

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <http://www.researchgate.net/publication/266139786>

The Meanings of Public Sphere: is there any democratic role for Internet?

CHAPTER · JANUARY 2011

DOI: 10.13140/2.1.1.1118.3364

DOWNLOADS

36

VIEWS

15

1 AUTHOR:

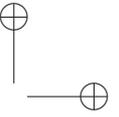


[João Carlos Correia](#)

Universidade da Beira Interior

110 PUBLICATIONS 38 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE



The Meanings of Public Sphere: is there any democratic role for Internet?

João Carlos Correia

Introduction

The concept of public sphere is being challenged by new interesting questions: what's the meaning of public sphere, today, in face of the changes introduced by Internet? Are those changes still compatible with the idea of publicity behind the conceptual classic models drawn by Habermas? Are still compatible with the strong notion and high normative demands that are implied in those models?

The aim of this text is to reflect on the connections among democratic deliberation and the role performed by online news media in a context of growing pluralism. In order to perform that reflection, we intend to develop a theoretical discussion on the limits of the classic concept of public sphere in face of the social *factum* consisting in the increasing fragmentation induced by digital media.

Today, most of political communication passes through expert communicators. This communicative division of labor threatens to undermine the quality of communication. Will the many-to-many communication possible with the Internet, helping to produce political situations in which communicative asymmetry can be mitigated, decreasing the gap between citizens and representatives?

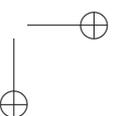
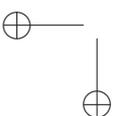
Communication and models of democracy

The relationship between the citizen, the state and the public sphere is a basic theoretical consideration and this can be traced back to the earlier days of the press.

Behind different conceptions of democracy we may find different conceptions of media's political role. Authors such as Dahlberg (2001b) and Christians, Glaser, McQuail, Nordenstreng and White (2010) established a correspondence between normative thinking about the media's democratic potential and distinct models of democracy: the *liberal individualist*, the *communitarian* and the *deliberative*.

At the central core of liberal theories (Berlin, 1990; Nozick, 1974) is a common belief based on the assumption that mostly individuals are motivated by self-interest rather than any conception of common good. According Habermas (1996: 21), "*in the liberal or Lockean view, the democratic process accomplishes the task of programming the government in the interest of society, where the government is represented*

Public Sphere Reconsidered. Theories and Practices, 37-50



as an apparatus of public administration, and society as a market-structured network of interactions among private persons.”

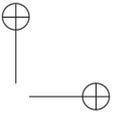
In some versions of the liberal individualism the identity between the public sphere and market goes even far. By conceiving democracy as a mechanism for choosing political elites in the competition between parties through voting, it equates to some extent, the political dynamics with the market game. Under this model, communication is primarily one-way, directed to obtain information that allows to formulate a rational individual choice.

Communitarians such as MacIntyre and Charles Taylor argued that the standards of justice must be found in forms of life and traditions of particular societies and hence can vary from context to context (Taylor 1985; MacIntyre, 1978, 1988). Consequently, communitarians emphasize the power of media to reinforce existing community ties as well as establish new ones.

With similarities with communitarian perspective, republicanism shares with it the same emphasis on common good. For Habermas, (1996: 21) in this view politics is “*conceived as the reflective form of a substantial ethical life, namely as the medium in which the members of some how solitary communities become aware of their dependence on one another, acting as full deliberation as citizens, further shape and develop existing relations of reciprocal recognition into an association of free and consociates under law*”.

According to Clifford Christians (2004: 236; 247), the communitarian perspective challenges “*the dominance of Western individualist libertarianism as a workable philosophy of the press. In the communal worldview, the community is ontologically prior to persons.*” So, in the communitarian perspective, “*reporting must be grounded historically and biographically*”, and seek “*to open up public life in all its dynamic dimensions*”.

