The (re)production of publicness and privateness in the liquid modern society[1]

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SUMMARY

Internetization probably represents the greatest transformation in communication technology since the invention of the alphabet and writing. For the first time in history, the mutual determinacy of publicness and privateness has been materialized within a single technological platform. The unprecedented growth of public, private and hybrid modes of communication on the web and in social media indicates that the internet use can significantly influence the future of publicness, privateness, and political processes at large. The article discusses new modes of relationship developed in the integrated public-private communication networks (IPPCN), such as privacity and publicy, and new avenues for the formation of the IPPCN-based publics.

Internatization and liquefaction of society

The development of global digital interconnectivity powered by the internet – a process I term "internetization"[2] – probably represents the greatest transformation in communication technology since the invention of the alphabet and writing, which marked the transition from barbarism to civilization. Internetization denotes not only the interactivity of the global communication infrastructure with its continuous technological innovations, but also a series of new social and cultural phenomena challenging traditional hierarchies and boundaries in society. Today,

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integrated communications provide a unified user interface and user experience across multiple communication channels inside a single platform, and integrate real-time and non-real-time communications (e.g. an individual can send a message on one medium and receive it on another one at any point of time). They expand personal contacts, presence and mobility capacities to all devices a person has at his or her disposal and thus create the Integrated Public-Private Communication Network (IPPCN).

IPPCNs are created along the lines of cultural and political interests, generational affinities and specific issues within and across regional, national, and supranational boundaries, entangled in economic power relations and governmental structures. They are fundamentally reshaping the nature of work and economy worldwide. The production and (productive) consumption of huge amounts of information and data as the most important resource, "the new oil" of the 21st century, raise "fundamental questions about privacy, property, global governance, human rights" and demand "a new way of thinking about individuals" (WEF, 2011: 5; see also Rubinstein, 2013). IPPCN opens new avenues in the (re)production of public and private life, including public opinion, the public sphere, and protection of privacy, and challenges social scientists to reconsider democratic potentials of (new) communication technologies.

One could (mistakenly) believe that internetization is not a new phenomenon only by underestimating the multiple ways in which all aspects of human life, from the workplace to education, leisure and politics, are affected on global scale by the omnipresence of the internet. Internetization has transformed communication processes with consequences that affect online and offline universes, private and public environments, to weave them inextricably together in the "liquid-modern society" (Bauman, 2015). The internet has reduced the time-space distance between places linked into it to zero and decreased the amount of time required to conduct social exchanges. Moreover, it has been completely integrated with the 'pre-internet' modes of activities, to the degree that the sense of its distinction from the ways we traditionally get things done has largely disappeared.

Communication technologies have always produced ambivalent consequences for individuals and societies, each an "expansion of men's powers to learn and to exchange ideas and experiences" and "a new opportunity for a new method of government or a new opportunity for trade" (Williams, 1962/1976: 10). Since the advent of writing, every new communication technology – from print to radio, television and the internet – was lauded as the bright beginning of a new era, and criticized that it would destroy the glories of the past culture. All new communication technologies were seen as potentially democratic, because they could reduce the cost and in-

crease the speed of information dissemination, the number of available communication channels or media, and possibly content diversity. The internet significantly enhanced two other important, potentially democratizing features: helping communities to stay in touch with each other, and establishing forms of communication that transcend boundaries between private and public, interpersonal and mass communication (Arterton, 1987: 29-38).

Yet new communication technologies also have the potential of being abused, as Williams warns us, for political or commercial ends. The development of IPPCN is not an exception. Algorithmic communication tools, the internet of things, smart TV and phones, and other smart connected products have not only the potential to enhance the colonization of daily life and reinforce institutions of authority – particularly by making user data continually available to the manufacturer and thus invalidating the assumed exclusive ownership of the buyer/user –, but also to smudge the distinction between human and computer capacities and operations. They generate major changes by loosening technological boundaries that once separated the private from the public, requiring renegotiations of the meaning of publicness and privateness among the people. The permeability of formerly solid boundaries between specific domains of human life regulated by specific regimes also raises important questions of who and how will control these regulatory regimes in the IPPCN-based "liquid-modern society."

Issues of publicness and technologies of control have been central in the development of communication technologies since the early newspaper history and fights against censorship, and they became ever more important with each advancement in communication technologies that followed. They emerged in the very first conceptualizations of the public in the 18th century, closely connected with the social significance of the press with its editors and journalists as the "public opinion tribunal" (Bentham, 1791). Ever since, mass media have been considered the central pillars of the public sphere constitutive to democratic governance, and journalistic discourse a specific regulatory regime of the public sphere.

Internetization of social and political environments has deeply affected the articulation of the basic critical-normative functions of public communication related to the formation of publics and public opinion, once specifically attributed to the mass media. These functions refer to (1) the making visible developments in the socio-political environment with important long-term consequences for citizens (as conceptualized by Dewey), (2) providing citizens access to the media needed for their "public use of reason" (Kant), (3) conducting surveillance of political and economic rulers and legitimizing their decisions (Bentham), and (4) mediating between the rulers and the ruled (Marx), acknowledging disagreements and cultivating reflexive publicity. They need to be reconceptualized and (re)affirmed, and adopted by the mass media

and new modes of many-to-many communication in order to overcome the contemporary democratic deficit.

