

## PART III



# 9

## Publicity and Privacy

### Two Contemporary Challenges to the Liberal Script

*Jan-Werner Müller*

Mancher redet so vom Publikum, als ob es jemand wäre, mit dem er auf der Leipziger Messe im Hotel de Saxe zu Mittag gespeist hätte. Wer ist dieses Publikum?—Publikum ist gar keine Sache, sondern ein Gedanke, ein Postulat, wie Kirche.<sup>1</sup>

[Some talk about the public as if it were a person with whom they had had lunch at Hotel Saxe at the Leipzig Fair. Who is this public?—Public is not a thing, but a thought, a postulate, like the church.]

**Friedrich Schlegel**

The notion is itself unfounded, that publicity, and the sense of being answerable to the public, are of no use unless the public are qualified to form a sound judgment. It is a very superficial view of the utility of public opinion to suppose that it does good only when it succeeds in enforcing a servile conformity to itself. To be under the eyes of others—to have to defend oneself to others—is never more important than to those who act in opposition to the opinion of others, for it obliges them to have sure ground of their own. Nothing has so steadying an influence as working against pressure. Unless when under the temporary sway of passionate excitement, no one will do that which he expects to be greatly blamed for, unless from a preconceived and fixed purpose of his own; which is always evidence of a thoughtful and deliberate character, and, except in radically bad men, generally proceeds from sincere and strong personal convictions. Even the bare fact of having to give an account of their conduct is a powerful inducement to adhere to conduct of which at least some decent account can be given.

**John Stuart Mill**

<sup>1</sup> Schlegel (1967, p. 150, nr. 35).

## 1 Introduction

The liberal script has many pages, but there is one whose content has always had significance for the script as a whole: publicity (usually paired with the value, or even right, of privacy). According to a very well-known, but by no means uncontroversial, account, the late 18th century and the early 19th century witnessed a profound change: monarchical power no longer displayed itself in front of the people (while hiding its secrets of ruling, its *arcana imperii* or what a reason-of-state theorist like Clapmarius had called *arcana dominationis*); instead, a critical public grew out of the worlds of private family and friendships on the one hand and supposedly “private” market relations on the other to demand that public power justify itself—and, less obviously, also become genuinely public, which is to say transparent for citizens.<sup>2</sup> The state had to meet requirements of publicity, while individual citizens were not only encouraged to enter the public, but also asked to offer public reasons (a demand codified in Kant’s hypothetical test: a maxim cannot be morally right if it could not pass the test of being known to all).<sup>3</sup> Put differently, pressure increased on states to justify themselves vertically; but citizens also faced more demands in how they dealt with each other (and, in particular, how they talked to each other) horizontally.

True, there is no straight line from Kant’s test to Rawls’s idea of public reason. According to the latter, liberal states must justify binding decisions with arguments that everyone in a diverse polity, irrespective of their particular ideas of the good life, about the meaning of the universe, etc. can reasonably accept. But both did end up suggesting an indissoluble link between liberalism and the principle of publicity (to be sure, not all thinkers who could be called liberal necessarily did: for instance, utilitarian liberals such as Sidgwick made explicit arguments against publicity and for utilitarianism having to operate in secret, behind the backs of the actors, so to speak) (Rawls 1971; 1993; Sidgwick 1981). Publicity was complemented, or so another common narrative suggests, with increased protections of a private sphere in which individuals can develop their own ideas of the good life, engage in what John Stuart Mill famously called “experiments in living,” or, for that matter, cultivate all kinds of eccentricities.

A triple imperative—the state must not be secretive, the public must be somehow in attendance and attentive, and individual citizens must engage in politics on the basis of publicly avowable reasons—is an important part of the liberal script, as is the related imperative to protect privacy (see also Zürn and Gerschewski, this volume).<sup>4</sup> But not only that: without publicity—or, with a related and today more fashionable, term: transparency—other parts of the liberal script cannot function at all, or cannot be assessed properly by those living under more or less liberal regimes.

<sup>2</sup> On the tradition of treating kingship as generating mystery and secrecy—and attendant instructions manuals in the art of secrecy—see Donaldson (1992).

<sup>3</sup> Kant (2021 [1795]), “Zum Ewigen Frieden”: “All actions relating to the right of other human beings are wrong if their maxim is incompatible with publicity.”

<sup>4</sup> A further nuanced account is offered in Luban (1996). Luban argues that the best justification of publicity is based on an appeal to popular sovereignty.

Those who claim that liberalism is in crisis are unlikely to say that publicity is central to this crisis; there just seems so much else to worry about right now. But to the extent that the legitimacy of liberalism relied on a politics for which in turn publicity was essential, profound challenges to the triple imperative outlined above would suggest that troubles with publicity—and the public sphere in particular—are not a sideshow. It is a regular complaint that politics in the circumstances of globalization suffers from unprecedented opacity; and it is a further well-rehearsed worry that highly segmented publics, with sometimes very little appetite for truth-seeking, no longer allow anything like a proper conversation of politics about themselves, in the way that a liberal like John Dewey had once imagined (as evidenced by the widespread anxieties about “post-truth,” “truth decay” etc.).<sup>5</sup> To recap the seemingly obvious: a deeply fractured public structured by unaccountable platform capitalism is not what those who, in the 1990s, had written about the Internet as an ideal speech situation had ever imagined in their worst nightmares; what’s more, this kind of capitalism not only potentially destroys public spheres, but also systematically undermines privacy, as data are collected in exchange for seemingly “free services” provided by companies engaged in comprehensive surveillance of billions of users (Zuboff 2019).

