

Habermas public sphere

“An” Understanding of Habermas and the Public Sphere

In my discussion of dis/placement violence in relation to “public” spaces, it might be helpful to figure out what exactly is meant by “public,” and in what context.

By two separate professors, I was directed toward the writings of Jürgen Habermas as the beginnings of a way to approach the idea of what is “public” and what is “private.” (I’m still not sure if this was the best advice, but at least I understand him enough to have a basis for my own criticism of current (neo)liberal constructions of publicness.) Here is my diagram the basic model of Habermas’ public sphere as I currently understand it, as he presents it in “The Public Sphere” as re/produced in *Jürgen Habermas on Society and Politics*, edited by Steven Seidman.

Based on this theoretical model, the idea of “publicness” is something constituted by/corresponding to the public sphere. The “public sphere” is a sort of space that mediates between society and the state. If I read “publicness” to mean “the quality of being public,” then this “quality of being public” corresponds to a relationship between society and the state. Habermas also explains that “public opinion, in terms of its very idea, can be formed only if a public that engages in rational discussion exists” (232), further specifying particular characteristics of what is “public.”

Okay. Great. So what does this mean? Is it even relevant to my project?

...Perhaps. Let’s see why/not.

In the short chapter from Habermas that I read, Habermas contextualizes the development of “the public sphere” in a specific historical process, tied to the development of capitalism and a liberal bourgeois as well as to the press as a form of public discourse. (Note that this approach is 100% Eurocentric, using developments in specifically European contexts and generalizing them into universals. Still, perhaps it can be seen as a development of historically, geographically specific political models that become relevant in other contexts through colonialism and globalization.)

At first, Habermas explains, there was a sort of “representative publicness,” where feudal lords “represented” the land by *being* the land; they represented authority “before” rather than for the people (232).

To be honest, I’m not entirely sure of what Habermas means here when he says that feudal lords were *being* the land, and I’m not sure it’s relevant to this website. Still, for the purposes of discussion, we might say that he’s talking about how lords’ authority and “ownership” of their land, and the supposedly inherent, “natural,” and perhaps divine connection between that lord’s “own self” and “own land,” meant that “public” representation of the lord was just to *represent*

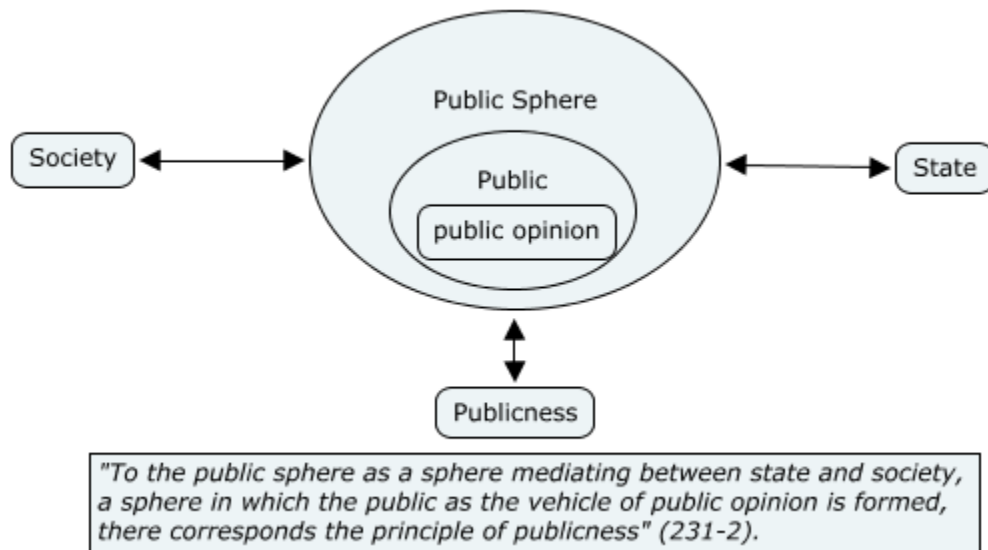
existing authority, rather than (as we'll talk about later) exposing authority to "public" debate.

What does this mean? Well, Habermas seems to be saying that the "public sphere" is *not* characterized by a "representative publicness," the public display of existing authority, but that this was a sort of precursor along the path of structural transformation of power/state/society and thus the public sphere.

Habermas continues in his short Eurocentric history of the public sphere, explaining that the rise of national and territorial states brought in a new sphere of "public power." At first, this public power consisted of established state authority, embodied in permanent administrations and standing armies. Public power, he says, was a sort of "competence-regulated activity of an apparatus furnished with a monopoly on the legitimate use of force" (233).