Finally, the concept of deliberative democracy implies a political process through which a group of people carefully examines a problem and arrives at a well-reasoned solution after a period of inclusive consideration of diverse points of view (Gastil, 2008). For the supporters of deliberative perspective several trends contributed recently to emphasize the need of rethinking the division between government and citizens, finding ways to strength the engagement of citizens in reflecting upon public problems and policies and carrying public action and participating in public dialogue. These trends include an increasing gap between citizens on one hand, and politicians, political parties and government on the other; the declining of citizen trust in governments; the declining party membership; the low rates of voting turnout in many countries and the growing sense of alienation of citizens with respect to democratic governance. “*Many new influences on democracy are the result of cognitive and communicative division of labor that are the inevitable structural consequences of technology, media and expertise*” (Bohman, 2000: 47). Simultaneously, a large



number of new initiatives, such as participatory budgets, citizen panels, deliberative polls, consensus conference have demonstrated the possibility and power of citizen engagement, participation, and even deliberation.

The discussion theory behind deliberative model implies a network of communicative processes, inside and outside of the parliamentary complex and its deliberative body, that sustain the existence of dialogic arenas where occur the formation of democratic opinion.

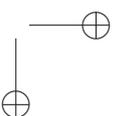
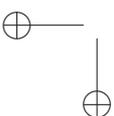
For the followers of the deliberative perspective “*rather to focus entirely on how to implement democracy in the nation-state, it is now more important to analyze how other institutions, such as the media, may affect the political discussions of political discussion, persuasion and communication*” (Bohman, 2000: 47).

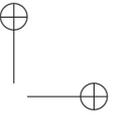
The concept and evolution of public Sphere

The notion of deliberative democracy generally refers to the need of to have a strong public informal public sphere that should optimally possess three characteristics:

1. the establishment of rational-critical argument (as opposed to social status) as the sole criterion by which public contributions should be judged;
2. circumscription of discussion topics to the “domain of “common concern””;
3. openness to all members of the public (cf. Habermas, 1989: 36)

In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* (1989), Habermas builds his model of what he called the public sphere upon the development of the bourgeois society verified in Britain, France, and Germany in the late 18th and 19th century. Based on that context, he suggests that a space was then formed between the economy and polity where people could be informed and discuss, so as to form decisions and act upon them. Newspapers, books, salons and debating societies were the instruments of an arena relatively independent of the Church and the State, characterised by openness to all citizens, in the sense of the Enlightenment. As follows, he sees such a communicative forum as a model for a rational-critical debate amongst citizens, that accordingly ensures political will formation, and that is therefore crucial for the emergence of democracy. Since that earlier work, Habermas followed an anthropological turn focused on the reconstruction of universal conditions of mutual understanding, emphasising the political and ethical relevance of the use of language in everyday life-word. The essential elements of Habermas’s work started to increase their attention to the category of agreement as a model of coordination of social interaction and





to communicative rationality as an alternative to the instrumental rationality (see Habermas, 1987:57 -58). The use of language in order to achieve agreement with others was, from that time on, saw as its original use.

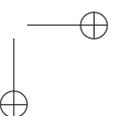
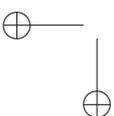
Communication appeared, finally, as the basis of the conditions of possibility of the fair acting which seems inevitably correlated with the growing development of the communicative competences. Among the structural elements of this theory emerge the rationally based consensus of normative kind obtained by the dialogical exchange of arguments between agents that would suspend its personal interests and social status (cf. Rehg in Habermas, 1996: xv).

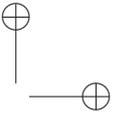
The category of rational consensus of normative kind would provided a critical dimension, claiming, as conditions of its accomplishment, for the absence of coercion and for the establishment of equalitarian conditions for public communication between social agents. The new paradigm of the rationality becomes not substantive but discursive: it is focused not it the content, but in the form of the argumentative procedures.