This chapter leaves aside the—in and of itself—very significant problem of state opacity in the 21st century (a story that would involve the actors of the “wealth defense industry,” the structural challenges created by law as the code of capital, and, of course, the forms of state surveillance that have become standard since 9/11) (Galison 2004; Pistor 2019; Winters 2011). Rather, I seek to take up the question how liberalism could make good on its twin promises of publicity and privacy, given the structural transformations we have witnessed in recent decades. To that end, I seek to adopt a framework of analysis that pays tribute to Jürgen Habermas’s classic from 1962: Habermas, it needs to be recalled, had argued that a proper understanding of changes in the public sphere was impossible without taking into account both transformations in subjectivity and the conditions of capitalist accumulation, viz. the cultivation of a particular sensibility in an 18th-century literary public and the emergence of a special kind of market economy (later to be transformed into a form of welfare state capitalism which, according to Habermas, resulted in a “re-feudalized” public sphere).<sup>6</sup> In other words, we ought to think of what is often considered a specific problem of social media (undermining liberalism or liberal democracy more broadly) in a wider context. This will also allow us to see more clearly what are genuinely new challenges in the early 21st century—and what are the results of a moral panic comparable to panics caused by previous media revolutions (along the lines of: printing gave us religious civil wars; radio made Hitler inevitable; TV produced

<sup>5</sup> See D’Ancona (2017), Kavanagh and Rich (2018). The latter define “truth decay” as involving “increasing disagreement about facts and analytical interpretations of facts and data,” as well as “blurring of the line between opinion and act” alongside “the increasing relative volume, and resulting influence, of opinion and personal experience over fact” and, lastly, “declining trust in formerly respected sources of factual information” (ibid., p. 41). For a much more nuanced account that puts contemporary challenges appropriately into historical perspective, see Rosenfeld (2018).

<sup>6</sup> This virtue of Habermas’s approach has also recently been emphasized by Staab and Thiel (2021).

McCarthyism—each examples of moral panics based on a form of technological determinism) (Jungherr and Schroeder 2021).

## 2 The Public, the Private, and the Secret: Changing Locations

There are two classic accounts of the structural transformation of the public sphere which matter for an understanding of the larger liberal story. One is obviously Habermas's: in the salons and *Tischgesellschaften* of the 18th century men (and women!) could form a public independent of political and socioeconomic status, as they reasoned first about aesthetic matters and, eventually, public affairs (Habermas 1990). In addition to the salons, there was Freemasonry; it was in the secret world of the lodges, or so this stylized account tells us, that new forms of egalitarian comportment and the fearless use of individual reason could first be tried and tested (forming a public—out of view of the state—which in turn crucially depended on the formation of the bourgeois family). Secrecy had served a sovereignty understood as *voluntas*; publicity enabled legislation for the common good grounded in *ratio* (with *ratio* being developed and refined in nominally private spheres).<sup>7</sup>

The other story is a much darker one: according to Reinhart Koselleck's seminal *Kritik und Krise*, the secret world of the lodges and other associations bred a kind of moralism that eventually overwhelmed the Hobbesian state and ended in the Terror (Koselleck 1973). The split between public conformity ensured by an authoritarian state and private freedom could not simply be replaced by a liberal state enabling diverse forms of life, including moral life—because liberalism, with its inherent moralism (according to arguments Carl Schmitt had already advanced in the interwar period), cannot constitute a stable politics: its attempt to make all possible conflicts matters of morality, where they can be debated peacefully, or material interests, subject to peaceful bargaining, will fail in the face of serious threats. If liberalism sticks with its twin strategies of ethics and economics in such cases, it will be doomed; if it actually meets such threats, liberalism will in all likelihood cease to be liberal (Schmitt 1963).

In either account—the public sphere as a site for the authentic exercise of popular sovereignty or the public sphere as the place of a dangerous moral self-empowerment by over-mobilized citizens—it was clear that the demand for publicity could not simply be wished away again. In the 19th century, liberal elites sought to uphold an ideal of a reason-giving state, which practically meant open debates and even open voting; less obviously, they also continued to treat the public as a postulate, in line with the quote of Schlegel at the start of this chapter.<sup>8</sup> They wished to govern with public

<sup>7</sup> Of course, both claims about inclusivity and rationality have been challenged by Habermas's critics, from Negt and Kluge to Nancy Fraser. See especially Fraser's seminal "Rethinking the Public Sphere" (1990).

<sup>8</sup> Mill and Bentham made various proposals for open voting, assuming that openness would ensure actors making decisions that could be justified with regard to some plausible understanding of the common good. Mill demanded open elections; Bentham opposed it with the argument that "the system of

opinion, while in fact continuing to exclude large parts of the population, who were deemed to lack the capacity responsibly to engage in politics on account of insufficient education and property. Publicity remained an ideal, but it clearly also had to be carefully curated in the face of threats from potentially unruly masses: figures like liberal French politician François Guizot, who firmly believed in the “managing of men’s minds,” governed in the name of a *juste milieu* that relied on a careful reading of elite and popular sentiments (France even had a ministry of public opinion in the 1830s) (Rosanvallon 2018; see also Kuntz, this volume). Plenty of liberals appeared to assume that, as more individuals were inducted into the public sphere, so to speak, they would learn the arts of dealing with public affairs: they might start at the local level, but then develop capacities to deal with larger and more complex questions over time, as a kind of general intelligence of a collective was being harnessed and further refined—a thought that can even be found in the seminal lecture by Benjamin Constant extolling modern liberty in contrast to the liberty of the ancients: for Constant freedom in “private affairs”—commerce in particular—would dominate the lives of the moderns (Constant 1988).

Yet public ones could not just be left to rulers assumed to be benevolent: a carefully curated public remained crucial, not because participation in politics allowed the cultivation of particular forms of human excellence and virtues, but because power had to be kept in check (see also Kumm, this volume); less obviously, individual minds had to be enlarged, as they developed a view of the common good, in contrast to narrow private interests. Constant left no doubt that the private had to be protected, but he also insisted that the private should not usurp the public—in the sense of politics as a pursuit of the good of society.

Yet, something else happened in the 19th century with publicity and its two antonyms, secrecy and privacy; and here I am picking up an intriguing argument put forward by Andreas Mix (Mix 2019.) While state secrecy became less and less acceptable, the economy emerged as a new area of opacity and, to some degree, what was regarded as legitimate forms of secrecy. The mercantilist state had been a transparent one; the market economy, by contrast, was impossible to grasp as a whole (metaphors like “the invisible hand” and formulations like “*der Fetischcharakter der Ware und sein Geheimnis*” gesture at this opacity). Private firms engaged in coercion that required no reason-giving and, very often, jealously guarded company secrets.<sup>9</sup>

A notion of privacy further shielded power relations inside the bourgeois family. In his book, Mix draws the suggestive contrast between a Rococo period where affairs were “open secrets” (Madame Pompadour could be officially decorated by the French king; everyone would have known about the dalliances depicted in the novel *Liaisons Dangereuses*) and a 19th century where bourgeois men not only dominated their wives, but also felt entitled to keep the secret of their monthly visit to brothels and the mistress. Whereas the intricate love affairs of the 18th century had effectively been

secrecy has therefore a useful tendency in those circumstances in which publicity exposes the voter to the influence of a particular interest opposed to the public interest. Secrecy is therefore in general suitable in elections.” A useful inventory of arguments is provided in Fine Licht and Naurin (2015).

