

9-2009

Public Spheres, Networked Publics, Networked Public Spheres?: Tracking the Habermasian Public Sphere in Recent Discourse

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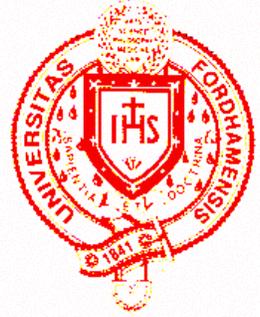
Aslama, Minna and Erikson, Ingrid, "Public Spheres, Networked Publics, Networked Public Spheres?: Tracking the Habermasian Public Sphere in Recent Discourse" (2009). *McGannon Center Research Resources*. 4.
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WORKING PAPER

**PUBLIC SPHERES, NETWORKED PUBLICS,
NETWORKED PUBLIC SPHERES?
TRACKING THE HABERMASIAN PUBLIC SPHERE IN RECENT
DISCOURSE**

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September, 2009

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Introduction: Old Concept, New Context

The early and mid 1990s witnessed a surge of academic thinking and public debates around the democratizing power of the Internet. The most hopeful utopias of deliberative online communication and formation of active ‘subaltern counter-publics’ (Fraser 1992/1997) were countered with fears ranging from trivialization, fragmentation, even the disappearance of widely and commonly shared issues, to viral distribution of non-democratic, ‘harmful’ content. Now the same debates are re-emerging once again in an era that is witnessing the explosion of ‘social production’ in a multitude of digital platforms. The recent examples of the elections in two very different societies, the United States and Iran, provide just two cases where information production by non-professional individuals and loose associations, distributed via informal networks including social networking sites and microblogging, has played a major role in democratic processes (e.g., Williams & Gulati 2007; Keim & Clark 2009). A core question remains: do social networks facilitate platforms for democratic debate and participation in our ‘post-broadcast’ democracies (Prior 2007) characterized by ‘a networked information economy’ (Benkler 2006)? In other words, is or can there exist such a phenomenon as a ‘networked public sphere’?

The term ‘public sphere’, credited to Jorgen Habermas (1962/89), may be one of the most enduring concepts within academic disciplines that deal with society and democracy. Habermas articulated the public sphere as a primarily co-present space where deliberate democratic opinion could be expressed and debated among citizens. Given that Habermas’ work was based on 18th century bourgeois Europe, that in his opinion the public sphere had by the 20th century already been ‘refeudalised’, and that he regarded the role of mass media as forming a public sphere ‘by

appearance only', it is not surprising that his theorization has influenced numerous disciplines. Debates ranging from the democratic theory of political science and the self-reflection of cultural critics to empirical studies in sociology and communications, have all embraced the term in their own ways – and continue to do so (Calhoun 1997/1992, vii; Garnham 2007). Consequently, the term has been criticized, altered, and rediscovered to the point where it has almost become a generic slogan for theorizing, and often promoting, both mediated and unmediated arenas for democratic deliberation.

This statement by Habermas, translated into English from his lecture in Germany, and posted in the Association of Internet Research (AoIR) listserve, evoked some critical comments there in March 2006:¹

Use of the Internet has both broadened and fragmented the contexts of communication. This is why the Internet can have a subversive effect on intellectual life in authoritarian regimes. But at the same time, the less formal, horizontal cross-linking of communication channels weakens the achievements of traditional media. This focuses the attention of an anonymous and dispersed public on select topics and information, allowing citizens to concentrate on the same critically filtered issues and journalistic pieces at any given time. The price we pay for the growth in egalitarianism offered by the Internet is the decentralised access to unedited stories. In this medium, contributions by intellectuals lose their power to create a focus.

Habermas perceptively notes the paradoxical quality of networked forms of interaction—they are at once broadening and limiting. Admittedly, individuals, groups, and societies are increasingly dispersed in our globalized world, but communication networks afford a means to bridge these spans, and in a precise manner. In some cases, the bridging power of the Internet can enable new ties to form and new forms of interaction to blossom. But what is the public sphere here? The virtual 'space' created by networked infrastructures? The social structures, or 'publics' enacted

through networked communication? Or the products of collective action made possible by Internet technology? These confusing questions show how subtle shifts—for example, between the idea of a network as an infrastructure, a place, or a social unit—impede robust, interdisciplinary discussion of communication technology’s effects on modern day venues for public deliberation.

Broadly speaking, certain conceptualizations of ‘network,’ ‘public sphere,’ and ‘publics’ correspond to the disciplinary fields in which they are theorized and debated. Within the sociology, political science, and public policy camps, the notion of the public sphere is generally thought of as a ‘commons’ like place where debate and discussion can occur unimpeded. With the breakdown of proximity-defined relations and associative structures (a.k.a. traditional notions of community), the public sphere appears threatened. Where to debate? How to find appropriate associations or alliances to carry out public objectives? The problem from this vantage point is about the loss of the historic public sphere and the need to find a new space or place for exercising deliberative democracy. The brief takeaway here: commons-like venues promote democratic deliberation by affording people space and shared context to interact and engage with one another around public issues.

Within the eclectic field of media and communication studies, on the other hand, the public sphere is most often conceptualized as the product or outcome of common media usage, typically at a national or shared-language level. The sphere extends as far as the media transmission does; media defines the shape and dynamics of the sphere. Consumption of media informs a group of people simultaneously and in so doing defines a public audience(s), more recently referred to as ‘publics’ (Sheller, 2004; Varnelis, 2008). A case in point is the use of the public sphere theorization in defense of public service broadcasting: public service broadcasting

(PSB) has been traditionally characterized in most countries by nation-wide, free-of-charge, universal, full-service content production and distribution for ‘citizens’ as imagined recipients. There is a subtle, but burgeoning, tension between the public sphere as viewed as a cybercommons and as a media-derived audience of (potentially) active citizens.

A third disciplinary area, tangential more to media and communications scholarship than sociology and political science, is composed of researchers who participated in the development and sensemaking around the Internet from the beginning. They are information science and science and technology scholars. For this group, the networked infrastructure of the Internet was no mere metaphor: networks are inherently relational—a network is defined by ties, or associations, between nodes. Unlike the transmission model articulated within media studies, information scientists understand networks structurally and processually—by one node linking or not linking to another node. The recent move toward social networks on the Internet amplifies the networked infrastructure as a social one, but in this conceptual realm, networks are very far away from their component elements. Neither a digital space nor a distributed social body per se, networking within information studies remains most steadfastly the means by which organizing occurs.

All of these fields, or metafields, despite their distinctions, have been influenced by what Crossley and Roberts (2004, 13-17) call the three ‘schools’ of rethinking of Habermas and the public sphere in the 1990s: the late-modern, the postmodern, and the relational/institutional schools of thought. The *late-modern* approach, developed by Cohen & Arrato (1992) in particular, views society as comprised of a system and life-world, which both entail public and private spheres. In terms of the system, the private sphere refers to the economic and the public sphere to the political system. In the lifeworld, the private sphere consists of intimate space of

relationships, while the public sphere refers to public communication. The public sphere allows for individual communication to enter into the public discourse so that it can affect the political system. The *postmodern* view emphasizes the constantly negotiated, ever-changing and conflictual nature of public communication (as opposed to one based on consensus). Here reign issues of power and control; the sphere can be co-opted by private, corporate interests if not for the counter or alternative publics that hold these entities in check. Counterpublic spheres are essential for the postmodern notion of the public sphere to exist. Finally, the *relational and institutional* strand of thinking—that has mainly emerged in the U.S.—understands the public sphere as a particular institutional and relational setting, namely one where networks develop based on symbolic relations, structures and practices. This school of thinking, in particular, has taken on the notions of ‘flows’, ‘fluidity’, ‘mobility’—and ‘networks’.