From what I understand in this sentence, "competence-regulated" refers to the regulation of participation in public power through public office. (I.e., people had to be "competent" enough to participate in public office in order to have an effect on the apparatus.) By "apparatus," I understand Habermas to mean the state apparatus. So, maybe he is saying that public power first consisted of "state activity, driven by specific public office holders and enacted through the state's monopoly on legitimate force."

This public power was *addressed to* a public formed by "private persons subsumed under the state" (233). This means that public power *wasn't* subject to "public opinion" as a way to rationally debate and control state policies; rather, the public was *subsumed* under the state.



My representation is intentionally hierarchical, with Public Power and the State "on top." At this (supposed) historical moment, the state, run by people in office, uses its established authority and force-based institutions as mechanisms to regulate/control "the public."

At this point, though, there began to arise another force that started to confront such a public power that "subsumed" state citizens. This "counterpart" of the state consisted of things like the

stock market and the press, “through traffic in goods and news;” it was based on the rise of bourgeois society as a social/political/economic group that valued things like rights and “private” property and “free market” liberal economic systems.

Habermas explains that at this stage, “society becomes a matter of public interest insofar as with the rise of a market economy the reproduction of a life extends beyond the confines of a private domestic power” (233). In other words, as market economies began to foment, so did a group of individuals who wanted to control the state *so that it wouldn’t interfere in their private dealings*. As I understand him, at least, Habermas is saying that the public sphere arose in confrontation with the state as a way for bourgeois society to secure access to “private property” and a market system based in an absence of state (“public power”) control.

They did this through an appropriation of the press... The public sphere of newspapers, says Habermas, was used against the public power itself, in order to “engage in debate about the general rules governing relations in their own **essentially privatized but publicly relevant** sphere of commodity exchange and labor” (233, my emphasis).

With this rise of the bourgeois opposition to the public power comes, finally, the “liberal model of the public sphere” that is represented at the beginning of this page. Habermas claims the following in relation to the (bourgeois, rational) debate about the general rules governing political relations:

The bourgeois are private persons; as such, they do not ‘rule.’ Thus their claims to power in opposition to public power are directed not against a concentration of authority that should be ‘divided’ but rather against the principle of established authority. The principle of control, namely publicness, that the bourgeois public opposes to the principle of established authority aims at a transformation of authority as such, not merely the exchange of one basis of legitimation for another. (234)

[Personally, I might oppose this directly and say that the bourgeois appropriation of the public sphere in opposition to public power and established authority is a way of transferring “rule” to the private, capitalist system of socioeconomic relations, based on the bourgeois “freedom” to exploit others through the market system. It’s not based on the division of a concentration of authority per se, but perhaps on a naturalized, “invisible” authority governed by liberal economics and the “private” individual, as I discuss in my post about positionality. However, let’s continue with the discussion of Habermas in his own terms.]

Habermas seems to be saying that the rising of a “public sphere” in rational debate, in opposition to the established authority of the state, was a way for private individuals (this term is very particular and exclusive, of course, where “private individuals” probably means “bourgeois men in positions of political and economic power”) to create “publicness” as a way to transform authority from something established (in armies and institutions) into something “discussed” through rational debate. Thus arose the “public sphere,” a space using “publicness” as part of public opinion in order to mediate between a state and a society of private persons.

Two other ways (based on my understanding) that Habermas refers to the public sphere and the

mediation between “state” and “society.” The words and phrases are mostly taken directly from page 234 of the text I am using.

Thus we see that this conception of the public sphere, as created and performed and enacted in historical and political context, are (according to Habermas) specifically contextualized in bourgeois economic liberalism.

This diagram shows the logic, within a liberal, capitalist society, of how “emancipation” (of bourgeois “private” individuals) works in favor of the “general interest.” Again, most of the words on the diagram are taken directly from the text, again from page 234.

Habermas goes on to talk about the changes in the public sphere in “mass welfare-state democracies,” but I don’t have time to write about it right now. He basically says that there is a tendency away from individual private power and toward the influence of large groups that circumvent private, individual autonomy. He suggests that the best option at this stage, in the face of a “weakening” public sphere, is the organization of *groups* of private individuals. He doesn’t seem explicitly critical about the bourgeois/market liberalism aspect of the public sphere, at least not within this piece.