An increasing amount and diversity of user- and computer-generated contents – used by the media and bypassing the media – challenges these (normative) functions of public communication, as the mass media and journalists who ought to (and used to) perform them may be facing not only a loss of autonomy in the IPPCN but also the demise of the journalistic profession as we used to know it. The breadth of these changes is reflected in the prevailing belief of journalists that they would no longer be able to carry out their work without social media, which are also supposed to undermine traditional journalistic values (CISION, 2016), and in the news industry projection that 75 percent of its content will be robot-created by 2020 (Schaefer, 2016).

These changes bring us to the question of whether the emancipatory potential of the internet-based IPPCN is strong enough to enhance new democratic platforms cultivating reflexive publicity, the Kantian "public use of reason?" Or has internetization blended publicness and privateness in a way that not only would not allow us to reach "the final stage of democracy," but may also seriously compromise our rights and freedoms?

A major feature of internetization is the liquefaction of the boundary between publicness and privateness. With the IPPCN, the relation between privateness and publicness has moved, for the first time in history, from the conceptual to the *material*: the IPPCN links publicness and privateness together directly, inside a single technological platform. In a platform for both private and public interactions, the difference is now diffused through the production of hybrid public-private forms of communicative actions, situations, actors, and digital intermediaries. By integrating private and public communication, the internet has interconnected traditionally separated modes of communication (from one-to-one to many-to-many) and types of content (text, image, audio, video, and voice) on a *global* scale. This new world of communication, "mass self-communication," as Castells (2007: 248) calls it, has far more significant long-term consequences for individuals and society than any other previous revolutionary communication technology. Not only is, what used to be called the private sphere, not regarded private anymore. Formerly clearly-demarcated boundaries between private and public discussion of personal and collective concerns in hierarchically-organized political communication are now porous; even the human needs and rights to privacy and free public expression (to act publicly) coalesce into each other, as for example in the 'right of publicity.'

> *Hitherto distinct boundaries between public and private have become increasingly unstable and bedevilled by ambiguities between first-person experiences and universal concerns. ... Previously conceived in terms of linear*

transmission, the political communication system has become porous, and the democratic project, once limited to a clearly delineated 'public sphere', seeps into innumerable areas of social interaction that cannot be easily categorised as public or non-public, political or non-political (Coleman, 2017: 59–60).

Immense technological and social changes in the period of globalization also challenge the explanatory power and validity of theorizations of privateness and publicness historically rooted in entirely different social and technological conditions. There is a need to reconceptualize the traditional concepts of publicness and privateness to fully capture changes in the public and private modes of relationships among people created in and by internetization, and to explore the affordances of IPPCN to increase people's political engagement and develop participatory forms of political democracy.

Publicness and privateness figure as "basic notions" of social life (Dewey, 1927: 12–13). The idea that "there are things that need to be hidden and others that need to be displayed publicly if they are to exist at all" (Arendt, 1989: 73) is universal and transcends cultural boundaries.[3] The distinction between publicness and privateness should be considered *"the great dichotomy,"* according to Bobbio (1989: 1), because it is suitable "for dividing a world into two spheres which together are exhaustive" and, at the same time, "mutually exclusive." Yet the idea of mutual exclusivity of publicness and privateness, which seemed irrefutable in the pre-digital era, can hardly be justified today. The internet blurred the boundary between the two spheres that was consolidated two centuries ago by the emergence of the bourgeois public, which was brought about by the new technology of printing and clearly separated from the private sphere. Nevertheless, maintaining boundaries between the public and private spheres, and enhancing their autonomy, remains essential to preserving human freedom and is constitutive to democratic governance, both of which are fundamental notions in western political thought.

The universality of the concepts 'publicness' and 'privateness' suggests that the distinction between the two concepts *cannot be unique* to modern societies. Throughout human history, culturally, morally, and politically defined *boundaries* and *interaction* between showing and hiding, between visible and invisible, between external and internal, between disclosure and discretion, between public and private have existed at the personal and societal level. This is not to say that the social significance of public and private life and the boundaries that separated them remained unchanged. Quite to the contrary, in the last two centuries, they have been changed significantly, and have been made politically and economically relevant mainly due to the emergence of mass media. With the internet, these changes be-

came even more profound, "a new battleground in modern societies, a contested terrain where individuals and organizations wage a new kind of information war, a terrain where established relations of power can be challenged and disrupted, lives damaged and reputations sometimes lost" (Thompson, 2011: 49).

Publicness and privateness are opposed but complementary to each other, as they are both closely linked with actions aiming to control our relationships with others by managing information access and visibility thresholds. In Aristotle's early conceptualization of household (*oikos*) as the basic social unit and ideal-typical realm of privacy opposed to the public domain of political agency (*polis*), housekeeping included duties toward society and imposed by society. Public transactions coexist with private ones because they both have, by their very nature, a social component (Splichal, 2006; 2016b). The quintessential difference between publicness and privateness is, following Dewey's distinction between the public and private, based on the perceived consequences of social transactions rather than specific qualities of a situation or personal motives (Splichal, 2016a). A transaction is private if its consequences are confined to only those directly engaged; if the consequences extend beyond those directly involved, the transaction is by its very nature public (Dewey, 1927/1991: 12ff). When transactions have long-term and important consequences for those not directly involved, there arises a need to establish regulatory and controlling mechanisms and institutions, eventually the state – in contrast to privacy that does not need any external regulatory mechanisms, but necessitates privacy actions and public protection but did not need, until recently, any external regulation. The social bond between publicness and privateness is so strong that it is often difficult to identify strictly private human actions in the sense that (1) the consequences of interpersonal transactions are controlled entirely by those directly involved and (2) no direct or indirect consequences whatsoever of 'private' actions would affect other people.