<sup>9</sup> More recently articulated by Anderson (2019).

“safe spaces” for relatively egalitarian relations (to be sure, against the background of the rigid status hierarchies of the *ancien régime*), the bourgeois family became a cage in which secrecy precisely prevented the emergence of more egalitarian relations.

Liberals struggled throughout the 19th century to draw legitimate lines between the public and the private;<sup>10</sup> privacy, we need to remind ourselves, was never equally distributed because privacy came with assumptions about virtue and vice that might characterize what is actually being done in whatever is designed as private.<sup>11</sup> If privacy is understood as somehow erecting a barrier to common knowledge, declaring the family private did indeed mean shielding the nefarious practices of men from outside gazes and hence also potential criticism; if privacy is understood as a right to be left alone or as a right to control what is known about oneself, the problem for many women was precisely a lack of privacy: they had neither necessarily a room of their own, nor time for themselves; and they were surveilled and controlled by men entirely in charge of finances. Only a few liberals—Mill foremost among them—protested these practices.

Liberals also struggled to defend themselves against charges of hypocrisy, primarily, but not only, from the left: their promises of autonomy were constantly undermined by the new forms of dependency produced in the “private” bourgeois economy (as well as the bourgeois family); and their claim to generate legitimacy on the basis of public opinion was vulnerable to the charge that “the public” was really just a particular group of *Honoratioren*—notables whose claim to discern the common good in free and open argument was shaky at best.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> The argument that there is no stable private–public distinction (and that particular attempts to draw the distinction cannot be understood apart from particular power relations) is made in Raymond Geuss’s “qualified genealogy” (2001); Geuss claims that “the public/private distinction is such an ideological concretion. [. . .] Unraveling the connections between different senses of ‘private’ and ‘public’ can help break the hold the public/private distinction has on our minds and allow us to see that political and moral options are available to us that might have been more difficult to see, or to evaluate positively, before” (pp. 10–11). Geuss is surely right to suggest that the distinction has been deployed for nefarious purposes, that different understandings are more like “overlapping contrasts” (p. 6), and that, above all, its invocation cannot be kind of normative trump. However, it does not follow that particular understandings of it are always advocated in bad faith, or that one cannot properly distinguish different meanings and then advance proper arguments for them. The really effective critique is not the genealogical one by Geuss (who, in any case, simply describes different usages with reference to more or less random examples drawn from antiquity, as opposed to providing an account of the development of concepts), but the notion that there is no “right to privacy” at all; see Thomson (1975).

<sup>11</sup> Igo (2018). I leave aside here the attempts to formulate a right to privacy in the face of increasing intrusions by journalist having to conform to the logic of market competition in an increasingly capitalist public sphere; Warren and Brandeis’s famous “right to be let alone” needs to be understood in this context. His famous 1890 *Harvard Law Review* article claimed that “The press is overstepping in every direction the obvious bounds of propriety and of decency. Gossip is no longer the resource of the idle and of the vicious, but has become a trade, which is pursued with industry as well as effrontery. To satisfy a prurient taste the details of sexual relations are spread broadcast in the columns of the daily papers. To occupy the indolent, column upon column is filled with idle gossip, which can only be procured by intrusion upon the domestic circle.”

<sup>12</sup> A variation of this critique—still important today—is that particular constructions of “the public” simply serve as smokescreens for various antagonisms; see for instance Bourdieu (1984).



### 3 A New Publicity–Secrecy Constellation—and a New Set of Challenges for Liberalism

I won't repeat here the story of how liberals negotiated the challenges of mass democracy and an evolving capitalism; their responses often involved both rearticulating notions of the public (by Dewey, for instance) and retrenchments of what could be declared private and beyond the grasp of the state.<sup>13</sup> I also won't recount the story of how attempts to shield the family from normative claims on the basis of privacy were attacked by feminists, including feminists who sought to marshal specifically liberal principles to rectify the pervasive injustices inside families.<sup>14</sup> Rather, I want to fast-forward to the present and bring out a particular constellation of publicity, privacy, and secrecy at the beginning of the 21st century. It yet again requires us to think together institutional changes, transformations of the economy, and different forms of subjectivity in various spheres that might *prima facie* be deemed private.

Not everything that happened after 1973 or so can be attributed to “neoliberalism.” (see also Schmidt, this volume). But two at first sight contradictory developments surely are part of that particular story: on the one hand, the continuing affirmation of the economy as a site of opacity: Friedrich von Hayek's claim that planning could not work for epistemic reasons—lack of access to the tacit knowledge dispersed in modern societies, as well as the sometimes secret preferences of market actors—continued to justify particular neoliberal policies: all one could do was provide a stable and predictable framework for competition; inside that framework, as unpredictable, sometimes outright incomprehensible process of evolution would take place. Ironically, at the same time, major forms of deregulation (not necessarily as neoliberal policy, though) were justified precisely with the idea that financial markets could be both transparent and truly efficient (Vogl 2021).

We should be careful not to suggest some (secret, for that matter) complicity just because particular phenomena happened to be contemporaneous. But it seems plausible to see the 1970s as an era in which demands for “transparency”—for making the previously hidden public—rose to prominence in many disparate areas of modern life. Feminists kept insisting that the personal was political (thus trying to end the shielding of relations of domination in the bourgeois family); journalists, in a

<sup>13</sup> Think of (or us perhaps) rather quaint statements such as “For what is the faith of democracy in the role of consultation, of conference, of persuasion, of discussion, in formation of public opinion, which in the long run is self-corrective, except faith in the capacity of the intelligence of the common man to respond with common sense to the free play of facts and ideas which are secured by effective guarantees of free inquiry, free assembly, and free communication?” and “[. . .] the heart and final guarantee of democracy is in free gatherings of neighbors on the street corner to discuss back and forth what is read in uncensored news of the day, and in gatherings of friends in the living rooms of houses and apartments to converse freely with one another.”