Why did I give you such a detailed summary of Habermas’ text? Well, it was mostly so *I* could understand it, and most of it isn’t relevant to this research project. However, going through this little story has helped to highlight several things. First, the “public sphere,” and thus “publicness,” as conceived by Habermas, is a *particular manifestation of bourgeois politics and history*, and thus something imbedded in (print) capitalism, in today’s neoliberalism, in individualism and private property.

It is *not* something inherent and timeless, and *not* something with a universal meaning. Rather, the idea of what *is* public, Habermas says, has changed over time, and is constantly transforming, in relation to the “structural transformation” that he probably talks about in his 1962 book, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*.

“Publicness” in this framework, then, refers to *historically specific* characteristic of a relationship between private individuals (or organized private individuals) and a state, thus structuring the functioning of a liberal democracy based on specific manifestations of liberal “market capitalism.”

(Note that Habermas’ chapter continues with one more chapter about the changes in the meaning of the public sphere in a ‘mass welfare state,’ but I am principally concerned with the way he talks about the *idea* of publicness in an ‘ideal’ form.. I do not see Habermas’ conception of public sphere as a reality, but instead as a thought tool. Thus, his discussion of how the public sphere is currently changing because of changes in political dynamics is something I skipped

over due to lack of time.)

So, how does this relate to “public space” and displacement violence? In the next post, I was going to talk about critiques of Habermas’ theory, and then I would explain how these theoretical models might (or might not) offer a useful framework for understanding the relationship between “citizens” and “state” that’s involved in acts of dis/placement during street protests (and through their representations).

However, that never really happened. For the beginnings of a critique of Habermas’ approach, see my [brief discussion](#) of DeLuca and Peeples’ text.

My most important point in this post is the following... Habermas argues that the public sphere can only exist *in the absence of coercion*. However, with my discussion of police enactment of violent dis/placement of political protesters, I am arguing that the public sphere, as a sphere that mediates between private persons and the public, *has its boundaries enacted through violence*. The public sphere is free from coercion in some ways, but it is based on a regulation of public behaviors and the limits of publicness. My idea is that the public sphere, as a space where only a limited number of individuals can participate due to its methods of ‘rational discussion’ (that privileges certain social classes), is (in this case) constituted by coercion. The space for rational discussion – such as the interview of a MPL representative in my post about the Estadão piece – is undergirded by violence.

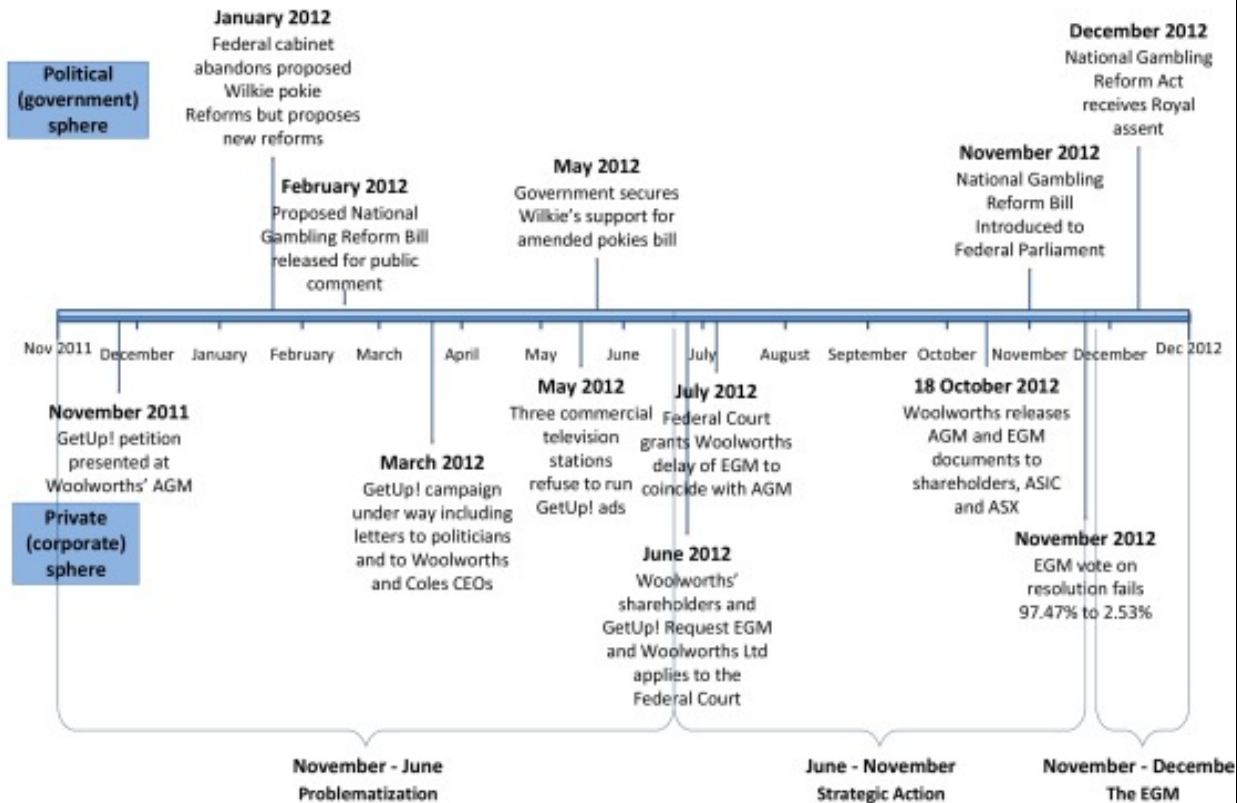
2 thoughts on ““An” Understanding of Habermas and the Public Sphere”