Publicness refers to a specific quality or "mode of relationship among people" (Calhoun, 2013: 72) based on transparency, visibility and access, being in the sight of observers, made to be (or can be) seen, heard, or accessed by everyone, or at least by many. The public, public sphere and publicity are essential for collective self-understanding processes and constitutive to democratically organized societies. Publicity (re)produces connectivity, which makes it constitutive of publics and the public sphere, and thus essential for any conceptualization of democracy, particularly deliberative democracy. The communication infrastructure and its social organization (public or private, for-profit or non-commercial service, etc.) define conditions and ways of access (who can communicate with whom), modes of access (audio, video), and modes of communication (from one-to-one to many-to-many). As Dewey (1927: 114) argued, "technology employed so as to facilitate the rapid

and easy circulation of opinions and information, and so as to generate constant and intricate interaction far beyond the limits of face-to-face communities" was the main enabler of "modern state-unity."

The development and social use of communication infrastructure are culturally, politically, legally and economically regulated, coordinated and eventually even censored, for political or commercial purposes. "What is allowed to become public and what is kept private in any given transaction will depend on what needs to be taken into collective consideration for the purposes of the transaction and what would, on the contrary, disrupt it if introduced into the public space" (Nagel, 2002: 12). The question of 'What' is directly related to the question of 'Who': *Who* is in control of politics of visibility? *Who* decides on what has to be seen and what has to be put out of public sight?

Contemporary controversies around the relationship between the new communication infrastructure and possibilities for participation in public communication committed to the public good are rooted in the Dewey-Lippmann debate on the nature, competences, legitimacy and efficacy of 'the public' in 1920s. Many studies have advanced Dewey's idea of "the public" (Dryzek, 2010, Jacobs et al., 2009, Chambers, 2012, Keane, 2013, Calhoun, 2013, Coleman, 2017). However, despite an immense potential of publicity attributed to the internet, concerns about limitations to the democratic potential of publicness and publics persist, but there is hardly any discussion how to overcome them.

Privateness, on the other hand, refers to what is hidden, confidential, invisible to others and only restrictively accessible. Privacy provides the space that protects and makes the individual fit to appear in the public realm. Moreover, privacy is a necessary condition for an individual to exist as a human being. Being human implies singularity and commonality, individuality and sociability, privateness and publicness, which are all constitutive of human nature and dignity. Without privacy, our lives would resemble the life of slaves and serfs, who were afforded little or no privacy; the places they lived (which they were not allowed to own) and their personal belongings, even their lives themselves were constantly under the eyes of their owners and masters, and thus utterly dehumanized.

On the other hand, privacy may also have negative implications. Under the veil of privacy, domination, exploitation, violence, tyranny, censorship and other abuses of power, unlawful and unethical activities in families, corporations and organizations can be kept away from public monitoring and sanctions. There were good reasons why Bentham considered privacy "one of the most mischievously efficient instruments of despotism," and required that "on no occasion to give to privacy any extent beyond what the particular nature of the occasion absolutely requires" (Bentham, 1812/1843: 28).

Traditionally, privacy was (regarded as) natural – "as a given bedrock or substratum of taken-for-granted experiences and meanings" (Keane 2013, 33) – and technology-free: no particular technology was needed for hiding oneself temporarily from others, e.g. protecting oneself from public gaze or state interference in one's private lodging. Neither of that is true anymore. If in the past, "the four walls of one's private property offered the only reliable hiding place from the common public world, not only from everything that goes on in it, but also from its very publicity, from being seen and being heard" (Arendt, 1989: 71), those times have definitively ended with the internet, if not even long before.

Privacy does not imply social isolation. It is (re)produced in a broader value system that regulates social behavior. In Aristotle's conceptualization of *oikos*, "human beings should conceive privacy not as a sphere that should (at best) accommodate common opinion, but as activities that *cultivate virtue* and *discount common opinion*" (Swanson, 1992: 7, emphasis added; see also Calhoun, 2013). While often also closely related to 'suspicious' secrecy, privacy is considered a safeguard of individuals and societies against arbitrary and unjustified use of power and "a necessary condition for democracy" (Boehme Nessler, 2016: 222). The right and moral obligation of journalists – professional intermediaries between publicness and privateness – to protect privacy of their sources and conceal their identities as professional secrecy, perhaps best indicate how precious privacy is also for public life. Without keeping a source's identity private, not only would their personal fate be endangered, but also important stories would be kept out of the eyes of the public.

New modes of relationship: privacity and publicy

By folding publicness into privateness, and privateness into publicness, internetization made the traditional borderline between once clearly separated circles of publicness and privateness increasingly blurry, which problematizes traditional concepts and experiences of publicness and privateness. It has become common that our relationships with other people are only rarely marked by private face-to-face interactions and 'normally' take place in the IPPCN-environment. Even our interactions with the physical world are often IPPCN-mediated, with remote cameras and microphones, GPS navigation utilities, sensors and interfaces, autonomous vehicles and other digitally conveyed 'extensions' of human bodies and faculties. New private/public environments are being created, making it necessary to reconsider and reconceptualize not only privateness and publicness but many of the most basic categories related to them in social sciences, such as 'mass communication', 'mass media', 'interpersonal communication', 'social network', or 'advertising' and 'propaganda'.