<sup>14</sup> See in particular Okin (1989). Some feminist sought to reject the public–private distinction altogether; others sought to rescue it, emphasizing that privacy, properly understood as a set of liberties, was important for women as well (while also insisting that such liberties had to be realized without reinforcing existing gender-based hierarchies). See Gavison (1992) and Nussbaum (2000).

post-Watergate world, doubled down on a notion of journalism as detective work; by the 1980s at the latest, presidential candidates had their pasts truly vetted for the first time; and institutions whose *modus operandi* had in effect been the backroom deal needed to come to terms with a new reality of “sunshine laws” (Igo 2018, see chapter “The Ethics of Transparency”).

Yet the (often unintended) end results of these different pushes for transparency have turned out to be a constellation that precisely puts into question both liberal ideals of publicity and liberal notions of privacy. The personal, it turned out, is not only political; it is also big business. Surveillance capitalism has arguably lived off the positive normative associations of publicity and transparency;<sup>15</sup> yet while tech companies with virtually unprecedented power know almost all about us, we hardly know anything about them (or, as the Stanford scholar Nate Persily has put it, we don’t even know what we don’t know, in the face of proprietary algorithms and other business secrets) (Persily and Tucker 2020). One does not have to fall for a facile cultural pessimism to think that contemporary subjectivity is being transformed such that an imperative of publicity *de facto* means relentless pressure for self-display online (with the attendant need for self-optimization and self-marketization of one sort or another) (see also Nymoen and Schmidt 2021). The idea that sheltered spaces could be indispensable for self-development and self-reinvention—as they depend on solitude and some sense, however illusory, of self-sovereignty—is receding (Igo 2018); instead, the self appears to be a matter of a continuous *Inszenierung*, or production, of singularity (Reckwitz 2017). The previously hidden is displayed in daily high-tech productions; unlike the royal displays before the public, though, the means of production are available for everyone able to afford a fancy cellphone. It is worth remembering that even Hannah Arendt—often held up as a kind of cheerleader for the public in contrast to the private—wrote in *The Human Condition*: “A life spent entirely in public, in the presence of others, becomes, as we would say, shallow. While it retains its visibility, it loses the quality of rising into sight from some darker ground which must remain hidden if it is not to lose its depth in a very real, non-subjective sense.”<sup>16</sup>

What’s more, our digital doubles put into question traditional liberal notions of autonomy because, in subtle ways, we are being manipulated to conform to expectations of ourselves that have been formed in profoundly opaque ways and that are obviously geared to profit-maximization. Platforms, and social media in particular, segregate us in ways that are not self-chosen; they provide illusions of immediacy (“I am connecting directly with the leader”) (Urbinati 2015) and accessibility (“I am doing my own research”)<sup>17</sup> without making their own roles in curating establishing

<sup>15</sup> Zuboff (2019); also the prescient article by Jodi Dean (2001), “Publicity’s Secret.”

<sup>16</sup> Arendt (1989, p. 71). In what one might see as somewhat of a contradiction, she also held that “even the twilight which illuminates our private and intimate lives is ultimately derived from the much harsher light of the public realm” (p. 51).

<sup>17</sup> Michael Butter (2018, p. 64) offers the neat concept of a “Enthierarchisierung von Wissen durch das Internet.”

connections clear to users who voluntarily surrender their data to keep a business model based on surveillance successful.<sup>18</sup>

One does not have to believe that Facebook will lead to fascism, as the American liberal Timothy Snyder does, and yet be profoundly troubled by the structural transformations associated with platform capitalism (Snyder 2018). For, *prima facie*, they put at least some of the liberal imperatives outlined at the beginning of this chapter into question: while the public was never unified, let alone homogenous, the structuring of public engagements by corporations who jealously guard their *arcana imperii* is undoubtedly a challenge for liberal ideals; as is the influence on individuals starting to believe that their entirely private reasons are in fact public reasons. It is a contingent, but still fateful matter that, during the same era, states have reclaimed secrecy for themselves on the basis of the need to protect their citizens from global terror; what in the United States is known, with a truly Orwellian term, as “Total Information Awareness,” is of course a completely asymmetric affair.<sup>19</sup>

## 4 Rewriting the Script to Promote Publicity and Protect Privacy?

What can be done, or, put differently, how might liberals in particular react to this new constellation? Can a self-critical liberalism acknowledge blind spots in the script inherited from various liberal traditions, while also deploying some central ideals of the script to criticize present-day developments and suggest concrete counter-measures?

Start with the question of the structural transformation of institutions, or, for that matter, the emergence of new institutions. What are digital platforms anyway? Michael Seemann has plausibly suggested that they enable particular connections, without determining them; rather than owning the means of production, platform companies own the means of connection (Seemann 2021). They are about access, rather than property or other rights, for that matter. They do not generate content; they sort and, to a limited extent, curate content. They are neither the *Tischgesellschaft*, nor the newspaper; if anything, they provide the coffeehouse, but also tell customers in the coffeehouse where to sit and who they can talk to (or, if they don't outright instruct them, they at least “nudge” them in one way or another).

Traditional liberal approaches would appear to suggest something like the following: first, break up monopolies, for a monopoly of controlling connections is *ipso facto* a form of concentrated power that is incompatible with liberal notions

<sup>18</sup> There is now some evidence that concerns about “filter bubbles” and “echo chambers” may have been overblown; but the fact remains that platforms run on segregation, so to speak. See Guess and et al. (2018), as well as Bruns (2022, pp. 33–48); on segregation: Wylie (2019, pp. 225–228).

<sup>19</sup> I leave aside the problem that more transparency does not equal more democracy, contrary to what theories of “monitory democracy” or “counter-democracy” might suggest. See Dormal (2018). Dormal does not hesitate to call these transparency-centered visions of democracy a form of *Honoratiorenrepublik* 2.0.

of dispersed and checked power. Even if companies are committed to a principle of “not doing evil” (Google’s one-time, much-ridiculed motto), the sheer concentration of power, combined with the absence of any recourse or means of contestation by “users,” is a problem. The intuition here is a very old one: the slave might be treated very decently at the moment, but the master can change his mind anytime; the despot might be benevolent, but he is still a despot, and if he ceases to be benevolent, there is little those living under despotism can do.<sup>20</sup> The lesson here is two-fold: avoid concentrations of power, but also ensure effective means of contestation; both could be seen as plausible means for avoiding individuals’ structural vulnerability to platform power.