This whole argument followed a background of anthropological kind drawing the difference between strategic action and communicative action (see Habermas, 1987: 144). By omitting the sociological, cultural and historical components of his earlier work (1982), Habermas drew the communicational act in an idealistic way articulating it increasingly with the very evolution of civilization.

Previously, the unfinished project of modernity was described as a failure of bourgeois universalism. With the Theory of Communicative Action (1987), it will be linked to the achievement of individual and collective higher levels of communicative competence. Before, the distortion of communication patterns was located in the past history of individuals and communities, now it will be seen as being rooted in the inability of individuals and communities to acquire conditions enabling it to reach a new stadium (see Benhabib, 1994). Thus, *“the consensus demanded at discursive level, depends by one hand, of the irreplaceable ‘yes’ or ‘no’ of concrete individuals, and, by the other hand, of their ability to overcome their self-centred perspectives. (...) The method of discourse will cover the close relationship between the inalienable autonomy of individuals and its insertion into intersubjectively shared ways of life* (Habermas, 1999: 22).

Finally, Habermas argues that advanced capitalist society cannot be conceptualized as social totality, because it is split into separate realms integrated on different bases. Life-world is described as a linguistically organized stock of interpretative patterns which are largely implicit but necessary for the conduct of practical social interaction and communication (Habermas, 1987: 124: cit in Gardiner, 2004: 40). Is the realm of personal relationship and of communicative action. It is in life-world that people communicate with one another in a non-instrumentalist but intersubjective manner. Habermas idealizes the directly interpersonal relations of the life-world as





counterpoint to a system ordered on the basis of a non-linguistic steering media (money and power), integrating society impersonally through functional or cybernetic feedback. So, new social movements are interpreted of the advocates of a threatened life-world against colonization by the systemic forces of state and capital (cf. Calhoun, 1992: 30-31).

The processes of rationalization within the life-world are said to occur through communicative or through strategic action. The taking over of communicative imperatives by strategic imperatives leads to colonisation of the life-world.

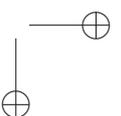
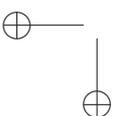
In its work on the philosophy of law, “Between Facts and Norms”, the unitarian concept of public sphere is replaced by a more pluralistic and multiform one: an highly differentiated network of local, regional, scientific, political public spheres where occur discursive processes of opinion formation and which main goal is the diffusion of information and knowledge. That plurality of public spheres doesn’t mean the absence of an overall public sphere in which all society creates self- reflexive knowledge about itself. The Habermasian conception of democratic deliberative politic is based in a dual model, which is connected with the will formation in the parliamentary complex but also with a concept of public sphere that is articulated with an spontaneous network of informal public spheres dialogically discursive and democratic. This means that the political system is now conceived as an open system that can be indirectly influenced by a public sphere that produces transparency. This means also the recognition of an ambivalent role to the media: if in 1962, media were the leading responsible for opacity and refeudalization of public sphere, now Habermas didn’t deny the ambivalence of media as social actors responsible by publicity and transparency.

Media and Public sphere: The case against democratic of media

A set of different scientific disciplines explored the way as media might influence the political climate and the democratic process in modern democracies.

Of course a “public” should be conceptualized as something more than just a media audience, as a social reality existing as discursive interactional processes. However, in our complex and strongly mediated societies we have to accept as a fundamental element of contemporary public sphere the circulation of media messages in many contexts, from the most structured and larger public *fora* to the broader micro-contexts of everyday life.

The most important democratic functions that we can expect the media to serve are listed in a well known article by Gurevitch and Blumler (1995: 97). These functions include surveillance of socio-political developments, identifying the most rele-



vant issues, providing a platform for debate across a diverse range of views, holding officials to account for the way they exercise power, provide incentives for citizens to learn, choose, and become involved in the political process, and resist efforts of forces outside the media to subvert their independence.