At present, we are at a blurring moment in history where sociologists and political scientists, media and communication scholars, and information and technology researchers are converging on a common question: Is the Internet a new public sphere ("virtual public sphere": emphasis space/place), a new form of publics ("networked publics": emphasis social body), a “networked public sphere” (emphasis yet to be determined), or something else?ⁱⁱ Unfortunately, the debate today is clouded by the fact that many of the terms that define the discussion are ill-defined or multi-referential. This paper attempts to depict and analyze conceptualizations of the public sphere and network(s) as they are discussed within the set of interrelated fields described above. The lack of, and need for, an overview such as this has been noticed and expressed, but to date no systematic attempt to map out and summarize the theoretical and/or empirical work regarding the public sphere and the new networked media environment has yet been conducted. Our aim is to provide such a basic overview herein. We examine a collection of key journal

articles written between 2004-2009 within the social sciences and communication studies to illuminate extant interpretations of these concepts and to identify salient, related thematics. Our working research questions include: Are there emerging areas of common interests between fields? Are there new alternative empirical and theoretical innovations around the concepts of public sphere and/or network(s)? Can obvious gaps or urgent research questions for empirical or theoretical work be identified?

Mapping Networked Spheres: Methodology and Data Analysis

Our approach in this paper is decidedly exploratory, involving several stages of keyword search and associated basic descriptive content analyses. While several authors have recently called for analyses of the understandings and uses of the notion of the public sphere in relation to ‘new media’, ‘networked communication’, and so on, and several journal theme issues have been recently published to explore the thematics (e.g., *Information Society*, see Feenberg 2009; *Javnost*, see Gripsrud 2009), there are no systematic overviews how different disciplines view the relationship between democracy, ‘networked communication’ and its users/publics. Hence, at the outset there was a need for a basic mapping of whether and to what extent the notions of public sphere and network(s) appear in recent work done in the three fields. Consequently we began with database searches, followed with the construction of a matrix depicting core aspects of selected articles, and moved on from there to illustrate some emerging trends by discussing four articles in detail. This section follows these steps in sequence.

Our focus centered on three major subject-oriented databases—the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI)ⁱⁱⁱ, EBSCO Communication and Mass Media Complete (CMMC)^{iv}, and

CSA Illuminav—to gauge the public sphere and network publics discourse within political science and sociology, and media and communication studies, broadly speaking. We felt these sources, particularly EBSCO^{vi} and CSA Illumina^{vii}, were representative of our target disciplines and could therefore reflect an accurate view of public sphere discussions in these areas. The SSCI database^{viii}, on the other hand, acted as a source for uncovering a generalized social science discourse, which we used to reveal cross-disciplinary overlaps and to capture relevant writings at the periphery. The focus on journals allows easy access to a diversity of fields, and provides a more varied, up-to-date view of the fields than concentrating on recent monographs and edited volumes.

We delimited our searches in each of the three databases by time: 2004-2009. The focus on recent years was intended to capture work on the current socio-political and technological contexts of research. Obviously articles drawn from the years 2004-2008 represent a comprehensive search, whereas articles from the current year capture only those published and indexed in the first 6-7 months of the year. Database searches were not restricted as to written language, however the majority of articles were in English.

We conducted preliminary searches on several key terms to establish the dynamics of the discourse up front. Article databases were searched at the level of title and abstract to constrain the pool to those writings that addressed our chosen key words directly in their primary arguments. As a means of surveying the terminological landscape, we experimented initially with searches on key words related to public, the Internet, communication, and community, particularly experimenting with words that have emerged in recent public and scholarly discussions (e.g., ‘social media’, ‘web 2.0’; as well as more complex terms such as ‘networked information economy’, Benkler [2006]; ‘networked publics’ [Varnelis, 2008]). We also felt that

searching within a constellation of associated terms would help harvest work that might address the thematics of the public sphere, but not use the directly. Table 1 illustrates our multiple searches on various sets of key terms.

Table 1. Exploratory Keyword Searches (2004-09)

Data (04-09, journal abstracts)	Public sphere*	Public sphere* + network*	Public sphere* + communication technolog*	Virtual public sphere*	Networked public*	Social media	Networked information econom*
EBSCO	737	32	14	6	1	112 (INCLUDES NON-ACADEMIC, TRADE JOURNAL ARTICLES)	---
CSA: CIOS + SAGE comm. texts (great overlap)	755	12	10	13	---	8	---
CSA: CSA Sociology abstr + SAGE	707	41	11	5	1	6	1
CSA : CSA pol sci & intl pol sci	489	29	6	3	---	1	---
<i>Total CSA (=comm., soc, pol)</i>	<i>1462</i>	<i>70</i>	<i>21</i>	<i>7</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>12</i>	<i>1</i>
SSCI	538	33	7	4	---	22	---
TOTAL	3226	147	48	31	3	149	2

The first search on the concept of the ‘public sphere’ revealed that the term is indeed alive and well, almost half a century after it was initially conceived: it emerged in massive amounts in all databases, and almost equally in subsearches in CSA Illumina, of sociology,

political science, and communication studies. At the same time, it became clear that terms like ‘social media’ or ‘web 2.0’ might still be too vague to be used in theorization around the public sphere. It also appears that the new theoretical terms ‘networked publics’ and ‘networked information economy’ have not yet explicitly entered the research terminology of either the social sciences, communication studies, or other peripherally-related disciplines. Thus, as a result of this terminological experimentation, we felt that the most promising set of cases to represent a corpus of work on shifting notions of the public sphere would be found by combining ‘public sphere*’ and ‘network*’ as a single search. Both sphere and network were denoted with wildcard endings to capture terms such as ‘spheres,’ ‘networks,’ and ‘networked’—all of which are related to the idea of a mediated public sphere(s).

Table 2 depicts the number of articles that utilize variants of both the terms ‘public sphere’ and ‘network’. Recalling that EBSCO and CSA Illumina Comm are primarily media-related journals, and SSCI covers social science generally, it is not possible to claim that any one disciplinary field dominates the discourse. It is striking, however, that sociology does appear to use this combination of terms almost twice as frequently (within this small sample, which is not representative of articles overall) as political science. This raises a flag for future research at a more statistically significant level.

Table 2. Public sphere* + network* (2004-09)

	EBSCO	CSA Illumina Comm.	CSA Illumina Sociology	CSA Illumina Pol Sci	CSA Illumina Total (no duplicates)	SSCI	TOTALS
Public sphere*	737	755	707	489	1462	538	3226
Public sphere* + network*	32	12	41	22	69	33	147

Working with the sample, we identified 147 total articles for consideration, 59 of which

were duplicates of one another. After removing these duplicates, we tightened the sample down to 88 (indicated in Appendix A). We can break these publications down as follows by

publication year:

2009: 12 (14%)
2008: 15 (17%)
2007: 10 (11%)
2006: 12 (14%)
2005: 20 (23%)
2004: 19 (21%)

Furthermore, we can say that 50 articles (57%) appeared only in one database, 20 articles (23%) appeared in only two databases, 2 articles appeared in all three databases simultaneously, and 1 of the 88 articles appeared simultaneously in all three databases and in two separate subject areas within CSA Illumina.

