

Public Understanding of Science

<http://pus.sagepub.com/>

Book review: Simone Rödder, Martina Franzen and Peter Weingart (eds), *The Sciences' Media Connection – Public Communication and its Repercussions*

Kristian H. Nielsen

Public Understanding of Science 2014 23: 364

DOI: 10.1177/0963662514522728

The online version of this article can be found at:
<http://pus.sagepub.com/content/23/3/364.citation>

Published by:



<http://www.sagepublications.com>

Additional services and information for *Public Understanding of Science* can be found at:

Email Alerts: <http://pus.sagepub.com/cgi/alerts>

Subscriptions: <http://pus.sagepub.com/subscriptions>

Reprints: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsReprints.nav>

Permissions: <http://www.sagepub.com/journalsPermissions.nav>

>> [Version of Record](#) - Mar 28, 2014

[What is This?](#)

Book review

Public Understanding of Science
2014, Vol. 23(3) 364
© The Author(s) 2014
Reprints and permissions:
sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav
DOI: 10.1177/0963662514522728
pus.sagepub.com


Simone Rödder, Martina Franzen and Peter Weingart (eds)

The Sciences' Media Connection – Public Communication and its Repercussions. Sociology of the Sciences Yearbook 28. Dordrecht: Springer, 2012. 379 pp. ISBN 978-94-007-2085-5, £126.00 (hbk)

Reviewed by: Kristian H. Nielsen, Aarhus University, Denmark

In 1998, Peter Weingart proposed that, owing to the growing impact of mass media on public policy and the increased competition between scientific institutions for resources, the sciences would become more and more media-oriented. He coined the term “medialization of science” to describe the tendency of the scientific community to seek public attention and legitimacy through the media with the ultimate aim of forming political agendas.

Weingart’s thesis is the starting-point for *The Sciences’ Media Connection*. Most of its chapters refer explicitly to the concept of medialization of science, and all chapters provide empirical or theoretical confirmation of the thesis. This consistency is one of the strengths of the book: unlike in many other edited books, here all the contributions are dedicated to a single phenomenon. Yet, it would have been improved by including one or two chapters reflecting on the limits of the medialization of science.

The editors deserve credit for having collected together so many interesting chapters on this topic, but also for bringing the German tradition of science communication studies, based more or less on Niklas Luhmann’s systems theory, and, like Luhmann’s own writings, mostly published in German, to an international audience. The systems approach is complemented by a number of articles that operationalize the concept of medialization at the level of actors: scientists, journalists and others involved will attempt to interpret and structure the process of medialization in different ways. Consequently, there are several possible outcomes of the process of medialization, contingent upon circumstances in which specific science–media relationships are being enacted.

The medialization of the sciences since the 1990s has been accompanied by a medialization of public understanding of science research; at least if articles published in this journal serve as an indicator of the field. The recent *PUS* bibliography shows that articles about media coverage have gone up from 27 per cent in the 1992–2001 period, to 49 per cent between 2002 and 2010. In my opinion, there is little doubt that we are witnessing a self-reinforcing process: the perceived increased importance of the mass media in the sciences results in an increasing number of studies of the sciences’ media connection, which again boosts the perceived importance of mass media attention and legitimacy, and so on.