Whereas for centuries, personal privacy was seen as a feature that simply existed and could be taken for granted (but it was commonly agreed that it deserved some protection), now it is something we need to *act* on behalf of, to create and to have, as for example to control access to our (meta)data (Jensen & Helles, 2017: 23). For more than two centuries, publicity and the public (and more recently the public sphere) were 'the stars' of academic disputes and normative regulations to enhance and protect public communication, whereas privacy was kept in the shadow. Now it seems that almost the opposite is the case. As Jeff Jarvis observed, "It used to be that publicity had to be paid-for. Soon, privacy may have to be paid-for."[4]

The controversial conceptualizations of the public-private relationship resulting from the emergence of the privacy issues can be perhaps best exemplified with the recent discussions of the 'right of publicity.' The right of publicity was conceptualized by Judge Jerome Frank in 1953 to distinguish the right of publicity from other privacy rights by focusing on the economic interests involved, as opposed to personal interests characteristic of the right to privacy, and first enacted by the U.S. Supreme Court in 1977 (Faber, 2015). Yet the concept is often misinterpreted, partly because its (legal) definition and recognition vary from country to country, and partly because the term misleadingly alludes to publicness rather than privateness. The right of publicity is conceived of as the right of individuals to control the use of their personal names, images, likenesses, and other facets of one's identity, and being protected against their commercial exploitation without permission or compensation (but not necessarily against the use for public purposes). It is mostly not considered a 'personal right' but rather a kind of property right, so that its validity can survive the death of the person involved ('postmortem right of publicity'). However, the right of publicity is not only the right to profit from your own identity; it also implies the protection of individuals against the privacy intrusion (intrusion upon physical solitude; public disclosure of private facts) and the 'right to a good name' (against depiction in a false light and misappropriation of name and likeness). In effect, the right of *publicity* protects material and immaterial *private property* and personal *privacy*.

Controversies on the right of publicity arise from the fact that it is a Janus-faced right: it binds in a relation two – private and public – domains and actions, referring to the (violation of) personal privacy right, private property right, and instrumental publicity. The reference to publicity is focused on a specific activity – named 'publicity' – in which a private condition or state is made public. This kind of publicity is usually aimed at promoting private interests in public and thus instrumental rather than reflexive. Yet even so, the substance of the right of publicity is not in publicity but in (preventing) actions that invade privacy by making private conditions public without the authorization of private person(s) affected, which brings privacy

invasions close – in principle – to enslavement. In essence, the right of *publicity* protects material and immaterial *private* property and personal (but also corporate) *privacy*; it does not endorse or protect publicness, but it does '*publicy*'.

To address these Janus-faced actions and their contradictory consequences, I propose introducing two new concepts, *publicy* and *privacity* (cf. Table 1) to grasp the smooth passages from privateness to publicness and *vice versa*. Such passages are not entirely new phenomena. Opinion polls 'magically' transform anonymous private opinions into 'public opinion' (Splichal, 2012b). In his largely forgotten essay on public opinion published in 1940, Tom Harrisson saw the British pub as a place where "private opinions emerged as public opinions." Likewise, we can think of the internet as a 'digital pub', as a hub potentially interconnecting not only private and public *opinions* but expressions of *all forms of 'holding for true'* (*Führwahrhalten*) – opining, believing and knowing (Kant, 1781/1952: 241) – as well as (subjective and objective) *doubts*. The 'digital pub' is less like the old neighborhood pub in this respect: the need to risk expressing opinion dissolves into fleeting likes and dislikes, expands into societal and transnational symbolic engagements although, in some countries, this activity occurs at the peril of personal safety and even existence.

Table 1. Four main conceptual dimensions of liquefaction
        of the public-private dichotomy

Agency	publicity	privacity
Principal actor	the public	individual
Quality	publicness	privateness
Situation, condition	publicy	privacy

We need the words 'publicy'[5] and 'privacity,' however awkward they are, to indicate new modes of relationship among people, new modes of agency and new venues of communication brought about by IPPCNs, which are neither strictly public nor strictly private. Technology and economics assisted people to form new kinds of communities – political, economic, or cultural; material and imagined – that go beyond the face-to-face communication and personal transactions but are not entirely public. In a personal public-private communication network built in the 'second universe' of the IPPCN, the people we connect with are seen as members of a community, and this community *belongs* to the one who created it – the internet user. In contrast, in a community of the 'first universe,' in *Gemeinschaft* as Tönnies defined it, the opposite is the case: individuals belong to 'their' community; they are subjugated to it.

If 'privacy' indicates specific conditions in which a person does not allow being observed or disturbed by other people (such as in personal 'right to privacy'), it is important to complement this character with 'publicy,' a newly emerging situation in which a person allows or invites other people to engage in a 'community' that (s)he has established online. Complementary to privacy in the sense of being alone, publicy refers to what Bauman (2015) described as a "collection of loners who are never alone" because they are always connected. It is still the domain of one's undivided sovereignty, but it is widely open to external gaze – a personal quasi-public or "proto-public" (Splichal, 2012a), in an "area of social interaction that cannot be easily categorized as public or non-public" (Coleman, 2017: 60). Internet users often express themselves more openly in 'publicy' than in the traditionally separated public and private domains as a consequence of the *online disinhibition effect* created by dissociative anonymity, invisibility, asynchronicity, solipsistic introjection, dissociative imagination, and minimization of authority (Suler, 2004: 321). These new areas of private publicness and public privateness are the places where the bulk of contemporary online interactions occur. They are based on limited transparency, visibility and access – certainly meant to be seen, heard, or accessed by many, but not by everyone. Yet this new mode of many-to-many communication does not help to overcome the contemporary democratic deficit; even the contrary may be the case.

