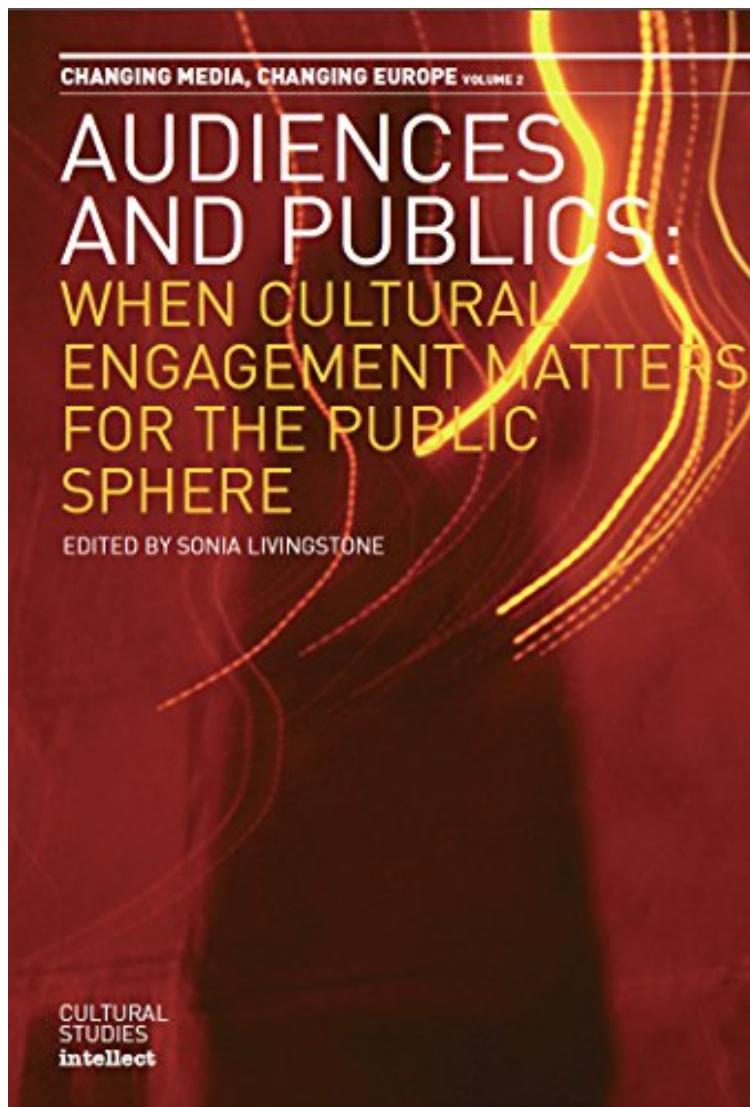


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In today's thoroughly mass-mediated world, audiences and publics are, of course, composed of the same people. Yet social science traditionally treats them quite differently. Indeed, it is commonplace to define audiences in opposition to the public: in both popular and elite discourses, audiences are denigrated as trivial, passive, individualised, while publics are valued as active, critically engaged and politically significant.

**About the Author** Sonia Livingstone is professor of social psychology in the Department of Media and Communications at the London School of Economics and Political Science.