We built on this logic of disciplinary reach to architect a subsample from the total 88 that might represent the keystone^{ix} articles for the discussion of networks, networked publics, and public spheres. It should be noted that this subsample does not correlate in any way with citation statistics. Rather, it is based on the idea that the greater the access (i.e., the larger the number of databases in which an article is indexed), the larger the article's potential impact on scholarship. Applying this working theory of access impact, we sorted the full sample by the number of databases the articles appeared in and skimmed off the top any that appeared in two databases or greater. This strategy netted a smaller sample of 23, which comprises the table in Appendix B.

Of this total sample, we note the following publication history:

2009: 5 (22%)
2008: 4 (17%)
2007: 0 (0%)
2006: 3 (13%)
2005: 6 (26%)

2004: 5 (22%)

We can also state that eleven of the papers in the subset are empirical treatments, while twelve are theoretical. Additionally, twelve of the papers are classified as communication scholarship, four as political science, four as sociology, and the remaining three as cultural studies, history, and information studies. However, the sizeable number of communication papers reflects the database composition of the larger subset (44 of 88 articles drawn from media and communications journals) and should not be interpreted—without additional follow-on research—as the primary domain of debate on this topic.

Counter Publics, Networks, and Global Public Sphere(s): Four Cases

The basic analysis of the 23 core articles from years 2004-09 clearly shows the variety of public sphere-related thinking within sociology and political science, communication studies, and science and technology studies. In order to illustrate some of the diversity and the richness of discourses around the notions of the public sphere and networks, we chose four articles as descriptive cases. The articles were selected because they all addressed what seems to have been the most prominent theme of the past years: the transnational or global nature of the public sphere formed by new kinds of civil society networks. At the same time, all four offer very different takes on that research subject.

In order to depict the essence of these approaches, we asked the texts the following core questions:

(1) What is the specific context of the article? What is its specific focus, subject matter?

(2) How is the idea of the public sphere understood in the article? How is network defined? How do those ‘ways of seeing’ reflect the particular academic field that the article represents? Are these key notions redefined, if so, how?

(3) What is the main outcome / finding / suggestion of the article? What does that tell about public spheres and networks?

Case 1: The Frankfurt School and the “Virtual Public Spheres”

[Langman, L. (2005). From Virtual Public Spheres to Global Justice: A Critical Theory of Internetworked Social Movements. *Sociological Theory*, vol. 23, No. 1, pp. 42-74.]

As our basic analysis indicates, the idea of the public sphere is not seen as an outdated model from the critical leftist tradition of European scholarship of the 1960s. Instead, it is being utilized not only as a vague notion when discussing empirical cases, but as a theoretical framework that bears great relevance in the networked communication environments, especially for (global) social movements. A case in point: in her extensive article, Langman (2005) revisits and revitalizes the ideas of the Frankfurt School in order to bring critical theory to the forefront of theorizations about social movements. She critiques academic social movement theory of remaining in the realm of ‘grant-funded empiricism’ and ‘eschewed objectivity’.

It seems that around the time Langman’s article was published the work on networked social movements had just begun; hence she points out the way the theorization had so far downplayed the role the online and mobile communications. However, she argues, these technologies facilitate what she labels ‘virtual public spheres’. For her, coming back to, and revising Critical Theory for the 2000s is particularly relevant regarding the various alternative globalization/global justice movements that she calls ‘Internetworked Social Movements’ (ISMs). While these Internet-enabled movements may in their fluidity and flexibility be very different from movements of resistance in the past, the ISMs have become the primary basis of

struggle against the globalized neoliberal capitalism, corporate power, and privilege.

After a thorough account of social movement and the Frankfurt School of theorizing, the context for ISMs, and the roles electronic media play in these movements, Langman ends with a passionate conclusion. She strongly argues that theories of social movements should embrace the legacy of Critical Theory:

“[Critical Theory] offers a comprehensive framework to both chart the new forms of social mobilizations and, at the same time, inspire participation in the struggle for global justice. Moreover, its critiques of economic, political, technological, cultural, and even psychological domination are the starting points for imagining that, as the WSF [the World Social Forum] proclaims, ‘another world is possible’.”

In short, Langman sees the network as a tool for expanding the reach of social movements in time and space, and this mediated reach results in a space for distributed interaction that would otherwise be impossible. Despite the spatial connotations, ‘network,’ in Langman’s parlance, is never conflated with the ‘virtual public sphere’; it is merely a means—“internetworked”—for connecting social groups who by their interaction construct (in a Giddens’-type structuration way (Giddens, 1984)) the virtual public sphere wherever and whenever they can, online and off. The sphere manifests itself anywhere that social movement actors can internetwork.

Case 2: Transnational Communication Deficit and Possibilities in the European Union

[Wimmer, J. (2005, June). Counter-Public Spheres and The Revival of The European Public Sphere. *Javnost-The Public*, 12(2), 93-109.]

Like Langman’s theorization, Wimmer’s (2005) article, ostensibly the keystone article in our sample for its presence in all three database searches, is inspired by the rise of networked social movements. However, Wimmer’s focus is on the particular geopolitical setting of the European

Union. Although the entire concept of a ‘European public sphere’ is still under debate (e.g., Nieminen 2009), for Wimmer, this public sphere is an empirical reality or at least a true possibility. He depicts a variety of empirical evidence of the nation-bound public spheres in Europe: the media tend to concentrate on domestic issues; the political decision-making is in the hands of EU-specialized elites. Referring to recent re-theorization of the public sphere, including Habermas’ more recent work, he argues for the necessity of such a unified space as a prerequisite for a functioning, transnational European democracy. This theoretical-empirical context is Wimmer’s starting point for his analysis of counter-public spheres, which can cure what he calls “a communication deficit” in Europe.

For Wimmer, the concept of the public sphere is very closely tied to mediated communication. He recognizes the haziness of the notion, and goes on to review a multitude of interpretations of his core term ‘counter public sphere’, settling on a two-fold, media-focused definition. The first dimension of the definition refers to counter public spheres that are formed by critical partial publics seeking to promote their alternative, marginalized views in mass media (‘alternative public spheres’). The second understanding marks new, networked social movements and non-profit organizations that in past decades have gained importance as political actors in Europe (‘participatory counter-public spheres’). While not radically new, this two-dimensional understanding highlights the different approaches to communication. Alternative public spheres are formed by alternative media contents, their main purpose being complementary to mainstream media. Counter-public spheres, in contrast, may be more insular, not necessarily or primarily formed to directly influence mass media and ‘public opinion’.

Wimmer discusses in length the importance of ‘new media’, especially the Internet, in the formation of the counter-public spheres, and goes on to argue how counter-public-spheres will be

essential for a potential transnational public sphere in the European Union. With relatively brief analyses of two European-wide communication networks, *Attac* and *Luther Blisset*, he illustrates how these two counter-public spheres actually work in practice. His final conclusions are not surprising, given that his work appeared in the mid 2000s when the Internet and social movements had begun to gain momentum as a research topic: online communication will increasingly influence political communication in microscopic level (individual participation), mesoscopic level (NSMs, NGOs) and in an aggregate macroscopic level. While arguing for the importance of the meso level, he also notes how potentially risky and explosive ultra-radical movements may become for deliberative democracies, and calls for ‘activation’ of media policy and regulatory measures.

Wimmer represents a trajectory of scholarship that sees the Internet as the latest in a long line of media, all of which have and will continue to be used to animate the public sphere. To a certain degree, the public sphere has always been defined by media—the public, in a way, was/is an audience as well as a civic body—so control of the media is a significant mode of influencing public dialogue: the participatory prowess of online communication technologies help to shift the power balance toward individuals and social groups. Like Langman’s perspective, Wimmer too sees the Internet, folded into the larger category of media, as a means for public participation; however unlike Langman, cyberspace is not conceived as a virtualized locale.