At the time when privacy is losing its attractiveness or is even being declared dead ("You have zero privacy anyway – get over it!"[6]), it is particularly important to complement 'publicity' with 'privacy,' referring to actions creating privacy and privateness. Two types of action-making, publicity and privacy, address the doubly reflexive character of internetization. The first is captured by a familiar term – *publicity,* which means the making of the private public (e.g. expressing private opinion in public or providing public surveillance), acting to attract public attention or (re)creating *publicness*. Its opposite – and complementary in terms of the two spheres which together are exhaustive – is *privacy*, or *counter-publicity*, which signifies actions of autonomous individuals toward cultivating, (re)creating and protecting intimacy, domesticity, and the space of individuality, aimed to control their self-presentation and protect themselves against arbitrary use of power. As publicity produces publicy, privacy produces and maintains privacy.

Privacy typically involves actions intended to conceal (parts of) identity in order to attain and protect one's privacy – in contrast to culturally *imposed* invisibility. "Hidden in plain sight, under the radar, or behind the scenes are people who strategically choose to conceal parts of their identity, their locations, or their life situation. Strategic invisibility resists an oppressive environment by disengaging from it until new possibilities arise" (Lollar, 2015: 298).

While originally conceptualized by Kant as the public use of reason, and constitutive of the public for Bentham, publicity later dissolved into any form of attracting

public attention for ideas, individuals, organizations, artefacts, goods and services, to become (almost) synonymous with promotion, advertising, or propaganda. Similarly to instrumental publicity generating "representative publicness" (Habermas) through propaganda, advertising, and public relations, privacity also includes instrumental actions suppressing the potentially public, which can even extend to the unmaking of the public back into the private (e.g. personalized computational propaganda substituting traditional mass propaganda, or protection of corporate privacy). Emancipatory forms of publicity and privacity largely remain normative ideals; in practice, instrumental forms prevail. Table 2 presents instances of emancipatory and instrumental modes of publicity and privacity.

Table 2. (Dys)functions of publicity and privacity

Agency	Purpose	
	Emancipatory	**Instrumental/Surveillance**
Publicity	information dissemination, deliberation	propaganda, advertising, PR
Privacity	control of self-presentation protection of privacy strategic invisibility	computational propaganda psychological operations protection of corporate privacy

The two types of agency, publicity and privacity, are performed by either individual or collective (including corporate) actors. The qualities they generate are – as *yin* and *yang* – distinguished by actual visibility or circulation – *publicness* – and invisibility or covertness – *privateness*. Privateness exists under conditions and situations for which the term, *privacy* is commonly used. Nowadays, the situation of *privacy* with its quality of *privateness* amounts to "something that we must act on to get back, rather than something we attain or retain by mere default"; this leads to the *personal(ized) venue of public life*, *publicy*, as "the new default" (NetLawMedia, 2012). Privacy is becoming a condition of latency, even marginality, overshadowed by acts of publicity that generate publicy, the personalized opposite of privacy (in contrast to the genuinely public "public sphere"). "Everything private is now done, potentially, in public – and is potentially available for public consumption. … The private is public, to be celebrated and consumed by countless 'friends' as well as casual 'users'" (Bauman and Lyon, 2013: 25, 19).

Yet neither privacy nor publicy assume given and complete conditions, but have to be permanently worked for. We can see both publicity and privacity more often managed by the *non-principal* resource- and powerful actors (commercial groups and political agents) than indigenous actors who alone can reproduce publicness

and privateness. Habermas' distinction between the loosely organized actors who "emerge from the public and take part in the reproduction of the public sphere itself," and much more resource- and powerful actors who "occupy an already constituted public domain in order to use it," thus merely "appearing before the public" to manipulate it (1992/1997: 375), also applies to priva(cit)y. Instrumental modes of privacity managed by corporations to protect 'corporate privacy' prevail over emancipatory (re)creation of personal privacy.

New avenues for the IPPCN-based publics: from newsworthiness to public-worthiness

Publicity, the mode of activity, and *publicness*, the quality of relationship, are integral to the constitution of *publics* and the *public sphere*. *Publicy*, the new phenomenon in the online universe is not a public and even less so a/the public sphere, yet it is directly linked to them. It refers to newly emerging situations in which a person allows or invites other people to engage in a 'community' that (s)he has established in the online universe. It is a kind of semi-public extension of privacy – more like a *club* than a *pub* – potentially connecting publicy with publics in the public sphere. In contrast, the public normatively refers to the collective subject of (all) individuals interested in, and discursively connected to follow and discuss some issue with important long-term consequences for a significant number of people. It is constituted by cooperative efforts of its members to bring about the commonly desired regulation of consequences.

