK, USA and Venezuela.

Experiencing Public Relations goes beyond the 'frontstage' scholarship of public relations to bring together stories of public relations in daily life, revealing how influential theories work out in practice and translate into different cultural and social contexts. This book will provide researchers, professionals and students with a vital perspective on the inner workings of public relations today.

ELIZABETH BRIDGEN is Principal Lecturer in Public Relations at Sheffield Hallam University, UK. Her research explores the lives of public relations practitioners with a particular focus on gender, diversity, and the impact of technology on working lives.

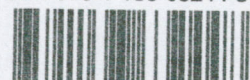
DEJAN VERČIČ is a professor and Head of the Department of Communication at University of Ljubljana, Slovenia. His research focuses on globalization and strategic communication. He is a member of the European Communication Monitor (www.communicationmonitor.eu) research team, and since 1994 he has organized BledCom (www.bledcom.com).

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Development of Society

an informa business

ISBN 978-1-138-63244-8



9 781138 632448

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
www.routledge.com

CONTENTS

<i>List of figures</i>	<i>vii</i>
<i>List of tables</i>	<i>viii</i>
<i>List of contributors</i>	<i>ix</i>
1 Introduction: experiencing public relations <i>Elizabeth Bridgen and Dejan Verčič</i>	1
2 Experiencing public relations as an academic discipline: What do scholarly views and published research tell us? <i>Alenka Jelen-Sanchez</i>	6
3 Dealing in facts <i>Howard Nothhaft</i>	26
4 Confessions of a public relations practitioner: hidden life in the open plan office <i>Paul Willis</i>	39
5 Personality in practice <i>Sarah Williams</i>	51
6 Public relations as 'dirty work' <i>Elizabeth Bridgen</i>	66
7 The anatomy of a spokesperson in South Africa: sometimes a lie is kinder than a truth (African proverb) <i>Ronél Rensburg</i>	81

8	'Can you see me?' Images of public relations in <i>Babylon</i> <i>Kate Fitch</i>	95
9	Public relations in fiction <i>Philip Young</i>	105
10	Social media and the rise of visual rhetoric: implications for public relations theory and practice <i>Ganga S. Dhanesh</i>	123
11	From propaganda to public diplomacy: the Chinese context <i>Chun-Ju Flora Hung-Baesecke and Minghua Xu</i>	137
12	Influences of postcolonialism over the understanding and evolution of public relations in Latin America <i>Juan-Carlos Molleda, Ana María Suárez Monsalve, Andréia Silveira Athaydes, Gabriel Sadi, Elim Hernández and Ricardo Valencia</i>	152
13	Fanning the flames of discontent: public relations as a radical activity <i>Oyvind Ihlen</i>	165
14	Subversion practices: from coercion to attraction <i>Sergei A. Samoilenko</i>	174
15	Analysing terrorist use of public relations: ISIS and Al Qaeda <i>Greg Simons</i>	194
16	Epilogue: How people experience public relations: applying Martin Buber's phenomenology to 'PR tree' <i>Jordi Xifra</i>	209
	<i>Index</i>	217

FIGURES

- 2.1 Pie chart showing c
- 2.2 Graph showing rese
- 2.3 Graph showing rese
- 2.4 Graph showing the
in different periods

INFLUENCES OF POSTCOLONIALISM OVER THE UNDERSTANDING AND EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC RELATIONS IN LATIN AMERICA

Juan-Carlos Molleda, Ana María Suárez Monsalve, Andréia Silveira Athaydes, Gabriel Sadi, Elim Hernández and Ricardo Valencia

Introduction

In the contemporary field of public relations, some developed countries have had an absolute primacy in the production of specialized literature. This might have been possible due to the linguistic advantages of what is broadly considered the international language for business: English. It has not been merely by chance that authors of Anglo-Saxon countries – with a predominance of authors from the United States and United Kingdom, in that order – have been the most productive in terms of research and publication, which ‘gives public relations the [majority] nature of an Anglo-Saxon endeavor’ (Xifra, 2003, p.94), a state of affairs that is not necessarily sensitive to the idiosyncrasy of Latin American practitioners.

In this context, and starting in the 1970s, the theoretical analysis of public relations starts showing an inspiration clearly based on the functionalist and systemic approach. This perspective is centred on the way public relations can contribute to organizations and their environments as integrated subsystems through the maintenance of an equilibrium or consensus with the ultimate goal of comprehension and mutual benefit (Sadi, 2013). This does not consider some concerns present in the Latin American public relations perspective regarding the social roles of the practice and its practitioners (Molleda, 2001).

In crafting this chapter on the interplay between postcolonialism and Latin American public relations practice, most sources have been precisely contributions produced in developed countries, which represents a factor that exemplifies the

colonialist influence of the book. However, the contributions of Latin American authors to the understanding of postcolonialism and its influence on public relations in Latin America, we have seen. However, it has been necessary for theorists to understand, from a postcolonial perspective, the influences in our profession.

The chapter has been divided into a brief description of what constitutes public relations and how they have contributed to the postcolonial evolution of the profession. This includes an overview of the practice in six Latin American countries: Colombia, Cuba, Mexico, Peru, Venezuela and Chile. This is accomplished through the official websites of five public relations agencies in each selected country.

Latin America and postcolonialism

Latin America is a subcontinent in the American continent, a combination of English, French and Spanish. The proportion of the population (The Indigenous Languages of Latin America) along with the large number of languages prevailed. It is therefore a region of Latin America – though it usually excludes

Latin America is a region that includes Portugal, at the beginning of the 15th century, and several territories and the northern border of Mexico and the Caribbean. It has an area of approximately 13 per cent of the Earth's surface, estimated to be more than 626 million

Origin of postcolonial theory

Postcolonial theory emerged in Africa and Asia after the Second World War. The British Empire (Mishra and Hodson, 2001) geographical region and historic context have influenced many phenomena in Latin America.