

Reviews

Nicolae Frigioiu

Political Anthropology

Tritonic Publishing House, 2009

This book offers the reader information about political anthropology in an objective manner. The first chapter resembles a dictionary because of the vast amount of definitions. Fundamental concepts like ethnography, ethnology, social anthropology, cultural anthropology, physical anthropology are explained here. Moreover, this introductory part offers information about the role that anthropology plays within the domain of political sciences.

An interesting excerpt is the one which offers explanations to the evolution of mankind across time, to the biological changes that mankind went through, changes that constitute the difference between humans and all other species. From here on, the author tries to show that it was the biological imperfection itself that caused the evolution of mankind, giving humans the determination to overcome obstacles in hostile and perilous environments. To sustain his theory, the author brings forth arguments pertaining to the realm of changes in the Earth's climate and geography, changes that mankind adapted to.

There is also reference to the Paleolithic, Mesolithic and Neolithic Eras and their anthropological significance is stressed upon.

The book also deals with the main steps in the development of political anthropology, mentioning previous scholars who tackled the subject and their most important scientific works. One of them is, as would be expected, *The Origin of Species*, by Charles Darwin. The founders of this domain and their personal contributions are presented chronologically and placed in a political and cultural context.

The numerous arguments and countless details that the author offers, make it easy for even a novice to understand the main theories and currents that have contributed to the development of anthropology: evolutionism, culturalism, functionalism, structuralism, diffusionism etc. We are then acquainted in broad terms with the concept of aggressiveness, from a psychological point of view. Only after a thorough enumeration of the theories and opinions of several specialists in this area does the author go on presenting things from a political point of view. The reader discovers that aggressiveness can be caused by political factors – one of the examples given is that of nationalism, that has manifested itself increasingly in the second half of the 20th century.



Using the same rigorous style, the author analyses and describes political terrorism over an entire chapter, with a special focus on the profile of the ‘woman terrorist’. He sums up the various explanations that have appeared throughout time concerning the involvement of women in terrorist activities. He then goes on to present the intercultural conflict. He explains this phenomenon from a political perspective, but also from the valuable perspective of social sciences.

The chapter concerning the genesis and the evolution of the state is extremely well documented and the information is given gradually. Even the definition and concept of state are dealt with in a very meticulous manner. The author examines closely the characteristics of the historic state forms, underlining the existing differences between the 3 types of state: the ancient oriental, ancient Rome, ancient Greece and the medieval state.

The final chapter deals with rituals and political communication and is abundant in examples. Whereas in the first half of the book the approach was mostly theoretical, with countless definitions for a better understanding, towards the end of the book many examples are used. They help the reader identify and decipher certain gestures from the political sphere. The gestures are solemn, apparently meaningless, but as the author says, they are actually rules of social conduct with a precise function for the political regime and for political order. The examples stem from historical events that we are all familiar with, events celebrated by political leaders through certain rituals. The author helps us decode these rituals and see them in a more revealing light.

In the end, the author shifts his focus on the philosophical spectrum and quotes Mircea Eliade on his idea that the world’s events are cyclical and mankind’s hope for evolution can only be achieved through creation.

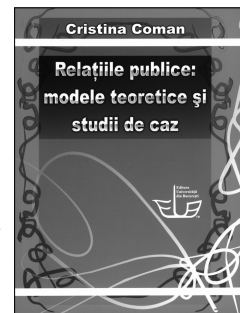
Meda Mucundorfeanu

Cristina Coman

*Public Relations: theoretical models and case studies*¹
Bucharest University Publishing House, 2009

The author of the book *Public Relations: theoretical models and case studies*, Cristina Coman, presents the field of Public Relations in a very complex way. In the present study, the author *investigates all the theoretical constructions in this field*.