At present, the internet's emancipatory power of creating new democratic platforms and fostering reflexive publicity or the Kantian "public use of reason" remains questionable. Internetization has enabled privatization of publicness and publicization of privacy in a way that may seriously compromise citizen rights and freedoms. Information abundance spurring processes of fragmentation and one-sided cognitive consonance tends to reduce opportunities for testing reliability of our knowledge and opinions. Monologues in fact-deprived and private digital rallies in fragmented pseudo publics prevail over stimulating discussion and conversation in the public sphere. Web communities, which shoot up like mushrooms after the rain in the internet, hardly transcend group particularisms based on ethnic, racial, gender, age, ideological, religious, professional, and other identities, partialities and interests. The eclipse of consequential, authentic publics – if they ever existed – is exacerbated as individual and corporate social network (prod)users (can) apply social access control tools to specify which users or groups of users have access to the uploaded content. The ('big') data that web users continually provide – in the form of clicks, likes, comments, downloads and uploads, shares, search, update status,

adding photos, friends, names, and data use permissions granting via apps – are tracked and transformed by Web analytics into a product that can be marketized and monetized. While customizing their services to users' tastes and preferences, the internetized companies may trap them in the 'filter bubbles' of like-minded people not exposed to information that could challenge or broaden their understanding but only to information and opinions reinforcing their preferences. The corporate capture of the IPPCNs imposes a highly asymmetric exchange advancing corporate rather than common interests and limits public debate on the exercise of economic power. "Corporations know almost everything about our activities but we know almost nothing about theirs. Disclosure of their strategies and intentions is highly selective and carefully massaged by public relations. The bases of the algorithms directing user activity are protected by intellectual property regimes and commercial confidentiality" (Murdock, 2017).

In an attempt to "develop a stronger theoretical grasp of the problems and potential of democratic publics," Calhoun (2013: 103) suggests that we should resist "three longings that color many accounts of the public sphere" (which in fact refer both to 'the public' and its infrastructure, the public sphere). "It is not subject to complete rational control … It is not possible to make public life an extension of community … And publicness cannot be neatly bounded by the limits of a public sphere, because publicness always has the capacity to transform the public itself." While admitting that publics cannot be completely 'rational,' and that publicness/publicity does not match the public sphere, publicy as an extension of privacy with the capacity to connect with a public can, hypothetically, facilitate and support public participation and debate over the issues with important long-term consequences for those (to be) involved in debates and beyond.

How publicness, public life, publics (and we should ad, publicy) are seen to be connected with/in the public sphere partly, and perhaps even mainly, depends on how these concepts are defined. The Habermasian term 'public sphere' introduced in the English translation of his *Strukturwandel* is still the source of misunderstandings and confusions, equating 'public(s)' with 'public sphere(s)' (cf. Bruns & Highfield, 2016: 59). In a very usable operationalization of the public, according to Habermas (1989: 249), Mills defined it in the following way: "In a public … virtually as many people express opinions as receive them. Public communications are so organized that there is a chance immediately and effectively to answer back any opinion expressed in public. Opinion formed by such discussion readily finds an outlet in effective action, even against – if necessary – the prevailing system of authority. And authoritative institutions do not penetrate the public, which is thus more or less autonomous in its operations" (Mills, 1956: 303–304).[7]

In Mills' perspective, the key question is, if/how new communication technologies can "facilitate maximum public participation and debate over the key issues" (Kell-

ner, 2014: 19) *effectively*? Of the four conditions outlined by Mills, which are essential to deliberative legitimization processes in complex societies, IPPCN can be deployed to help solve the issues of inclusiveness and autonomy, but much harder the issue of efficacy. At least in their idealized form, informal networks are symmetrical and decentralized, where as many people (can) express opinions as receive them, and any opinion expressed can be easily answered back or commented on, so that the traditional distinction between communicators (sources) and recipients melts down. By providing access to everyone, IPPCN may also be used to address the problem of legitimacy (Fraser, 2007), to the degree at least that it provides a socio-technological infrastructure for the public sphere in which the rulers and the ruled can discursively connect. It can also be employed to enable "citizens and whole organizations and networks to sound the alarm whenever they suspect that others are causing them harm, or that calamities are bearing down on their heads, in silence" (Keane, 2013: 241), which indicates a level of autonomy from authoritative institutions. The question remains whether it is possible to develop the existing communicative affordances of IPPCN's to increase the rational potential of publics, which is also a necessary condition for the fully fledged autonomy of publicy and publics. The evidence suggests that emancipatory potentials of the internet to create new democratic platforms of reflexive publicity inspired by the Kantian "public use of reason" are yet to be developed. The development of such platforms would offer an opportunity to 'test' the old Dewey's idea that only after secrecy is replaced by publicity and methods of communication and education are improved, we will be able to tell "how apt for judgment of social policies the existing intelligence of the masses may be" (Dewey, 1927/1991: 209).

Contemporary controversies around the relationship between the new communication infrastructure and possibilities for participation in public communication committed to the public good remind us of a similar debate almost a hundred years ago about whether the public is just a "phantom" (Lippmann), or if it can indeed act (Splichal, 1999). The main issue in that debate was the fate of the public – its nature, competences, legitimacy and efficacy. Lipmann cynically called the public a "phantom" and compared it with a "deaf spectator in the back row who ought to keep his mind on the mystery off there, but cannot quite manage to keep awake" (Lippmann, 1927: 13). Only experts could find effective solutions to problems, but not large-scale publics in public debates. In contrast, Dewey considered an actively involved public essential for democracy, as it emerges from discussions of important social consequences of transactions among individuals who did not take part in them, but were affected by them (Dewey, 1927/1954: 35). He admitted that the actual performance of publics was below normative expectations but this was not to say that publics could not get much stronger

if "secrecy, prejudice, bias, misrepresentation, and propaganda as well as sheer ignorance are replaced by inquiry and publicity" (Dewey, 1927: 209).