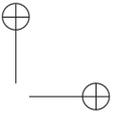
However, “*the communicative division of labour threatens to undermine the quality of communication and even to introduce distortions and manipulations, especially since the goals of mass media are typically not to democracy but rather to shape communication in order to achieve great market share or to further the goals of their paying customers*” (Bohman, 2000: 48).

There is a growing concern that the mass media are not fulfilling these functions properly:

a) The media industry by its nature is driven by economic rationality moving away from the civic requirements supported by advocates of deliberative democracy. Media have become increasingly commercial under the systemic imperatives of the global economy. De-regulation and privatization of public services and the increasing phenomena of infotainment are characteristics of the reality of the actual media system, disturbing its contribution for public democratic deliberation

b) Public sphere involves critical reflection and distance. The *media* increasingly call for participation and emotional involvement in a way that implies the generalization of spectacle. News is more entertaining than informing, offering mostly gossip, scandals, sex, and violence. Political news is more personalized than ever, focus about individuals and leaders than about their ideologies. As consequence of the market driven options and the dependence of political hierarchy, the media spend much of their time looking for scandals in the private lives of politicians and their families, but ignore much more serious consequences of their policies. While minor dangers are hysterically blown out of proportions, much more serious dangers in our society go largely unnoticed (Glassner, 1999; Bagdikian 1983; Fallows 1996; Capella and Jamieson 1997; Bennett and Entman 2001; Barnett 2002).

c) The mediated public sphere of communications it's under the attack of corporate money and power, even through systemic mechanisms that ensure that our leisure is confined to more and more spaces where commercial messages are the only ones permitted. In the absence of serious debate, voters are left with paid professional political propaganda containing only meaningless slogans making them disinterested and cynical about politics. Our ways of communicating are becoming colonized, trademarked and censored by the language of the “brand”, marking a climate of cultural and linguistic communication. Most of major media are often responsible for a generalization of a one-dimensional discourse, already analysed by classic thinkers such as Adorno or Walter Benjamin, Heidegger, Karl Kraus and George Orwell: «the language of total administration», the prominence of the illusion of a pure denotative language, a kind of closed discourse that it does not explain but simply broadcast



the social order, in a more or less subtle way. In cognitive terms, that language only expresses the intervention of technocracy as an intrusion of instrumental rationality at the most deep level of human consciousness, that is to say, the intromission of the systemic imperatives in the ordinary language.

d) Public opinion is formed largely within the confines of a prior selection of subjects of public attention. The task of setting the issues of public agenda is confiscated by politicians and the journalists of the major media. It makes sense to speak of a kind of censorship that is not performed on the communication but that comes itself from communication (see Rodrigues, 1985). We are facing the need of fighting for the freedom of expression against the power from major media groups and other primary definers to settle the public agenda.

e) There is still a strong dependence from primary definers and powerful source, who hold the power, define the relationship and ultimately the news agenda by controlling the access to and the flow of important information, building an hierarchy of credibility based on power, legitimacy and authoritativeness (cf. Phillips, 2010: 88).

f) In news discourse and practice, frames and tipifications are basic cognitive structures which guide the perception and representation of reality (Gittlin, 1980; Tuchman, 1978). The critical problem is that those artificial constructs may lead reporters to apply stereotypes, easy simplifications and incorrect labels.

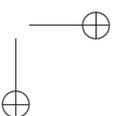
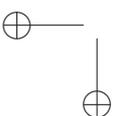
In spite of the accuracy o some of those critics, we stand that the communicative division of labor is demanded by social circumstances such as the complexity of problems and the size of the body of citizens. Some of these critics are accurate; others simply ignore the need of mediated communication in complex mass societies, downgrading the level of audiences to the status of a mass of cultural dopes. In spite of their pathologies, mediated communication makes rational publics possible.