This leads to the second, quintessentially liberal (or so it would seem) demand: provide individuals with rights. What “rights” means in this context, is arguably itself open to political contestation; different polities may well define privacy rights, for instance, differently.<sup>21</sup> But generally plausible contenders are rights for users to flag abuse of one sort or another and to have content about themselves be removed (be it abusive or not—the famous right to be forgotten, which has been upheld by European courts, but is seen as highly problematic in the United States) (Post 2018). The latter are rooted in an understanding of privacy not as a distinct sphere of life (this was the problem with the assumption that something called “the family” must be completely shielded from the outside, including the state, which therefore failed to protect structurally vulnerable wives and children); rather, it is based on the notion that privacy means having effective control over what is known about oneself, how much information about oneself is involved in different kinds of relationships, what level of intimacy one considers autonomously appropriate (Fried 1968; Marmor 2015). Not being known is also a way of not being determined or, put more colloquially, pigeonholed by others.<sup>22</sup> Sometimes Mill’s “experiments in living”—and with trying out different “identities”—require Arendt’s “dark ground.”<sup>23</sup>

Of course, one can object that platform capitalism is not really based on individualized surveillance; the state might be interested in particular citizens, if they act in what relevant state actors deem suspect; but for the rest of us, it is not really a problem if we become big data. Once more, the intuition about the wrongs or dangers here is that even if no one is interested in us as individuals right now, the fact

<sup>20</sup> I am referencing here the republican notion of freedom as “non-domination” (as opposed to the supposedly liberal one of non-interference, or “negative liberty”); contrasts between republicanism and liberalism are often overdrawn, though, both conceptually and historically. For the seminal contemporary statement on republican freedom, see Pettit (1997); for a critique of overdoing the liberalism–republicanism contrast, see Patten (1996); and for an application of republican intuitions to platform capitalism, see Susskind (2022).

<sup>21</sup> Though national/cultural differences can also easily be exaggerated; see, for instance, (Whitman 2004).

<sup>22</sup> See also Pressly (2014). Pace Whitman, privacy as informational self-determination (in contrast to a supposed US emphasis on privacy as property and the sanctity of the home in particular) is not an exclusively German/continental understanding of privacy.

<sup>23</sup> Or, as Milan Kundera observed: “[. . .] that we act different in private than in public is everyone’s most conspicuous experience, it is the very ground of the life of the individual; curiously, this obvious fact remains unconscious, unacknowledged, forever obscured by lyrical dreams of the transparent glass house, it is rarely understood to be the value one must defend beyond all others.”

that there is a record over which we have no control is ground for concern (think of a situation where a photographer possesses a particular image of you; in almost all cases, the situation might be innocuous, but the very fact that you have no control over the image and that it could be used in contexts you might not even suspect at the moment, is a legitimate reason to demand a measure of control—unlike in the case of public figures, though even with high-profile persons of more or less general interest, there can of course be privacy violations).<sup>24</sup>

Rights need to be enforced. Platforms themselves creating what at first sight can look like constitutional courts has been one prominent approach. Yet Facebook's Oversight Board looks more like a PR exercise than an institution reliably capable of securing the "user" interests outlined above. A more promising path has been to require platforms to put in place proper moderation policies and mechanisms for removing content flagged as problematic within reasonable time limits. Private companies are *prima facie* trusted as enforcers; this is not in itself problematic as long as there is meaningful access to the justice system, as well as possibilities for political contestation of the particular rights regime that has been established. Yet, as Elon Musk's takeover of Twitter and the hollowing out of content moderation at the company has shown, we are far away from proper legal pressure on platforms to provide even minimal safeguards against abusive behavior.

Both enforcement and contestation require transparency, or, with a term I prefer, what Onora O'Neill once called "assessability" (O'Neill 2013). An institution can be highly transparent, and yet it can be impossible to assess how it really functions and what the consequences of its workings really are: after all, one can overwhelm audiences with so much information that it becomes impossible actually to assess it properly (and to hold it accountable). The demand here would be proper reporting of how many posts were taken down, how quickly that happened; etc.; but it would also be to open the black boxes of the platforms. One would want to know whether, as many suspect, the platforms optimize for outrage and prolong and deepen engagement through anger and offering up ever more extreme content (therefore encouraging, even if not determining, forms of political radicalization).

Obviously, a liberal cannot argue for the censoring of media simply because they encourage anger: there is plenty of righteous anger in a deeply unjust world, and anger can in fact be a major motivation to struggle for progress; think of anger that is based on a justified sense of unfairness (Srinivasan 2018). Even in clear cases of "incivility," the law is the wrong instrument to counter such tendencies; or, as Robert Post put it, "the 'paradox of public discourse' is that the law may not be used to enforce the civility rules that make rational deliberation possible" (Nagel 1998).

It would also be an illusion to think that there is always an absolutely clear line between emotion resulting from powerful leadership and a sense of collective solidarity on the one hand, and various forms of manipulation on the other. Still, it matters

<sup>24</sup> As Marmor writes, "your right to privacy is violated when somebody manipulates, without adequate justification, the relevant environment in ways that significantly diminish your ability to control what aspects of yourself you reveal to others."

that one has a rough sense—can more or less assess—why one sees certain images, is presented with what is supposed to be of interest, etc. Dividing citizens up, even stoking conflict is not as such illiberal; the problem arises if one has no sense that the divisions are driven by a desire for profit maximization, or, for that matter, systematic spreading of disinformation.

Transparency has always been a liberal ideal, but thoughtful liberals have also always known that complete transparency is an illusion (and possibly a dystopia). It is tempting to attribute contemporary challenges to a new technology, because then some technocratic “fix” (worked out by rational liberals) would also seem to be the obvious answer. But neither previous publics nor traditional mass media always lived up to standards of rational debate; nor were they as inclusive and insulated from the private in the way that Jürgen Habermas’s recent contrast between a clearer division between private and public in the past and the rise of a “semi-public sphere” in the present would suggest.<sup>25</sup> It would have to be shown empirically that there is less general knowledge of general issues for a society, that people find it harder to ascertain whether others have such knowledge, and that there is less quantity and quality of what might qualify as critical rational debate.<sup>26</sup> I am not convinced that such empirical evidence could be produced.