Case 3: Local Meets Global in Online Activism

[Miloni, D. (2009, May). Probing the online counterpublic sphere: the case of Indymedia Athens. *Media, Culture & Society*, 31(3), 409-431.]

In the introduction to her recent empirical analysis on online activism, Milioni (2009) echoes the

main premise of Langman and Wimmer: The ideal of the public sphere is still constructive and appropriate concept both as a tool for criticizing the current power constellations (mass media included) and as a compass for restructuring the public space towards more democratization. For her study, the context is both local and global: She looks at the global network of Independent Media Centres (IMC)(aka Indymedia, a network she accredits being the ‘CNN of global citizen movements’) vis-à-vis a local node of the network, Indymedia Athens.

In Milioni’s definition, the Indymedia as alternative information and communication network is a potential ‘counterpublic sphere’. She reiterates the view of Langman and Wimmer regarding the potential of the Internet to weave together the different aspects of the democratic public life, such as information acquisition and opinion formation, political discussion, identity building and collective action. Similarly, she shares the view of many scholars about the ‘new’ aspects of the networked public sphere: There is now a diversity of publics, multiple networks facilitate identity formation and collective action, and the terms under which deliberation is carried out are varied.

Milioni’s fresh way of operationalizing these new aspects for empirical analysis is to apply Dahlgren’s (1995) model of television and the public sphere. She suggests that the new aspects of, or changes in, the public sphere correspond to Dahlgren’s main dimensions of the sphere, namely the structural, the representational and the interactional dimensions. Milioni’s analysis was equally threefold. She studied the organizational and normative features of IMC network structure. She also analyzed qualitatively the representational aspect by focusing on IMC content, sourcing and framing of news postings and the patterns of information processing. Finally, she explored the interactional dimension by exploring users’ behavior and communication modes. This kind of multi-dimensional empirical analysis framed around the

concept of public sphere is relatively rare within communication research, even within media sociology (c.f., Aslama 2008).

In the case of IMC, Milioni concludes, there are three central repertoires of online practice. She refers to information self-determination that could be exemplary (e.g., Indymedia Athens creating new models for sustainable media organizations), competitive (e.g., IMC creating its own outlets for production and dissemination of information) and supplementary (e.g., Indymedia centers monitoring and challenging mainstream media content). Indymedia Athens also facilitates a new kind of interactivity in the public sphere, since publics use these open online spaces as a platform for expressing their views and engaging in political conversation. This individual interactivity is different from the third repertoire, a notion Milioni calls delocalized networked (inter)action. By this she means the way IMC connects formerly disconnected collective and individual actors of civil society in transnational contexts.

While Milioni is cautious about the generalizability of her findings, she ends with a hopeful argument: for her, the “idea of the public sphere is still a useful concept to understand and structure online space – provided it acknowledges the multiplicity and diversity of active publics, the new roles and repertoires of their online counterparts, and the need for an open model for political communication” (ibid., 427). The spatial element of online space is accentuated for Milioni more than in many of the other writings in our sample, yet we see again the blurring of networked social actors and networked social space that characterizes this discourse.

Case 4: New Global Public Sphere and Its Governance

[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, pp. 78-93.]

Castells, one of the key theorists of the network society, takes perhaps the broadest look at the notions of networks and the public sphere found in our research material, both concretely (a global view) and normatively (a new global model and suggestions how to manage that sphere). He is quick to note that (informal) networks and the media have always been a part of the formation of the public sphere, albeit today it might be increasingly and explicitly so. He also stresses the very basic dynamic embedded in the notion of the public sphere, that between civil society and the state. According to his definition, the “public sphere is not just the media or the sociospatial sites of public interaction. It is the cultural/informational repository of the ideas and projects that feed public debate” (ibid., 79).

In this article, Castells takes on the task to map the new contexts of this repository in terms of state and civil society. In the globalizing world, it is not only the nation state that is in transition. Castells argues, like Langman, Wimmer and Milioni regarding their specific cases, that there exists a new, transnational and even global civil society. For Castells, this includes local as well as sectoral actors such as grassroots organizations and nongovernmental organizations with a global or international frame of reference. He sees social movements that aim to control the process of globalization as another kind of participant in that society. And, he continues, the movement of public opinion including the spontaneous, ad hoc mobilizations using horizontal, autonomous networks of communication, can be considered as yet another type of ‘actor’ of the global civic society.

Castells’ message is clear. For him, the new public sphere is constituted through both mass media and horizontal networks of communication. He urges state actors and intergovernmental

institution to take these mediated ways of communication and interaction seriously: they should relate to civil society not only around institutional mechanisms and procedures of political representation but in public debates within that global public sphere; particularly noteworthy are the social spaces of the Web 2.0, as exemplified by YouTube, MySpace, Facebook, and the blogosphere. In other words, he calls for ‘public diplomacy’ that would utilize these networks of communication:

“To harness the power of the world’s public opinion through global media and Internet networks is the most effective form of broadening political participation on a global scale, by inducing a fruitful, synergistic connection between the government-based international institutions and the global civil society. This multimodal communication space is what constitutes the new global public sphere.” (ibid., 90)

More than any of the other cases, Castells imagines the network of the Internet to be *the* domain of activity for public engagement because the world no longer exists at a community or national level. The new globalized reality demands a new venue that only a networked reality can provide. The Internet *is* the public sphere.

In one sense, these four cases represent four distinct approaches, from social movement theory, to political communication to theorization and empirical analyses inspired by media-oriented political economy. On the other hand, these four articles share two commonalities in their essential understanding of the public sphere in relation to networks. First, the context of each text is distinctly global, even if addressing local or broader geopolitically specific regions. Second, it is no surprise that given the context, the notion of public sphere is theorized beyond its traditional nation-bound meaning. These cases also, more or less explicitly, return to the normative ideal of a public sphere – while the context might not be further away from the original subject of Habermas’ work, 18th century bourgeois Europe.

What is less consistent is the conceptualization of the notions of networks and public spheres as spatial, social or instrumental entities. All of these cases appear on the surface to nod appropriately to the facilitative powers of the Internet to bridge, expand, or connect, but clearly Castells' conceptualization of the public sphere as constituted by the Internet and Wimmer's theorization of public audiences manifested by common media engagement are some distance apart. For one, the Internet is the subject and for the other it is just the vehicle. We see this particular nuance in place among the 23 articles we looked at closely as well. In addition to Castells, Bach & Stark (2004), Dahlberg (2004), Doyle & Doherty (2007), Feenberg (2009), Jouët (2009), and Silver (2005) all outline a virtual sphere of engagement with strongly spatial elements. Bach, like Langman, refers to the "virtual public sphere," Silver and Feenberg to "virtual town halls" and "virtual malls" respectively, Jouët to "digital public spheres," whereas Dahlberg and Doyle & Doherty discuss the matter more territorially with references to "extending" and "expanding" the public sphere. The network, electrified and hypertextual, is a new locale for public engagement, with all of the associations that people make with familiar and unfamiliar places. Participation as a citizen within this line of thinking is to know how to navigate this new space.

One way of navigating is as a collective, namely as a network, which has always been the case within the public sphere. Thus we see the notion of the network also conceptualized as an entity of a civil society within the recent discourse (most often as an 'alternative' one). Within the cases above, Langman's articulation of internetworked social movements reflects this view most closely. Indeed, her nomenclature simultaneously acknowledges the instrumental affordances of the Internet and the social organization that it enables. Wimmer's and Milioni's constructions of 'publics' and 'counterpublics', while similar social actors we would imagine, do

not quite bring the same image to mind. Castells reserves the term ‘network’ for the totality of the global public sphere he posits, but does mention social movements, organization and the like as actors within the greater ‘network society’ (Castells 2000).