The theories used are theories borrowed from disciplines of the sciences, sociology, philology, economy and psychology, and others, built in the field of communication sciences specifically for the system of Public Relations. Some such examples could be, *subjective expected utilities theory, framing theory, fantasy theory, information integration theory, power*



1 Our translation. Original Romanian title: *Relațiile publice: modele teoretice și studii de caz*

resources theory, taken from the sphere of social sciences, and the others, *reinforcement theory*, *rules theory*, *uses and gratifications theory*, *spiral of silence theory* etc. taken from the sphere of communication sciences. Cristina Coman tries to find some theoretical constructs used in PR. The two chapters of the book are dedicated to this aspect. The third chapter speaks about corporate social responsibility (CSR). We can find information about history, theories, arguments and critiques, the role of PR in CSR, the relations between mass media and CSR.

In the next chapter, the author makes a short presentation of PR in Romania. We will find concepts like institutionalization and professionalization, and also some examples regarding the departments and specializations in Public Relations. Although they have a short history here, public relations have evolved rapidly in Romania as an activity field, as number of departments in state institutions and commercial enterprises, as a profession, as an academic discipline.

The last two chapters refer to the risk and crisis communication. In the beginning some general aspects about these communication fields are presented. The author chose to give us examples, case studies from Danone, the airplane accidents from Timisoara and Baia Mare. So we can also see analyzed which the steps to be taken in such situations are.

The book is recommended for all the people who want to discover this interesting field, the field of Public Relations, for practitioners and, of course, for students, who can use the book as introduction into this world.

Ioana Lepădatu

Loredana Ivan

The Most Important 20 Seconds

*Competence in nonverbal communication*²

Tritonic Publishing House, 2009

Loredana Ivan's study *The most important 20 seconds; Competence in nonverbal communication* consists of five chapters. Its various and complex bibliography of Romanian and English titles gives the readers an insight into the world of nonverbal communication.

To start with, we can easily come up with the question: why a new work about the nonverbal communication? The answer is to be found in the present volume.

The content of the study evolves gradually, starting with pure theoretical considerations on the main concepts and definitions of communication in general and of the nonverbal one in particular. In the last two chapters, the author shows



2 Our translation. Original Romanian title: *Cele mai importante 20 de secunde Competența în comunicare nonverbală*

practical aspects of the latter form of communication – the nonverbal – which appears to be tremendously interesting.

In the first chapter, Ivan enumerates definitions and models of communication from Lasswell's scheme to Shannon, Weaver, Gerbner, Melvin de Fleur, Newcomb and others. Great importance is given to Roman Jakobson's model. Stating consistent arguments, the author considers that the six functions of the language recognized in linguistics can well apply in nonverbal communication. The chapter ends with the description of Berlos model which underlines the communication competences of both the transmitter and the receiver.

The second chapter unfolds the main explicative paradigms of the nonverbal behavior, namely the structural, sociologic, ethologic and psychosocial paradigm, and concentrates on the functions and forms of the nonverbal communication. The descriptions are backed up with suggestive well-chosen images.

The next chapter focuses on the collocation "competence in nonverbal communication". The author defines and stresses out the determinant factors of the nonverbal behavior, particularly the individual and cultural factors. Intending to measure the individual's competence in decoding the nonverbal elements, Loredana Ivan displays the advantages and disadvantages of the PONS test, used and recognized at international scale.

The last two chapters state useful theories that might support scientific research in the field of nonverbal communication. Therefore, the paradigm of the American researcher N. Ambady called "thin slices" is discussed in detail. Ivan suggestively labels this paradigm with an original formula: "paradigm of the 20 seconds". So, the author elegantly gets to explain the meaning of the book's title itself. In the end, she also clears up how the paradigm of the "thin slices" can be used at different levels on the basis of experiments.

The book's style is clear, fascinating and easy to perceive. The theoretical parts are always accompanied by relevant up-to-date examples, as well as images. The choice of narrative and images is definitely representative of the nonverbal communication. The promising title of the opus displays rich contents, while it is addressed not only to the scientific researchers in communication, but also to those passionate by the "silent language" (R. Birdwhistell) of gestures and mimicry: especially the ones willing to learn ways to evaluate the individual abilities of coding and decoding nonverbal messages.

An appealing linguistic invitation to discovery and thinking...

Veronica Câmpian