What certainly has changed are elite publics who can control access to information and, less obviously, the sense among politicians that public opinion is either published opinion or elite opinion as advanced on major radio and TV stations (Karpf 2020). They can, as the phrase goes, break both democratic and liberal norms, and not pay any obvious price for it; this logic applied to figures like Trump and Boris Johnson (even if their norm-breaking did eventually catch up with them, and traditional opinion makers could not be entirely ignored by them). They simply no longer accepted the notion that there was a reasonably well-informed and attentive public, and their conduct, over long stretches, proved their assumption roughly right.

Social media helped these figures in bypassing certain sections of elite opinion. As argued above, what makes social media unique is that it allows for what can seem like a direct connection between political leaders and potential followers. This is particularly useful for populists, who claim that only they can represent what they often call “the real people.” This implies that all other contenders for power do not represent the people, since, as the usual charge goes, they are corrupt. It also implies that some citizens are not part of the “real people” at all. Think of Trump complaining that his critics are not just wrong about policy, but that they are “Unamerican” or even—as he put it at a Veterans Day rally in 2023—“vermin.”

Populism is about denying and, eventually, destroying the pluralism of contemporary societies—social media are not somehow themselves inherently populist, but

<sup>25</sup> Habermas (2022); Habermas diagnoses a “peculiar anonymous intimacy” in online spaces; he writes: “Nach bisherigen Maßstäben können sie weder als öffentlich noch als privat, sondern am ehesten als eine zur Öffentlichkeit aufgeblähte Sphäre einer bis dahin dem brieflichen Privatverkehr vorbehaltenen Kommunikation begriffen werden” (p. 62).

<sup>26</sup> This useful tripartite division is suggested by Luban (1996, pp. 169–170).

they can be particularly helpful for populists. Liberals have long known about a technology that can help push back against such anti-pluralism and rein in populist political entrepreneurs: well-functioning parties, which are required by law in some countries to have internal democratic structures. (The right-wing Dutch populist Geert Wilders's Party for Freedom, would not be allowed in some liberal democracies, because Wilders is the only official member). Of course, parties unite partisans. But partisans often disagree on how principles they share should translate into policy. There is nothing strange about parties forming legitimate opposition to their leadership; and it is this pushback that has often proved crucial in providing a check on leaders. There is a reason why populists such as Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Hungarian Prime Minister Viktor Orbán run their parties in a highly autocratic fashion.

The work of getting people to the polls used to be done differently in the 19th and 20th centuries. As the political scientist Paul Kenny pointed out, before the age of social media, mobilization depended on clientelism or a well-organized (put more bluntly: highly bureaucratized) political party (Keeny 2023). Parties and candidates promised supporters material benefits or bureaucratic favors in exchange for votes. This was costly, and costs would rise steeply if political competition intensified or an ever-increasing number of power brokers entered the fray. Bureaucratic parties are also expensive to maintain, as party officers have to be paid, even if they can count on volunteer work by idealists who sacrifice their weekends to distributing leaflets or door-to-door canvassing.

As Kenny has argued, social media not only establishes the illusion of a direct link between the leader and the led (in a potentially thoroughly anti-pluralist fashion); it also cuts the costs of mobilization, especially for celebrity candidates such as Trump who can draw on their pop culture credit. In the old days, when print and TV were dominant, propaganda feedback loops would have been constructed at great costs by party strategists; today, they are created for free by companies that want to maximize "engagement" for the sake of profit.

As with influencers, a politician's online presence requires constant curation, so is not entirely costless. Trump might have written his own tweets, spelling mistakes and all, but others need to pay tech-savvy teams. Social media might work best for those who already treat parties as instruments for marketing a personality rather than developing policy. Take former Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi, whose PR specialists created the Forza Italia party for him in the 1990s and organized it like the fusion of a soccer fan club and a business enterprise.

Once populist leaders establish the illusion of direct connection, they find it easier to discredit traditional mediators of the public sphere such as professional journalists by claiming that they distort politicians' messages. That can translate into fewer pluralistic debates and fewer opportunities for reporters to ask inconvenient questions. Modi and Orbán, for instance, have not held a genuine press conference in more than a decade; Trump and Benjamin Netanyahu have declined to join debates before elections; and Trump has refused to appear onstage with Republican candidates in advance of the 2024 presidential primaries.

Filter bubbles can therefore help populists sell their core product: the notion of a homogenous people united behind the populist leader. However, online bubbles do not form in a vacuum. In the United States, plenty of people do live in a far-right bubble, without any contact even with center-right outlets such as the *Wall Street Journal*. This bubble is not the result of Facebook or Twitter. As social scientists at Harvard University have demonstrated, its contours were shaped by the enormous success of right-wing cable news and talk radio in the 1990s (Benker et al. 2018). Social media just came on top of that existing infrastructure and the peculiarly segmented public sphere in the United States, driven by commercial imperatives (if social media itself made for world where conspiracy theories and hate always reign, we would see the same outcome in every country—but we do not).

To be sure, populists cannot be prevented from building their own counter-publics online, just as parties cannot—and should not—be hindered as they bring together followers. Liberal freedom to assemble and associate means that like-minded people have every right to get together with others who share the same commitments. One would not want authorities to start shutting down safe spaces for groups devoted to empowering minorities, for instance, just because they happen to be insufficiently pluralistic. Ideas to combat online homogeneity through injecting viewpoint diversity into online life are well intentioned but impractical. Cass Sunstein, for example, has suggested a “Serendipity Button,” which could very well come out as “now that you’re looking at the feminist viewpoint, how about clicking on the antifeminist one?”

A more nuanced view of online political life does not mean that inciting hatred must be tolerated in democracies. Platform design makes a difference: As the political scientist Jennifer Forestal has shown, Reddit, for instance, makes for a more diverse conversation than Facebook Groups. Reddit allows for communities to form but keeps borders between Subreddits permeable; it also empowers both moderators and users to stick to rules agreed upon by an online community.