Within our large subsample, “republican networks” (Delalande 2008), “transnational networks of solidarity” (Doyle & Doherty 2006), “community networks” (Silver 2005), and “peer-to-peer (P2P) networks” (Uricchio 2004) are all actors that move and shape these nascent projections of the current and future public sphere within the discourse. Networks of actors certainly utilize communication technologies to form and sustain their ties, but it is not yet clear in the development of network/ed public sphere ideas presented here whether networks create their own public spheres, how they control or interact with other networks within the networked public sphere, or may represent, at a structural level, the mundane reality of the public sphere as a factionalized arena with cliques and clusters much in the same way that the nonmediated public sphere has been analyzed in the past. Moreover, it remains to be empirically investigated how closely related the ideas of publics and networks are within the networked public sphere. As mentioned, we have seen recent uptake of the term ‘networked publics’ (e.g., Varnelis 2008) in certain corners, but to date this construct appears largely under the radar across most fields.

Conclusion: Back to the Future with Critical Theory

Times are a-changing. As Dahlgren (2005) has noted, over the years the notion of the public sphere has left the strict Frankfurt School theory realm and is used generically to refer to democratic goals and responsibilities of media and civic life. Based on our crude, exploratory overview and examples, we dare to suggest that this loose association with Critical Theory is

becoming again more explicit, as much of recent work explores the **power relationships** between global political/economic elites and new, alternative forms of civic society.

The critique of Habermas' work as expressed in the early 1990s, focused specifically to the exclusion of gender and other factors of subordination/marginalization from his model. Another often-expressed discontent was about his rigid understanding of public -- private division. Finally, the national focus of the public sphere paradigm has been contested already for decades (e.g., Calhoun 1992/1997). These criticisms are bypassed in the work that addresses contemporary societies, networks and the idea of the public sphere. In a sense, much of the contemporary analysis deals specifically with 'counter-publics', informal, private communication, and global contexts.

Similarly, all the three schools of rethinking Habermas in the 1990s (Crossley and Roberts 2004)—the late-modern approach, the postmodern view, and the relational-institutional strand—seem to have influenced the current work. The notion of the 'lifeworld' and its two spheres is present, even if implicitly; 'counter-publics' seem to be one focus of research and understood essential to today's 'new public sphere'; and 'networks' is perhaps the most prominent term emerging in connection to work within the public sphere paradigm. It is as if, when all the critique has been absorbed and taken into account, it is now time to return to the essence of public sphere theorization: The need is for platforms that truly facilitate impactful debates—that, in turn, foster ever more complex, transnational, network-based, democratic processes.

While much of current work highlights the role of the Internet and other 'new' forms of communication, there is an aspect that is not often addressed in the current research, but pointed out in recent public sphere theorization by Goode (2005): Different media serve different

purposes (as, most likely, do different networks). The emancipatory or democratizing function of all networks is not that clear (as Wimmer does point out). Another issue recently raised by Zittrain (2008) but little discussed in the articles we examined, is how technology can limit the way the networked public sphere is formed. Open source movement and network neutrality advocacy offer hope, but in Zittrain's view popular technological innovations may take over markets and dictate the ways we communicate in the future.

Our searches and basic analyses also suggest that much more interdisciplinary research, or at least interaction, is needed to continue to understand the emergent relationship between networks and the public sphere. We found innovative outlooks on blogging, social networking, and so on, that clearly addressed the thematics of the public sphere, but did not frame the research within that paradigm (c.f., boyd 2008). Another look at the corpus in the next few years may reveal an very different field of investigation in which Web 2.0 technologies—think of all the attention Twitter is receiving these days—manifest themselves as part of an original, highly dynamic, likely mobile public sphere that no doubt continues to blur networks as spatial, social and instrumental.

The main take-away of our exploration is that increased empirical research is urgently needed to foster understanding of practices and impacts of 'networked', 'new' public spheres and publics. Habermas (2006) himself has recently reminded scholars about the Aristotelian approach of joining together (normative) theorizing and empirical research: networked public spheres may be fluid and very temporary, subaltern and transnational. Regardless, Habermas notes, the design of modern democracies, whatever political philosophies they may otherwise encompass, still entails the private autonomy of citizens, democratic citizenship, and an independent public sphere. Continued attention on this triad, in whatever form it manifests itself,

is still needed in order to better understand and ultimately support this elemental aspect of democracy.

APPENDIX A: 2004-2009 Articles (N=88) [KW=public sphere* + network*]

	Author	Title	Year	Journal	Field	DB Overlap	Database(s)	Theory/empirical	Media discussed?	Social media / web 2.0 discussed?
1	Anttila, Erkko	Bonds of Local Community and Their Disappearance in the Working Class Suburbs of Helsinki	2004	Sosiologia	Sociology	0	CSA - sociology	Empirical	No	No
2	Arditi, Benjamin	From Globalism to Globalization: The Politics of Resistance	2004	New Political Science	Political Science	1	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology	Theory	No	No
3	Arnaud, Michel	Authentication, Identification and Trusted Third Parties	2009	Hermes	Communication	0	SSCI	theory	yes	no
4	Arnoldi, Jakob	Informational Ideas	2007	Thesis Eleven	Interdisciplinary; Social Science	1	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology	Theory	Yes	No
5	Bach, Jonathan; Stark, David	Link, Search, Interact: The Co-Evolution of NGOs and Interactive Technology	2004	Theory, Culture & Society	Social Sciences; Interdisciplinary	2	CSA - sociology; SSCI	Theory	Yes	No
6	Baringhorst, Sigrid	Political Protest on the Net - Opportunities and Limits of Mobilising a Transnational Public	2009	Politische Vierteljahresschrift	Political Science	0	SSCI	Theory	Yes	no
7	Bauman, Z.	Chasing Elusive Society	2005	International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society	Political Science; Sociology	1	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology	Theory	No	No
8	Borrelli, Davide	The Videophone on the Net. The Construction of Moral Panic in the Journalistic Representation of a New Medium	2007	Quaderni di Sociologia	Sociology	0	CSA - sociology	Empirical	Yes	No
9	Bozzoli, Belinda	The Taming of the Illicit: Bounded Rebellion in South Africa, 1986	2004	Comparative Studies in Society and History	History	1	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology	Empirical	No	No
10	Brady, Martha	Creating Safe Spaces and Building Social Assets for Young Women in the Developing World: A New Role for Sports	2005	Women's Studies Quarterly	Feminist Studies; Sociology	0	CSA - sociology	Empirical	No	No
11	Brownlie, Julie	Researching, Not Playing, in the Public Sphere	2009	Sociology-The Journal of the British Sociology Association	Sociology	0	SSCI	theoretical	no	no
12	Caha, Omer	The Role of the Media in the Revival of Alevi Identity in Turkey	2004	Social Identities	Sociology	0	CSA - sociology	Empirical	Yes	No