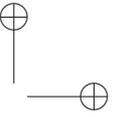
The online media as public sphere

Since the appearance of Internet, many authors stand that the new digital environment expands the realm for democratic participation and debate and creates new public spaces for political intervention, avoiding and overcoming the pathologies above referred.

Some authors stand that computers have produced new public spheres and spaces for information, debate, and participation that contain both the potential to invigorate democracy and to increase the dissemination of critical and progressive ideas (Kellner, 1998 apud Dahlberg 2001). The fear that the social asymmetries in communicative division of labor short-circuit the deliberation process strengthens the hope that the new communicative environment may help to surpass that threat.

Not surprisingly, the new social networks of the so called Web 2.0, similarly to what happened to previous online forums, were loaded with euphoric expectations





regarding the formation of a deliberative cyberdemocracy. Having in mind much of the available literature, we find a sincere hope in the renewal of a global public sphere built particularly by "the social spaces of Web 2.0, as exemplified by You Tube, MySpace, Facebook, and the growing blogosphere"(Castells, 2008). Simultaneously, we watch the presentation of a set of proposals seeking to overcome some of the pathologies related to the daily practice of journalism, trying to reconcile it with more inclusive social practices and democratic deliberation.

Accordingly to those approaches, new media born in the digital environment allowing a strong interactivity with publics and generating a new kind of public discussion, could overcome the dependence of economic and political systems, to open the public agenda to issues that we'll never find its way in traditional media, to be more attentive to alternative movements and social actors, to facilitate public dialogue among citizens and, finally, to avoid the stereotypization induced by mainstream media in the public communication

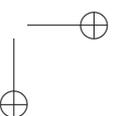
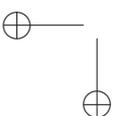
However, also many criticism has been launched against those hypothesis:

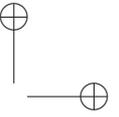
a) The supporters of phenomena such as civic and participatory journalism focus their critics in the journalistic professionalism avoiding identifying other mechanisms of power involved in the communicative process. The process of democratization of civil society remains confined to the replacement of journalistic elites identified as a major obstacle to citizen participation. The systemic dynamics of economic and political nature remain hidden. Consequently, there is a movement of dilution of journalistic professionalism which may lead to the abandonment of verification procedures.

b) In what concerns to the new interactive tools, first structural problem is related with the requirements of diversity and pluralism demanded by deliberative model and the fear that online forums and political discussions in social networks, far from encouraging reasonable dialogue over shared issues, merely encourages communication among very like-minded citizens.

Accordingly, the participation in social networks creates a sense of activity rather than genuine civic involvement, producing an overwhelming passivity in participants even while making them feel politically involved. This dysfunction will be aggravated by the fact that lack of face-to-face involvement generates a kind of pseudo-public, inconsequential, replacing a genuine commitment around public issues (Wilhelm, 1999; Sunstein, 2001).

In response to this criticism, we think that, surpassed some strong exaggerations made during the early years of Internet, there are reasons to believe that formats such as on line journalism, forums and social networks will help to achieve the balance between address to the highly heterogeneous audience and to treat issues that vary with the regard to the epistemic demands on speakers in diverse social and local contexts (cf. Bohman, 2000: 56).



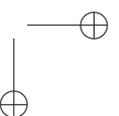
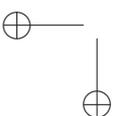


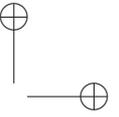
Following the impulse of John Dewey, Bohman states that the main goal of a reformist democratic deliberative project will be to develop democratic modes of interaction between experts communicators and their audience in public sphere. The answer is not the a movement of dilution of journalistic professionalism, but the cooperation between experts in communication and ordinary citizens:

“First, the public must challenge the credibility especially in their capacities to set agenda frames for discussing issues. Second (...) the public must challenge the reception by the media themselves, especially insofar as they may also report, represent and even define the «public opinion» of citizens who are stranger to each other” (Bohman, 2000: 56). So, “what is needed is a robust interaction between the audience of citizens and the professional media over the nature and character of public opinion and the power that media themselves exercise in virtue of defining this relationship and available forms and topics of communication (...) We may say that we are trading in a circle. In order of this ship to be possible, however, the public sphere must function well under the conditions of mediated communication, and the public sphere functions well only if there is a public with a robust sense of responsibility for sustaining the publicity of mediated communication” (Idem, ibidem). It seems that Bohman wasn’t talking about digital media, citizen journalism, online founs. However, some of his remarks seems to fit well with some reflections on digital democracy.