Numerous pre-internet experiments and case studies with – particularly local and cable – television were designed to explore the possibility of using communication technologies to increase people's political engagement and develop participatory forms of political democracy (Coleman, 2017: 49-51). They included community radio, telephone conferencing, televoting, two-way cable TV, which are now all part of the integrated public-private communication network based on the internet. The common thread running through those studies in the 1970s and 1980s was to consider what forms of political participation could emerge from an imaginative use of (new) communication technologies. In essence, they followed Dewey's (1927: 143) claim that, "the idea of democracy is a wider and fuller idea than can be exemplified in the state even at its best," which is why we have constantly to return to the idea of democracy itself to "criticize and re-make its political manifestations" (Dewey, 1927: 144). Ideas are decisive, but only as long as they are connected with, and validated against specific, given and potential historical circumstances, material resources, technological developments, and social and political actors and movements.

Many studies advanced Dewey's idea of 'the public' through an empirical analysis of how and where citizens talk, discuss, and deliberate with each other "on public issues that affect the communities in which they live" (Jacobs et al., 2009: 3). In 1988, Fishkin designed the famed "deliberative polling experiment" – a social science experiment combined with elements of public education – which has been conducted over seventy times in 24 countries by to date (Fishkin, 2009). These studies were primarily interested in whether citizens are in a position to make informed judgments and how they come to their opinions (Chambers, 2012: 56). Findings of those studies echo Dewey's conclusion of 1927 that, "The democratic public is still inchoate and not organized." When addressing the question of what steps can and should be taken to bring down the deliberative deficit, to enhance legitimacy and, hopefully, effectiveness of democratic process, Dewey's "intellectual instrumentalities for the formation of an organized public" – better education, distribution of knowledge and interpersonal communication – are widely recognized as potentially the most effective remedies, but there is hardly any discussion of how and where to 'get' those 'remedies'.

These issues are as relevant today as they were in the beginning of the 20th century, now significantly associated with the internet and the declining trust in traditional media, governments, political parties and many other national and transnational institutions. Despite an immense potential to entice social changes and personal behavior attributed to the internet, and beliefs that internetization broadens the venues

for communication without restraints, which implies that "*democratic politics* can flourish" (Keane, 2013: 221), serious concerns about limitations to the democratic potential of publicness and publics, which dominated in the former century, do not cease to persist. There are still concerns that the public "cannot quite manage to keep awake" (Lippmann) when faced with complex and specialized policy issues, and that it is constrained by the commercial and political interests of those in power. Whereas Tönnies (1922) conceived of public opinion as a complex form of social will in society (*Gesellschaft*) *opposed* to religion in community (*Gemeinschaft*), the role of religion in the public sphere today can be compared (and compatible) with that of public opinion, not least because they both make the boundary between publicness and privateness permeable. Exciting possibilities of interaction on a larger scale and over longer distances, followed by the ideas of transnational public spheres and publics, are confronted with a considerable increase in the extent of large-scale surveillance and intrusion of privacy. Normative requirements of a public to be a *legitimate* forum for citizens' deliberation, generating an *efficacious* public opinion (Fraser, 2007) are also challenged by the processes of globalization. Critics of the global democratic deficit argue that globalization sacrificed democratic politics to the profitability of global economic transactions: it shook economic security and social equalities, and weakened citizens' participation in decision-making and democratic institutions once established within democratic political systems of nation-states (Splichal, 2009).

Access to information on transactions with potentially important long-term consequences for those not involved is the fundamental precondition for a public to emerge. In the anarchic online environment, citizens have to function as their own gatekeepers and editors in order to acquire and disseminate relevant information, but many are not able to perform that task, which can even lead to information anxiety. Internet users may combine dozens of information and communication utility activities from searching answers to specific questions and news to email, open forums, blogs and microblogs, chat sites, news groups, and social networking sites. It is not only the flood of incoming e-mail messages and website updates ('RSS feeds') that causes personal information overload; it is also the vast ocean of information in the world outside, which people feel compelled to explore in order to keep updated, and disinformation ('fake news') that is hard to distinguish from information. We are living in an "informational abundance," which also generated (an impression of) "a communicative liquefaction of politics" (Habermas, 2009: 153).

If information overload incites processes of fragmentation and one-directional cognitive consonance (Festinger, 1957), resulting in 'echo chambers' or 'filter bubbles,' often spurred by covert algorithms, such as Facebook's personalized news-feed or Google Personalized Search, it reduces opportunities to test the objective validity of

our knowledge and opinions, which is the condition of reflexive reasoning. As Kant's maxim of judgment demands, one has "to think from the standpoint of everyone else," detached from "the subjective personal conditions of his judgement, which cramp the minds of so many others, and reflects upon his own judgement from a universal standpoint" (Kant, 1790/1952: 519). The norm that opinions (and reasons thereof) should be publicly available and comprehensible is a constitutive characteristic of deliberative democracy (Gutmann & Thompson, 2004: 4). Without an aptitude to take "the standpoint of everyone else," a person may become separated from relevant information, dissenting opinions and reasons substantiating them, and thus not being able of making informed judgements.

Publicy as an online extension of privacy generated by personal modes of publicity and potentially connected with a public is a new kind of communicative relationship among people enabled by IPPCN. It both connects and separates public and private life of individuals in an unprecedented way constitutive of the 'second universe'. Yet this new mode of many-to-many communication does not suffice to overcome the contemporary democratic deficit; even the contrary could be the case.

Since democratic decision-making and control require knowledge and basic insights into politically relevant processes and outcomes (i.e. those with important long-term consequences for a significant number of people), a public complement to private personalized news-stream algorithms should be developed, to avoid negative consequences of the commercial use of algorithms diverting users from testing the objective validity of their opinions. The possibility of making a major breakthrough in this field has become possible thanks to revolutionary computer advances in natural language processing and machine learning.