Liberals should push for content moderation being mandatory, as it is in Germany, rather than a luxury that a Musk has the power to dispense. Such moderation can be abused, but that is the case with any attempt to control media power. (Libel laws can be—and are—exploited by undemocratic actors, but that does not mean we should dispense with them altogether.) The “black boxes” of algorithms should at least be opened to researchers so that they can help policymakers better understand how social media platforms are run. The European Union has been pursuing these goals with its recent Digital Services Act and Digital Markets Act, which so far have prevented Facebook from launching its X clone, Threads, in the bloc due to its failure to comply with privacy regulations.

Legislation—in line with the liberal imperatives of breaking up monopolies and giving users individual rights—and education (of course) will be the most important tools. The business models of social media, which are based on maximizing engagement through offering ever more extremist content, are not beyond political regulation. Democracies should also invest serious resources in teaching media literacy—something that many leaders affirm in the abstract, but that, just like civic



education, always gets short shrift in the end, since “hard” subjects such as math are seen as more important for global economic competition. Not least, democracies must not treat social media in isolation. If they foster a healthier media landscape in general, including reinvigorated local journalism, and regulate political parties, it will be much harder for populists and other assorted anti-liberals—even if they turn to online manipulation—to succeed.

## 5 Conclusion

A conventional narrative—a modern meta-narrative, so to speak, one that often takes a distinctly liberal shape—claims that the ancients (or at least a few of them) had a glorious, heroic life in public; by contrast, the moderns busy themselves with commerce and private pleasures (this is the story most prominently derived from Constant, even if his account was in fact much more complex). But it is important to see how the liberal script actually differs from this narrative: liberals promoted publicity on the one hand and privacy on the other. In both regards, liberalism suffered from major blind spots: the public sphere in front of which governments were to justify themselves was not necessarily a site of critical, rational debate; and it certainly excluded many different groups deemed insufficiently rational. Privacy, rather than securing the autonomy of individuals, could be used as a shield to protect abusive relationships in the name of the sanctity, or at least integrity, of the family.

Yet blind spots could be removed over time—even if that process is neither automatic nor complete. But the constellation of publicity and privacy also shifted over time: today, states again claim secrecy for themselves; the public sphere, according to conventional diagnoses, is fragmenting and becoming less and less hospitable to open, critical debate about matters of general concern; and the private is being captured by companies following the imperatives of surveillance capitalism.

The latter part of this chapter has sketched some possible remedies: breaking up monopolies; giving rights to individuals; increasing transparency, or, in my preferred conceptual language: assessability. These are all plausible-sounding approaches; in fact, some of them have become conventional wisdom already. But something should give us pause: they are also ones any 19th-century liberal would have recognized: competition, rights, publicity as the answers. Whether they really match the challenges is an open question; and the answer depends partly on whether platforms are different from intermediaries as we know them (be it newspapers, radio, and TV on the one hand, and organizations like political parties and civil society associations on the other). But we should also not be entirely fixated on the platforms: their nefarious effects—such as the illusion of directness and the resulting removal of restraints on leaders intent on breaking with liberalism and eventually also democracy—are real; but it is not impossible to think that the best way of addressing them might be to reinvigorate institutions already familiar to a liberal of Tocqueville, but still of crucial importance: political parties and professional news organizations, high-quality local journalism in particular.

## References

- Anderson, Elizabeth (2019): *Private Government. How Employers Rule Our Lives (And Why We Don't Talk about It)*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Arendt, Hannah (1989): *The Human Condition*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Benkler, Yochai; Farris, Robert; Roberts, Hal (2018): *Network Propaganda*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bourdieu, Pierre (1984): *L'opinion publique n'existe pas*. In Pierre Bourdieu (Ed.): *Questions de sociologie*. Paris: Les Éditions de minuit, pp. 222–235.
- Bruns, Axel (2022): *Echo chambers? Filter bubbles? The misleading metaphors that obscure the real problem*. In Marta Pérez-Escobar; José Manuel Noguera-Vivo (Eds.): *Hate Speech and Polarization in Participatory Society*. London: Routledge, pp. 33–48.
- Butter, Michael (2018): *Nichts ist, wie es scheint. Über Verschwörungstheorien*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- Constant, Benjamin (1988): *The Liberty of the Ancients Compared with That of the Moderns*. In Biancamaria Fontana; Benjamin Constant (Eds.): *Political Writings*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 307–328.
- D'Ancona, Matthew (2017): *Post-truth. The New War on Truth and How to Fight Back*. London: Ebury Press.
- Dean, Jodi (2001): *Publicity's Secret*. In *Political Theory* 29 (5), pp. 624–650.
- Donaldson, Peter Samuel (1992): *Machiavelli and Mystery of State*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Dormal, Michel (2018): *Die öffentliche Meinung gibt es (immer noch) nicht. Eine Kritik an Pierre Rosanvillons and John Keanes öffentlichkeitszentrierten Formwandeltheorien*. In Winfried Thaa; Christian Volk (Eds.): *Formwandel der Demokratie*. Baden-Baden: Nomos, pp. 81–98.
- Fine Licht, Jenny de; Naurin, Daniel (2015): *Open Decision-Making Procedures and Public Legitimacy: An Inventory of Causal Mechanisms*. In Jon Elster (Ed.): *Secrecy and Publicity in Votes and Debates*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 131–151.
- Fraser, Nancy (1990): *Rethinking the Public Sphere. A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy*. In *Social Text* (25/26), pp. 56–80.
- Fried, Charles (1968): *Privacy*. In *The Yale Law Journal* 77 (3), pp. 475–493.
- Galison, Peter (2004): *Removing Knowledge*. In *Critical Inquiry* 31 (1), pp. 229–243.
- Gavison, Ruth (1992): *Feminism and the Public/Private Distinction*. In *Stanford Law Review* 45 (1), pp. 1–45.
- Geuss, Raymond (2001): *Public Goods, Private Goods*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Guess, Andrew; Lyons, Benjamin; Nyhan, Brendan; Reifler, Jason. (05/04/2018): *Avoiding the Echo Chamber about Echo Chambers. Why selective exposure to political news*