Some authors have developed the inter-media agenda-setting hypothesis, trying to understand the mutual influence among media from several kind, showing a new kind of complementary phenomena with democratic potential. For instance, Campbell, Gibson, Gunbter and Touri (2010: 34-36.) deal, first, with online journalism under the point of view of the first level of agenda setting as news originator. In this sense, they stand that the classical question on “what media tell people to think” may be changed to “what the bloggers and activists using news websites tell media to focus”.

Accordingly with this hypothesis, if a critical number of elite blogs and web sites focus their attention on a particular story, it can attract the interest of mainstream media outlets. Prominent political report, opinion columnists and social activists from digital media indicate the consumption of blogs and news websites as a part of their routine information-gathering activities. In some circumstances, reporters and columnist are simultaneously also producers of blogs and participants and independent news sites. So, this kinds of formats can act as news resuscitator or re-framer of past news items. As news resuscitator, blogs and independent news websites, thanks to the connections between many journalists with them, may return to past news items. For instance, the blogs chatter may help to resuscitate or to keep an issue in the agenda. As re-framer, online media may influence the public’s understanding of the news allowing the promotion of alternative frames for news items already in the mainstream media agenda, adding commentary, analyses and discussions and becoming a part of the professional communication process inside mainstream media.





Besides that, everyday, community of bloggers, citizen journalists and commentators offer alternative interpretations of the day's events, and watch critically industrial news and other sources providing further related (and often contradicting) information enabling readers to better assess the accuracy of mainstream news stories.

Online media can work as a platform questioning the dominant media, asking them about their representations of issues of collective interest. This "journalism about journalism" contributes to reinvigorate the function of journalism in carrying on and amplifying public conversation of people on the criteria and practices of media system.

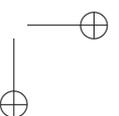
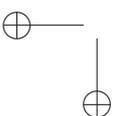
We stand that media channels open to diverse validity claims are still continuing to appear, avoiding an absolute reification of the structure of public communication. The appearance of new information channels that may be more sensitive to the pressures from new social movements will bring to light new validity claims excluded from public sphere. At least, some of this new experiences change in a significant way the agenda setting function, thanks to the impact produced in the traditional mass media. Also, some of them explicitly refuse to transform news in mere commodities and audiences in mere consumers.

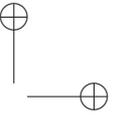
Finally, many of these experiences explicitly assume the critical interpellation of the role of media in complex and pluralistic societies, trying to prove that media should be more attentive to the representation of multiple life forms inhabiting life-world. We also stand that this hypothesis challenges the self-portrait of deliberative public sphere, with its trust in communicative rationality and in the strength of better argument.

Philosophically, we stand for a return to a social theory, with a global project oriented by principles that support a more comprehensive understanding of public life. At the level of public sphere, one must to accept the existence of subaltern counterpublics as parallel discursive arenas where members of subordinated social groups invent and circulate counter discourses to formulate oppositional interpretations of their identities, interests and needs (cf. Frazer, 1992: 123). Insofar as these counterpublics emerge in response to exclusions within dominant publics, they help to expand discursive space.

The theoretical solution to the social *factum* of fragmentation is to build an approach that have in account the multimodality of discursive practices within life world, and the large diversity of the public spheres. The really strength from deliberation will come from informal public spheres that bring to live, at least by some moments, the experience of freedom slowly introducing changes on institutional public deliberation.