In their seminal study of "how do 'events' become 'news'," Galtung and Ruge (1965: 65) identified twelve empirical "news factors" (such as negativity, personalization, cultural proximity, reference to elites, conflict etc.) that were conceived of as indicators of "*newsworthiness*" of events, which warrants reporting on them in a newspaper. The conceptualization of newsworthiness followed *The New York Times'* motto, "All the News That's Fit to Print": a content analysis of news reported in newspapers was conducted with the assumption that, if an event "becomes" printed news, it is newsworthy. Not surprisingly, many other "news factors" were extracted in later content analysis of news media in different countries.

By applying a different logic of the facilitating algorithm, we can conceptualize "*public-worthiness*" of events and processes to address the question, what events, processes and actors should be (able to be made) visible, and to whom? The public-worthiness algorithm should offer the internet users information on events and processes with potentially important long-term consequences. This new algorithm would be the exact opposite to the emerging robot-driven news production and dis-

semination software targeting users with customized news or generating automated news stories about niche or local topics, to be disseminated to many small audiences.

The idea of public-worthiness goes beyond the descriptive concept of newsworthiness, traditionally applied in the studies of news selection in the media, and includes four dimensions. Three dimensions of public-worthiness could be directly measured with AI tools: (1) news values or factors that determine how much prominence a news story or event is given on a global, regional, national or local scale, (2) the attention it is given by the internet users (popularity) globally, regionally, nationally, or locally, and (3) reliability and trustfulness of news sources, whereas (4) specific indicators of the "long-term important consequences" of events/processes/transactions reported will need to be manually generated at first but could be later generated in machine learning procedures. Such an algorithm would provide internet users with information based on their issue-related interests in the common good, rather than on what the so-called recommendation algorithms decide they 'would like' to see.

The emergence of (proto-) publics generated by the public-worthiness recommendation algorithm in social media would be a breakthrough for worldwide communication and defragmentation of the public sphere(s). Such a facilitating algorithm could stimulate internet users to effectively identify events and processes linking them together and thus motivate their public engagement even on a global scale. If the emerging online proto-publics will be stimulated to leverage public-worthy processes, they could convert themselves into a *genuine public* – a Deweyan "community" assuring that not only opinions are discussed among its members but also made visible to those with regulatory power, and thus (potentially) effectual.

It would be a delusion of technological determinism to say that technological possibilities of the internet or even an algorithm alone can introduce such changes. The seemingly emancipatory affordances of the internet and Artificial Intelligence have proved to be controversial at least. Despite an increased permeability between the various modes and domains of societal communication, we can hardly speak of democratization of communication, media and politics. The internetization and globalization of economy generate even a higher level of concentration of the internetized media than the traditional print and broadcast media have experienced in the past.

Even if there is an "emancipatory technological potential" in the internet, it is only its users as publics who can use new social networking platforms and tools to cultivate reflexive publicity and generate an effective public opinion. Which brings us back to Dewey's question of the development of "intellectual instrumentalities," such as social inquiry and publicity, as essential prerequisites "for the formation of an organized public."

NOTES

[1]   This is a much elaborated and extended version of my short article "Publicness – Privateness: Liquefaction of 'the Great Dichotomy" published in *Javnost – The Public*, 25(1–2).

[2]   The term 'internetization' was initially coined by Fortunati (2005), although Passaris (2006) is usually credited for it.

[3]   In China, for example, the distinctive characteristics of the concepts, public and private, are found in one of the dominant concepts shared by different schools of Chinese philosophy, 'yin-yang.' Yin, the passive principle in nature, symbolizes among other things what is covert, concealed or hidden, whereas its opposite, yang, the active principle, denotes open, overt forces.

[4]   https://www.slideshare.net/gleonhard/data-is-the-new-oil-publicy-is-the-new-privacy-futurist-speaker-gerd-leonhard

[5]   The invention of the term ''publicy'' belongs to Stowe Boyd (2009), who became famous for coining the term "hashtag" in 2007.

[6]   As expressed by the chief executive officer of Sun Microsystems, Scott McNealy, see: https://www.wired.com/1999/01/sun-on-privacy-get-over-it/

[7]   It is indeed unfortunate that, "although Habermas concludes *Transformations* with extensive quotes from Mills' Power Elite on the metamorphosis of the public into a mass in the contemporary media/consumer society, there has been little discussion of the significance of Mills' work for Habermas' analysis of the structural transformation of the public sphere" (Kellner, 2014: 25).

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(Re)produkcija javnosti i privatnosti u tekućem modernom društvu

Slavko Splichal

SAŽETAK

Internetizacija predstavlja vjerojatno najveću promjenu u komunikacijskoj teh-nologiji od izuma abecede i pisanja. Prvi puta u povijesti zajednička određenost javnost i privatnosti materijalizirana je na jednoj tehnološkoj platformi. Nevi-đen rast javnih, privatnih i hibridnih načina komuniciranja na internetu i u društvenim medijima pokazuje da korištenje interneta može značajno utjecati na budućnost javnosti, privatnosti i političkih procesa u cjelini. U ovom članku razmatraju se novi modeli odnosa razvijeni u Integriranim javno-privatnim ko-munikacijskim mrežama (IPPCN), kao što su "privacity" i "publicy", i nove putove za stvaranje publike koja se temelji na IPPCN-u.

Ključne riječi: internetizacija, javnost, publicy, privatnost, privacity, demokracija, IPPCN