13	Castells, M	The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance	2008	The Annals Of The American Academy Of Political And Social Science	Political Science; Social Sciences; Interdisciplinary	2	CSA - pol sci; SSCI	Theory	Yes	No
14	Castells, M	Communication, power and counter-power in the network society	2007	International Journal of Communication	Communication	0	CSA - comm studies	Theory	Yes	Yes*
15	Cesari, Jocelyne	Mosque Conflicts in European Cities: Introduction	2005	Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies	Sociology	1	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology	Empirical	No	No
16	Chu, YW; Tang, JTH	The Internet and civil society: Environmental and labour organizations in Hong Kong	2005	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	Geography; Planning & Development; Urban Studies	0	SSCI	empirical	yes	yes
17	Convert, Bernard; Heilbron, Johan	La réinvention américaine de la sociologie économique	2005	L'Annee sociologique	Sociology	0	CSA - sociology		No	No
18	Cottle, Simon	Reporting demonstrations: the changing media politics of dissent	2008	MEDIA CULTURE & SOCIETY	Communication & Media Studies	0	SSCI	theoretical	yes	no
19	Couldry, N & Dheher T.	Globalization and the public sphere: Exploring the space of community media in Sydney	2007	Global Media & Communication	Communication	0	CSA - comm studies	Empirical	Yes	No
20	Crack, Angela M.	Transcending Borders? Reassessing Public Spheres in a Networked World	2007	Globalizations	Sociology; Political Science	1	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology	Theory	Yes	No
21	Dahlberg, L.	Cyber-publics and the corporate control of online communication	2004	Javnost	Communication	2	EBSCO (academic journals); CSA - comm studies	Empirical	Yes	No
22	Delalande, Nicolas	Emile-Justin Menier, a Chocolate-Maker in French Politics: Disputes about the Political Competence of a Manufacturer in the Early Third Republic	2008	Politix	Political Science	2	CSA - sociology; CSA - pol sci; SSCI	Empirical	No	No
23	Doyle, Timothy; Doherty, Brian	Green Public Spheres and the Green Governance State: The Politics of Emancipation and Ecological Conditionality	2006	Environmental Politics	Political Science; Environmental Studies	2	CSA - pol sci; SSCI	Theory	No	No
24	Eade, John; Garbin, David	Competing visions of identity and space: Bangladeshi Muslims in Britain	2006	Contemporary South Asia,	Asian Studies; Sociology	0	CSA - sociology	Empirical	No	No

25	Elstub, Stephen	Weber's Dilemma and a Dualist Model of Deliberative and Associational Democracy	2008	Contemporary Political Theory	Political Science	0	CSA - pol sci	Theory	Yes	No
26	Eriksen, Erik Oddvar	An Emerging European Public Sphere	2005	European Journal Of Social Theory	Sociology	0	CSA - sociology	Theory	No	No
27	Feenberg, Andrew	Critical Theory of Communication Technology: Introduction to the Special Section	2009	The Information Society	Information Science & Library Science	3	CSA - sociology; EBSCO (academic); SSCI	Theory	Yes	Yes
28	Fine, Gary Alan; Harrington, Brooke	Tiny Publics: Small Groups and Civil Society	2004	Sociological Theory,	Sociology	0	CSA - sociology	Theory	No	No
29	Fornäs, John	The Advanced Cultural Studies Institute of Sweden/ACSIS: A National Centre for Transnational and Interdisciplinary Cultural Research	2005	Nordicom Review	Communication	0	EBSCO (academic journals)	Empirical	No	No
30	Friedberg, S	The ethical complex of corporate food power	2004	Environment and Planning D - Society & Space	Environmental Studies; Geography	0	SSCI	empirical	yes	no
31	Friedland L.A. et al.	The networked public sphere	2006	Javnost	Communication	3	CSA - comm studies; EBSCO (academic journals); SSCI	Theory	Yes	No
32	Gandy, M	Cyborg urbanization: Complexity and monstrosity in the contemporary city	2005	International Journal of Urban and Regional Research	Geography; Planning & Development; Urban Studies	0	SSCI	theoretical	yes	no
33	Garcia-Salmones, Monica	Taking Uncertainty Seriously: Adaptive Governance and International Trade: A Reply to Rosie Cooney and Andrew Lang	2009	European Journal of International Law	Legal Studies	0	SSCI	theoretical	no	no
34	Geissler, P Wenzel; Kelly, Ann; Imoukhuede, Babatunde; Pool, Robert	'He is now like a brother, I can even give him some blood' -- Relational ethics and material exchanges in a malaria vaccine 'trial community' in The Gambia	2008	Social Science & Medicine	Sociology	0	CSA - sociology; SSCI	Empirical	no	No
35	Gestrich, Andreas	The Public Sphere and the Habermas Debate	2006	German History	History; Sociology	1	CSA - sociology; CSA - pol sci	Theory	No	No

36	Giordano, Christian	Appropriating the Common Good by Personalizing Social Relationships -- Acquaintances, Patronage, and Corruption in Low Trust Societies	2004	European Journal of Law Reform	Legal Studies; Sociology	0	CSA - sociology		No	No
37	Guerra Sotillo, Alexei	State, the Informal Economy and Civil Society: A Conceptual Approximation of Networks Theory	2006	Convergencia	Social Sciences	1	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology	Theory	No	No
38	Gunaratne, Shelton A.	Understanding systems theory: transition from equilibrium to entropy	2008	Asian Journal of Communication	Communication	2	EBSCO (academic journals); SSCI	Theory	Yes	No
39	Harrington, S.	The democracy of conversation: The Panel and the public sphere	2005	Media Interntional Australia	Communication	2	CSA - comm studies; EBSCO (academic journals)	Empirical	Yes	No
40	Harris, M.	Digital technology and governance in transition: The case of the British library	2008	Human relations	Organizational Studies; Communication	0	CSA - comm studies	Theory/empirical	Yes	No
41	Hernandez, Gabriela Rodriguez	From participation to political protest	2007	Convergencia	Sociology	0	SSCI	empirical	no	no
42	Herren-Oesch, Madeleine; Knab, Cornelia	The Emergence of New Agencies in Information Politics at the Second Hague Peace Conference	2007	Journal of International Peace and Organization	Political Science	0	CSA - pol sci	Empiria	No	No
43	Hinkson, Melinda	What's in a Dedication? On Being a Warlpiri DJ	2004	The Australian Journal of Anthropology	Anthropology	0	CSA - sociology	Empiria	Yes	no
44	Hoffmann, Bert	Downloading Democracy? Potential and Limitations of the Internet for Advancing Citizens' Rights in Latin America	2005	Internationale Politik und Gesellschaft	Political Science	0	CSA - pol sci	Empiria	Yes	No
45	Holton, Robert	The Inclusion of the Non-European World in International Society, 1870s-1920s: Evidence from Global Networks	2005	Global Networks	Anthropology; Geography; Sociology	2	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology; SSCI	Empiria	Yes	No
46	Hunt, Tristram	Reality, Identity and Empathy: The Changing Face of Social History Television	2006	Journal of Social History	History; Sociology	0	CSA - sociology		Yes	No
47	Husting, G.	Neutralizing protest: The construction of war, chaos, and national identity through U.S. television news on abortion-related protest, 1991	2006	Communication and Critical/Cultural Studies	Communication	0	CSA - comm studies	Empirical	Yes	No