What we do propose is that, instead of conceiving public sphere as only as a specific social domain marked by consensus, we also see it as marked by numerous





contradictions and by a considerable degree of heterogeneity, that's to say as a poly-dimensional reality, fluid and ambivalent.

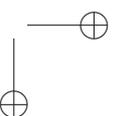
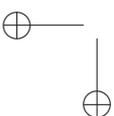
Rather than accepting a singular set of deliberative standards, several scholars, owing a insignificant debt to the work of Nancy Frazer, support the hypothesis that different kinds of public spheres exist (Cammaerts and Van Audenhove, 2005; Downey and Fenton, 2003; Jensen, 2003; Papacharissi, 2004).

So, a increasingly number of theorist who have applied Fraser's ideas stand that online discourse consists of several culturally fragmented cyberspheres that occupy a common virtual space, supporting the existence of plurality of rationalities inside the public sphere, avoiding privileging deliberation above other forms of discourse (Dahlgren, 2005).

So probably one must agree with Kellner assessment that the work of Habermas, an impeccable civic intellectual and philosopher that never run from debate of their own ideas, was undermined by too rigid categorical distinctions namely between liberal and contemporary public spheres, strategic and communicative actions, critical publicity and manipulative advertising. Public sphere must be the locus of consensus and public dialogue as much as the locus of the conflict, negotiation and fight for strategic gains. Some dualistic conceptions, even working as a conceptual and heuristic framework (as Habermas explained more than once), may acquire an idealistic configuration that doesn't work to the comprehensive understanding of the contemporary public spheres.

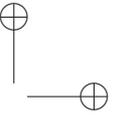
References

- BAGDIKIAN, B. H. (1983) *The Media Monopoly*. Boston: Beacon Press.
- BARNETT, S (2002) «Will a Crisis in Journalism Provoke a Crisis in Democracy?». *The Political Quarterly* 73: 400-408
- BENNETT, W. L., Entman R. M. (Eds) (2001) *Mediated Politics: Communication in the Future of Democracy*. Cambridge: University Press.
- BELL, D., (1993) *Communitarianism and Its Critics*. Oxford: Clarendon Press
- BENHABIB, S., (1992), *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics*. Cambridge: Polity Press
- BENHABIB, S. (1994), «Modernity and the aporias of critical theory» in Jay Bernstein, Ed., *The Frankfurt School*. Vol. I. London, Routledge.
- BERLIN, I. (1990) *Four Essays on Liberty*. New York: Oxford University Press.



- BLUMER, J. and Gurevitch, M. (1995), *The Crisis of Public Communication*. London: Routledge.
- BOHMAN, J. (2000) «The Division of labor in democratic discourse: media, experts and deliberative democracy» in Simon Chambers and Annie Costain, Eds, *Deliberation, Democracy and the Media*. Boston and Oxford: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers,
- CALHOUM, C. (1992), «Introduction: Habermas and the public sphere», in Craig Calhoun (Editor), *Habermas and Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press.
- CAMMAERTS B., VAN AUDENHOVE L. (2005) «Online political debate, unbounded citizenship, and the problematic nature of a transnational public sphere». *Political Communication* 22(2): 179–96.
- CAMPBELL, V., GIBSON, R., GUNBTER, B. and TOURI, M (2009) «New blogs, mainstream news and new agencies» in Garret Monaghan and Sean Tunney, «Web Journalism: a New Form of Citizenship». Sussex: Sussex Academic Press.
- CAPELLA J.N., JAMIESON K.H. (1997), *Spiral of Cynicism: The Press and the Public Good*. Oxford University Press.
- CASTELLS, M. (2008) «The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance». *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* vol. 616 no. 1 78-93.
- CHRISTIANS. C. (2004), «Ubuntu and communitarianism in media ethics». *Ecquid Novi: South African Journal for Journalism Research* 25(2):235-256
- CHRISTIANS, C. (1999). «The common good as first principle» in Theodore Glasser, *The idea of public journalism*. New York: Guilford.
- CHRISTIANS, C.G., GLASSER, T.L., MCQUAIL, D., NORDENSTRENG K. & WHITE, R. A. (2009), *Normative Theories of the Media: Journalism in Democratic Societies*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press
- COHEN, Jean, & ARATO, Andrew (1992). *Civil society and political theory*. Cambridge Mass: MIT Press.
- DAHLBERG L. (2001) «The internet and democratic discourse: Exploring the prospects of online deliberative forums extending the public sphere». *Information, Communication & Society* 4(4): 615–33.