- is less prevalent than you think, 4/5/2018. Available online at <https://knightfoundation.org/reports/trust-media-democracy/>, accessed on 6/1/2020.
- Habermas, Jürgen (1990): *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Habermas, Jürgen (2022): *Ein neuer Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit und die deliberative Politik*. Originalausgabe. Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- Igo, Sarah Elizabeth (2018): *The Known Citizen. A History of Privacy in Modern America*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Jungherr, Andreas; Schroeder, Ralph (2021): *Disinformation and the Structural Transformations of the Public Arena: Addressing the Actual Challenges to Democracy*. In *Social Media + Society* 7 (1), pp. 1–12.
- Kant, Immanuel (2021[1795]): *Zum ewigen Frieden*. Berlin: Berliner Verlagsbuchhandel.
- Karpf, Dave (2020): *How Digital Disinformation Turned Dangerous*. In Steven Livingston; W. Lance Bennett (Eds.): *The Disinformation Age*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 153–168.
- Kavanagh, Jennifer; Rich, Michael (2018): *Truth Decay: An Initial Exploration of the Diminishing Role of Facts and Analysis in American Public Life*. RAND Corporation.
- Kenny, Paul (2023). *Why Populism?* New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Koselleck, Reinhart (1973): *Kritik und Krise*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Luban, David (1996): *The Publicity Principle*. In Robert E. Goodin (Ed.): *The theory of institutional design*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 154–198.
- Marmor, Andrei (2015): *What Is the Right to Privacy?* In *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 43 (1), pp. 3–26.
- Mix, Andreas (2019): *Die Ambivalenz des Geheimnisses. Zum Verhältnis von Demokratie und Öffentlichkeit*. Frankfurt a.M.: Campus.
- Nagel, Thomas (1998): *Concealment and Exposure*. In *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 27 (1), pp. 3–30.
- Nussbaum, Martha (01/04/2000): *Is Privacy Bad for Women?* Available online at <https://bostonreview.net/articles/martha-c-nussbaum-privacy-bad-women/>, accessed on 11/27/2022.
- Nymoen, Ole; Schmidt, Wolfgang M. (2021): *Influencer. Die Ideologie der Werbekörper*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- O’Neill, Onora (2013): *Media Freedoms and Media Standards*. In Nick Couldry (Ed.): *Ethics of Media*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 21–38.
- Okin, Susan Moller (1989): *Justice, Gender, and the Family*. New York: Basic Books.
- Patten, Alan (1996): *The Republican Critique of Liberalism*. In *British Journal of Political Science* 26 (1), pp. 25–44.
- Persily, Nathaniel; Tucker, Joshua A. (Eds.) (2020): *Social Media and Democracy. The State of the Field, Prospects for Reform*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

- Pettit, Philip (1997): *Republicanism. A Theory of Freedom and Government*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Pistor, Katharina (2019): *The Code of Capital. How the Law Creates Wealth and Inequality*. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Post, Robert (2018): Data Privacy and Dignitary Privacy: Google Spain, the Right to be Forgotten, and the Construction of the Public Sphere. In *Duke Law Journal* 67 (5), pp. 981–1072.
- Pressly, Lowry (2014): Being Known. In *The Point* 9, 2014. Available online at <https://thepointmag.com/criticism/known/>, accessed on 11/27/2022.
- Rawls, John (1971): *A Theory of Justice*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Rawls, John (1993): *Political Liberalism*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Reckwitz, Andreas (2017): *Die Gesellschaft der Singularitäten. Zum Strukturwandel der Moderne*. Berlin: Suhrkamp.
- Rosanvallon, Pierre (2018): *Good Government. Democracy beyond Elections*. First printing. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Rosenfeld, Sophia A. (2018): *Democracy and Truth. A Short History*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.
- Schlegel, Friedrich (1967): Kritische Fragmente [Lyceums-Fragmente]. In Eichner, Hans (Ed.): *Charakteristiken und Kritiken I. Critical Friedrich Schlegel Edition*. 2 volumes. Stuttgart: Ferdinand Schöningh, 1958, pp. 147–163.
- Schmitt, Carl (1963): *Der Begriff des Politischen*. Berlin: Duncker & Humblot.
- Seemann, Michael (2021): *Die Macht der Plattformen. Politik in Zeiten der Internetgiganten*. Berlin: Ch. Links.
- Sidgwick, Henry (1981): *The Methods of Ethics*. Unabridged and unaltered republ. of the 7. ed. as publ. by Macmillan 1907. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing.
- Snyder, Timothy (21/05/2018): Fascism is back. Blame the Internet, 5/21/2018. Available online at [https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2018/05/21/fascism-is-back-blame-the-internet/?utm\\_term=.a73641422a11](https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/posteverything/wp/2018/05/21/fascism-is-back-blame-the-internet/?utm_term=.a73641422a11), accessed on 8/27/2018.
- Srinivasan, Amia (2018): The Aptness of Anger. In *Journal of Political Philosophy* 26 (2), pp. 123–144.
- Staab, Philipp; Thiel, Thorsten (2021): Privatisierung ohne Privatismus. Soziale Medien im digitalen Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit. In *Leviathan: Berliner Zeitschrift* (21), pp. 277–297.
- Susskind, Jamie (2022): *The Digital Republic. On Freedom and Democracy in the 21st Century*. New York: Pegasus Books.
- Thomson, Judith Jarvis (1975): The Right to Privacy. In *Philosophy & Public Affairs* 4 (4), pp. 295–314.
- Urbinati, Nadia (2015): A Revolt against Intermediary Bodies. In *Constellations* 22 (4), pp. 477–486.
- Vogl, Joseph (2021): *Kapital und Ressentiment. Eine kurze Theorie der Gegenwart*. München: C.H.Beck.

- Warren, Samuel D.; Brandeis, Louis D. (1890): The Right to Privacy. In *Harvard Law Review* 4 (5), pp. 193–220.
- Whitman, James Q. (2004): The Two Western Cultures of Privacy: Dignity versus Liberty. In *The Yale Law Journal* 113 (6), pp. 1151–1221.
- Winters, Jeffrey Alan (2011): *Oligarchy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Wylie, Christopher (2019): *Mindf\*ck*. Inside Cambridge Analytica's Plot to Break the World. Paperback edition. London: Profile Books.
- Zuboff, Shoshana (2019): *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism. The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. New York: PublicAffairs.