48	JOUËT, JOSIANE	THE HYBRIDISATION OF POPULAR AND CIVIC WEB USES IN FRANCE	2009	Javnost	Communication	2	EBSCO (academic journals); SSCI	Theory	Yes	Yes
49	Kelty, C	Geeks, social imaginaries, and recursive publics	2005	Cultural Anthropology	Anthropology	0	SSCI	empirical	yes	no
50	Langman, Lauren	From Virtual Public Spheres to Global Justice: A Critical Theory of Internetworked Social Movements	2005	Sociological Theory	Sociology	2	CSA - sociology; SSCI	Theory	Yes	No
51	Lecheler, S.	EU membership and the press: An analysis of the Brussels correspondents from the new member states	2008	Journalism	Communication	2	CSA - comm studies; EBSCO (academic journals)	Theory/empirical	Yes	No
52	LUDES, PETER	THE DISSOLUTION OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE INTO PRIVATE ATTENTION MARKETS	2009	Javnost	Communication	2	EBSCO (academic journals); SSCI	Theory	Yes	Yes
53	Lutz, Helma	Life in the Twilight Zone: Migration, Transnationality and Gender in the Private Household	2004	Journal of Contemporary European Studies	Social Sciences	0	CSA - sociology	Empirical	No	No
54	Mendes, Jose Manuel de Oliveira	The Media, Publics and Citizenship: Some Brief Notes	2004	Revista Critica de Ciencias Sociais	Social Sciences; Sociology	1	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology	Theory	Yes	No
55	Mihelj, S; Koenig, T; Downey, J; Stetka, V	Examining newspaper debates on the EU constitution in seven European countries	2008	European Societies	Sociology	0	SSCI	Empirical	Yes	No
56	Milioni, Dimitra L.	Probing the online counterpublic sphere: the case of Indymedia Athens	2009	Media, Culture & Society	Communication; Sociology	2	EBSCO (academic journals); SSCI	empirical	Yes	Yes
57	Min, Byoung Won	Cultural Networks in East Asia: Beyond the Paradigm of Cultural Industry and Cultural Policy	2008	Review of International and Area Studies	Political Science; Sociology	1	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology	Theory	Yes	No
58	Mohan, G	Embedded cosmopolitanism and the politics of obligation: the Ghanaian diaspora and development	2006	Environment and Planning A	Environmental Studies; Geography	0	SSCI	empirical	no	no
59	Narayan, B.	DomiNation: How the Fragments Imagine the Nation: Perspectives from Some North Indian Villages	2005	Dialectical Anthropology	Anthropology	0	CSA - sociology	Empirical	No	No

60	Nieminen, Hannu	Europe of Networks or the European Public Sphere? Four Plus One Approaches	2008	Sociologija	Sociology	0	CSA - sociology	Theory	No	No
61	Olesen, T	In the court of public opinion' - Transnational problem construction in the HIV/AIDS medicine access campaign, 1998-2001	2006	International Sociology	Sociology	0	SSCI	empirical	no	no
62	Pait, Heloisa	Global Citizens or Faraway Viewers? Sao Paulo Residents Talk about the 2006 Lebanon Conflict	2008	International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society	Political Science; Sociology	1	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology	Empirical		No
63	Parham, Angel Adams	Diaspora, Community and Communication: Internet Use in Transnational Haiti	2004	Global Networks	Anthropology; Geography; Sociology	2	CSA - sociology; SSCI	Empirical	Yes	Yes
64	Picciotto, Sol	Constitutionalizing Multilevel Governance?	2008	International Journal of Constitutional Law	Legal Studies; Political Science	0	CSA - pol sci	Theory		No
65	Plaisance, PL	The mass media as discursive network: Building on the implications of libertarian and communitarian claims for new media ethics theory	2005	Communication Theory	Communication	0	SSCI	theoretical	yes	no
66	RASMUSSEN, TERJE	THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERNET COMMUNICATION IN PUBLIC DELIBERATION.	2009	Javnost	Communication	2	EBSCO (academic journals); SSCI	Theory	Yes	No
67	Ruwanpura, Kanchana N	Separating spaces? Ethno-gendering social networks	2008	Contemporary South Asia	Asian Studies; Sociology	1	CSA - sociology; CSA - pol sci	Empirical		No
68	Şahin, Şehriban	The Rise of Alevism as a Public Religion	2005	Current Sociology	Sociology	0	CSA - sociology	Empirical	No	No
69	Sajo, Andras	Transnational Networks and Constitutionalism	2006	Acta Juridica Hungarica	Legal Studies; Political Science	0	CSA - pol sci	Theory	No	No
70	Salvatore, Armando	The Exit from a Westphalian Framing of Political Space and the Emergence of a Transnational Islamic Public	2007	Theory, Culture & Society	Social Sciences	1	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology	Theory	No	No
71	Samuel-Azran, Tal		2009	Journal of International Communication	Communication	0	EBSCO (academic journals)	Empirical	Yes	Yes
72	Sassen, Saskia	Local Actors in Global Politics	2004	Current Sociology	Sociology	1	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology	Theory	Yes	No

73	Schiltz, Michael; Verschraegen, Gert; Magnolo, Stefano	Open Access to Knowledge in World Society?	2005	Soziale Systeme	Sociology	0	CSA - sociology	Theory	Yes	No
74	Segert, Dieter	The New Confusion: Eastern Europe in Political Education	2005	Osteuropa	Political Science	2	CSA - pol sci; SSCI	Empirical	No	No
75	Seubert, Sandra	Civilian Islands and 'No Go Areas'. About the Conditions of Impertinence for Moral Courage as Civic Virtue	2007	Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen	Sociology	0	CSA - sociology	Theory	No	No
76	Shortell, Timothy	The Decline of the Public Sphere: A Semiotic Analysis of the Rhetoric of Race in New York City	2004	Research in Urban Sociology	Sociology	0	CSA - sociology	Empirical	No	No
77	Shukra, Kalbir; Back, Les; Khan, Azra; Keith, Michael; Solomos, John	Black Politics and the Web of Joined-Up Governance: Compromise, Ethnic Minority Mobilization and the Transitional Public Sphere	2004	Social Movement Studies	Sociology; Social Sciences	1	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology	Empirical	No	No
78	Silver, D.	Selling cyberspace: Constructing and deconstructing the rhetoric of community	2005	Southern Communication Journal	Communication	2	CSA - comm studies; EBSCO (academic journals)	Empirical	Yes	No
79	Smilde, David	Popular Publics: Street Protest and Plaza Preachers in Caracas	2004	International Review of Social History	History	2	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology; SSCI	Empirical	No	No
80	Staiger, Uta	Cities, Citizenship, contested cultures: Berlin's Palace of the Republic and the politics of the public sphere	2009	Cultural Geographies	Environmental Studies; Geography	0	SSCI	Empirical	No	No
81	Tallur Rao, Kalpana	Media in India: Colonisation of the Reader	2007	Emerging Trends in Development Research	Sociology; Communication	0	CSA - sociology	Empirical	Yes	No
82	Trandafoiu, Ruxandra	The whole greater than the sum of its parts: An investigation into the existence of European identity, its unity and its divisions	2006	Westminster Papers in Culture and Communication	Communication	2	CSA - comm studies; EBSCO (academic journals)	Theory	Yes	No
83	Uricchio, William	Beyond the great divide: collaborative networks and the challenge to dominant conceptions of creative industries	2004	International Journal of Cultural Studies	Cultural Studies	2	CSA - comm studies; CSA - sociology; CSA - pol sci?	Theory	Yes	Yes

84	Uzodike, Ufo; Whetho, A	In Search of a Public Sphere: Mainstreaming Religious Networks into the African Renaissance Agenda	2008	Politikon	Political Science	0	SSCI	Theory	No	no
85	Valtonen, Sanna , Ojarvi, Sanna	Do the right thing	2004	Nordicom Review	Communication	0	EBSCO (academic journals)	Empirical	Yes	No
86	Wimmer, J.	Counter-public spheres and the revival of the European public sphere	2005	Javnost	Communication	4	CSA - pol sci; CSA - comm; EBSCO (academic journals); SSCI	Empirical	Yes	No
87	Yan, Yunxiang	Little Emperors or Frail Pragmatists? China's '80ers Generation	2006	Current History	History; Political Science	0	CSA - pol sci	Empirical	No	No
88	Youmans, William	The War on Ideas: Alhurra and US International Broadcasting Law in the 'War on Terror'	2009	Westminster Papers in Communication & Culture	Communication	0	EBSCO (academic journals)	Empirical	Yes	No