- DAHLGREN P. (2005) «The internet, public spheres, and political communication: Dispersion and deliberation». *Political Communication* 22(2): 147–62.
- DOWNEY J., FENTON N. (2003), «New media, counter publicity and the public sphere». *New Media & Society*, 5(2): 185–202.
- FALLOWS J. (1996) *Breaking the News: How the Media Undermine American Democracy*. Pantheon, New York
- FRASER, N. (1992), «Rethinking public sphere» in Craig Calhoun (Editor), *Habermas and the Public Sphere*. Cambridge, Massachusetts and London: MIT Press.
- GASTIL, J., (2008), *Political Communication and Deliberation*. Sage Publications.
- GARDINER, M. (2004), «Wild publics and grotesque symposiums: Habermas and Bakhtin on dialogue, life word in public sphere» in Nick Crossley and John Michael Roberts, *After Habermas: new perspectives on public sphere*. Blakwell Publishing.
- GLASSNER, B. (1999), *The Culture of Fear*. Basic Books. New York.
- HABERMAS, J. (1987), *Théorie de l'agir communicationnel*. 2 vols, Paris: Fayard.
- HABERMAS, J. (1999), *Comentários à ética do discurso*. Lisboa: Piaget.
- HABERMAS, J. (1996), «Three normative models of democracy,» in S. Benhabib, *Democracy and Difference: Contesting the boundaries of political*. Princeton University Press.
- HABERMAS J. (1989), *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- HABERMAS J. (1996), *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- JENSEN J. (2003), «Public spheres on the internet: Anarchic or government-sponsored – a comparison». *Scandinavian Political Studies* 26(4): 349–74.
- MACINTYRE, A. (1991), «Letter». *The Responsive Community*, Summer 1991
- MACINTYRE, A. 1(988), *Whose Justice? Which Rationality?*. Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press
- MONHAGAN, G. and TUNNEY, S. (2009), «Introduction» in Garret Monhagan and Sean Tunney, *Web Journalism: A New Form of Citizenship*. Sussex: Sussex Academic Press.



- NOZICK R. (1974), *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*. New York: Basic Books
- PAPACHARISSI Z. (2004) «Democracy online: Civility, politeness, and the democratic potential of online political discussion groups». *New Media & Society* 6(2): 259–83.
- PHILLIPS, A. (2010), «Old sources, new bottles» in Natalie Fenton, *New Media, Old Media: Journalism and democracy in the digital age*. Los Angeles, London, New Delhi: Sage, pp. 87-61.
- RODRIGUES, Adriano Duarte (1985), «Figuras das máquinas censurantes modernas» . *Revista de Comunicação e Linguagens* nº 1, As Máquinas censurantes modernas. Porto. Afrontamento.
- STRANDBERG, K. (2008), «Public deliberation goes on-line?». *Javnost – The Public* 15(1): 71–89.
- SUNSTEIN, C. (2001), *Republic .com*. Princeton University Pres.
- TAYLOR, C. (1985), *Philosophy and the Human Sciences: Philosophical Papers 2*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- WILHELM, A. (1999) *Democracy in the Digital Age: Challenges to Political Life in Cyberspace*. London: Routledge.