APPENDIX B: Access Impact Article Subset

	Author	Title	Year	Journal	Field (Journal)	DB Overlap	Database(s)
1	Wimmer, J.	Counter-public spheres and the revival of the European public sphere	2005	Javnost	Communication	4	CSA - pol sci; CSA - comm; EBSCO (academic journals); SSCI
2	Feenberg, Andrew	Critical Theory of Communication Technology: Introduction to the Special Section	2009	The Information Society	Information Science & Library Science	3	CSA - sociology; EBSCO (academic); SSCI
3	Friedland L.A. et al.	The networked public sphere	2006	Javnost	Communication	3	CSA - comm studies; EBSCO (academic journals); SSCI
4	Bach, Jonathan; Stark, David	Link, Search, Interact: The Co-Evolution of NGOs and Interactive Technology	2004	Theory, Culture & Society	Social Sciences; Interdisciplinary	2	CSA - sociology; SSCI
5	Castells, M	The New Public Sphere: Global Civil Society, Communication Networks, and Global Governance	2008	The Annals Of The American Academy Of Political And Social Science	Political Science; Social Sciences; Interdisciplinary	2	CSA - pol sci; SSCI
6	Dahlberg, L.	Cyber-publics and the corporate control of online communication	2004	Javnost	Communication	2	EBSCO (academic journals); CSA - comm studies
7	Delalande, Nicolas	Emile-Justin Menier, a Chocolate-Maker in French Politics: Disputes about the Political Competence of a Manufacturer in the Early Third Republic	2008	Politix	Political Science	2	CSA - sociology; CSA - pol sci; SSCI
8	Doyle, Timothy; Doherty, Brian	Green Public Spheres and the Green Governance State: The Politics of Emancipation and Ecological Conditionality	2006	Environmental Politics	Political Science; Environmental Studies	2	CSA - pol sci; SSCI
9	Gunaratne, Shelton A.	Understanding systems theory: transition from equilibrium to entropy	2008	Asian Journal of Communication	Communication	2	EBSCO (academic journals); SSCI
10	Harrington, S.	The democracy of conversation: The Panel and the public sphere	2005	Media International Australia	Communication	2	CSA - comm studies; EBSCO (academic journals)
11	Holton, Robert	The Inclusion of the Non-European World in International Society, 1870s-1920s: Evidence from Global Networks	2005	Global Networks	Anthropology; Geography; Sociology	2	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology; SSCI
12	JOUËT, JOSIANE	THE HYBRIDISATION OF POPULAR AND CIVIC WEB USES IN FRANCE	2009	Javnost	Communication	2	EBSCO (academic journals); SSCI
13	Langman, Lauren	From Virtual Public Spheres to Global Justice: A Critical Theory of Internetworked Social Movements	2005	Sociological Theory	Sociology	2	CSA - sociology; SSCI

14	Lecheler, S.	EU membership and the press: An analysis of the Brussels correspondents from the new member states	2008	Journalism	Communication	2	CSA - comm studies; EBSCO (academic journals)
15	LUDES, PETER	THE DISSOLUTION OF THE PUBLIC SPHERE INTO PRIVATE ATTENTION MARKETS	2009	Javnost	Communication	2	EBSCO (academic journals); SSCI
16	Milioni, Dimitra L.	Probing the online counterpublic sphere: the case of Indymedia Athens	2009	Media, Culture & Society	Communication; Sociology	2	EBSCO (academic journals); SSCI
17	Parham, Angel Adams	Diaspora, Community and Communication: Internet Use in Transnational Haiti	2004	Global Networks	Anthropology; Geography; Sociology	2	CSA - sociology; SSCI
18	RASMUSSEN, TERJE	THE SIGNIFICANCE OF INTERNET COMMUNICATION IN PUBLIC DELIBERATION.	2009	Javnost	Communication	2	EBSCO (academic journals); SSCI
19	Segert, Dieter	The New Confusion: Eastern Europe in Political Education	2005	Osteuropa	Political science	2	CSA - pol sci; SSCO
20	Silver, D.	Selling cyberspace: Constructing and deconstructing the rhetoric of community	2005	Southern Communication Journal	Communication	2	CSA - comm studies; EBSCO (academic journals)
21	Smilde, David	Popular Publics: Street Protest and Plaza Preachers in Caracas	2004	International Review of Social History	History	2	CSA - pol sci; CSA - sociology; SSCI
22	Trandafoiu, Ruxandra	The whole greater than the sum of its parts: An investigation into the existence of European identity, its unity and its divisions	2006	Westminster Papers in Culture and Communication	Communication	2	CSA - comm studies; EBSCO (academic journals)
23	Uricchio, William	Beyond the great divide: collaborative networks and the challenge to dominant conceptions of creative industries	2004	International Journal of Cultural Studies	Cultural Studies	2	CSA - comm studies; CSA - sociology; CSA - pol sci?

Notes

ⁱ <http://listserv.aoir.org/pipermail/air-1-aoir.org/2006-March/009507.htm>

ⁱⁱ In 1996, Habermas himself defined the public sphere as a network for communicating information and points of view, although he remains skeptical about the ability for online communication to form platforms for deliberation.

ⁱⁱⁱ See, http://thomsonreuters.com/products_services/science/science_products/a-z/social_sciences_citation_index (accessed 30 August 2009)

^{iv} See, <http://www.ebscohost.com/thisTopic.php?topicID=56&marketID=1> (accessed 30 August 2009)

^v See, <http://www.csa.com/csaillumina/login.php> (accessed 30 August 2009)

^{vi} EBSCO CMMC is identified as follows: “A comprehensive index for communication topics CMMC incorporates *CommSearch* (formerly produced by the National Communication Association) and *Mass Media Articles Index* (formerly produced by Penn State) along with numerous other journals in communication, mass media, and other closely-related fields. Offers coverage of 690 titles.

^{vii} Within CSA Illumina we utilized the communication, political science, and sociology databases, each of which is described further here:

- CSA - comm = 2 databases combined, both under CSA Illumina: Communication Abstracts (Communication theory, mass communication, interpersonal communication: Over 64,296 records as of August 2009; 160 sources currently covered) + Communication Studies: A SAGE Full-Text Collection (Mass communication, media studies, written communication: 19 journals published by SAGE and participating societies, encompassing over 12,800 articles.)
 - CSA - pol sci = 2 databases combined: Political Science: A SAGE Full-Text Collection (Political science, American government, policy studies: includes the full-text of 29 journals published by SAGE and participating societies, encompassing over 62,700 articles) + CSA Worldwide Political Science Abstracts (Politics, international relations, government, public policy: Over 773,557 records as of August 2009)
- CSA - sociology = 2 databases combined: Sociology: A SAGE Full-Text Collection (Contemporary sociology, comparative sociology, consumer culture: 7 journals published by SAGE and participating societies, some journals going back 55 years, encompassing over 45,900 articles) + CSA Sociological Abstracts (Social structure, inequality, social change, social problems: Over 938,147 records as of August 2009)

^{viii} The Social Sciences Citation Index is a database owned by the media company Thompson Reuters, who describes it officially as “essential data from 2,474 of the world’s leading social sciences journals across 50 disciplines, as well as 3,500 of the world’s leading scientific and technical journals.”

^{ix} The idea of a keystone article mimic the notion of a keystone species, a species that has a larger effect on its ecosystem than it should given its abundance.

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