1. [mirengutierrez](#) says:

28 August 2018 at 09:38

Interesting point. Pity I didn’t see this comment before writing “Data Activism in Light of the Public Sphere” (see <http://krisis.eu/issue-1-2018-data-activism/>), which is another turn of the screw in the theoretical debate about the validity of the public sphere as a concept today. Cheers, Miren Gutiérrez

YDPAC-D-15-00099 Figures



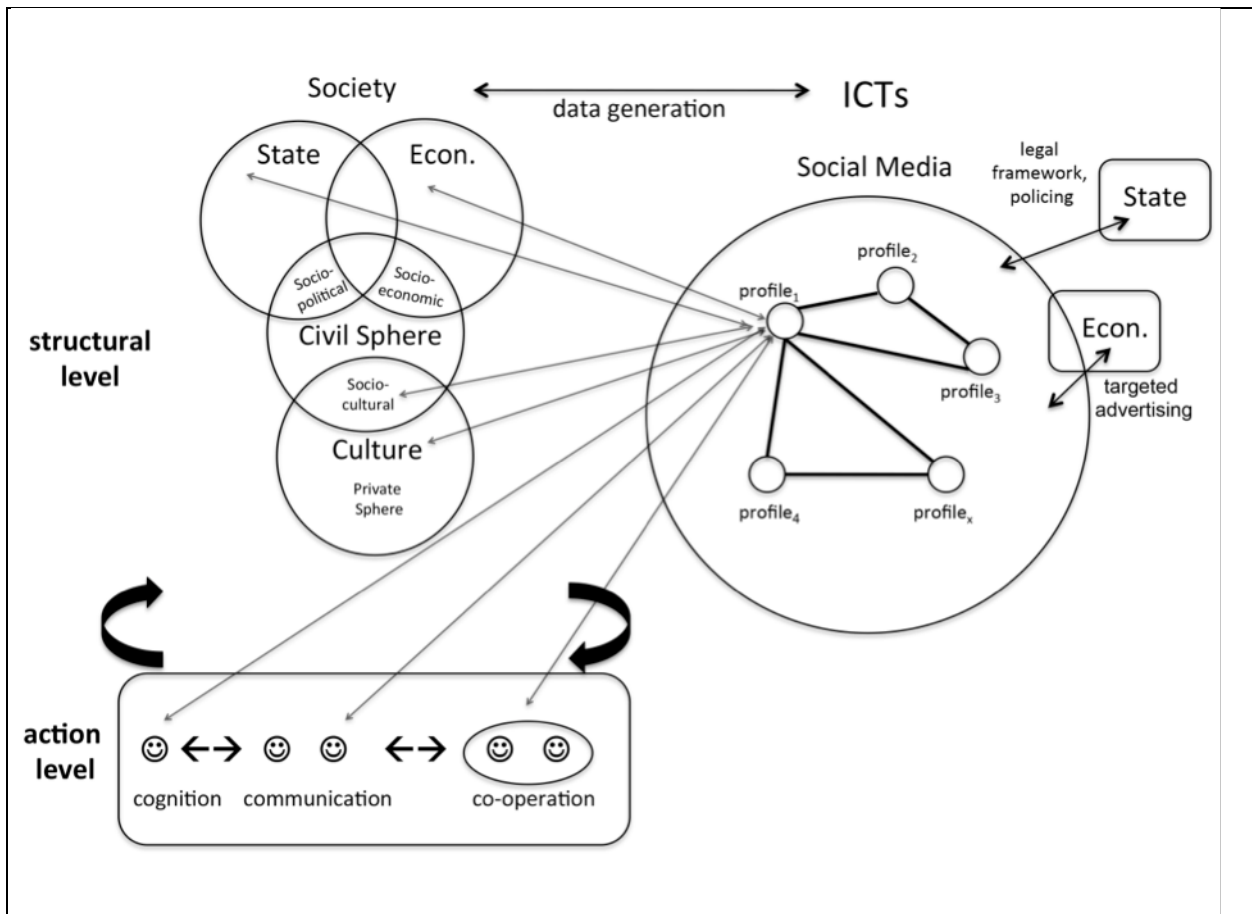
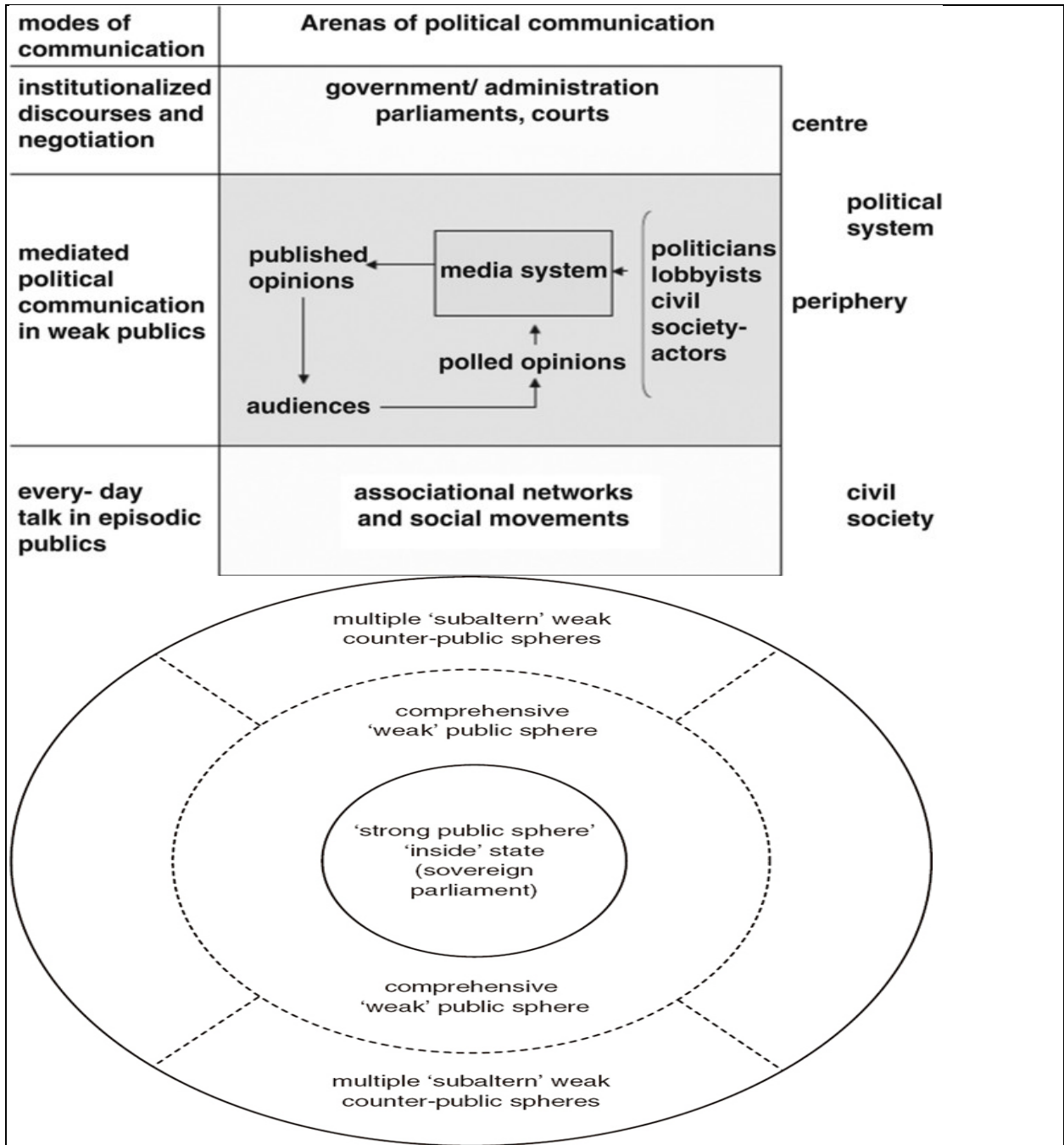
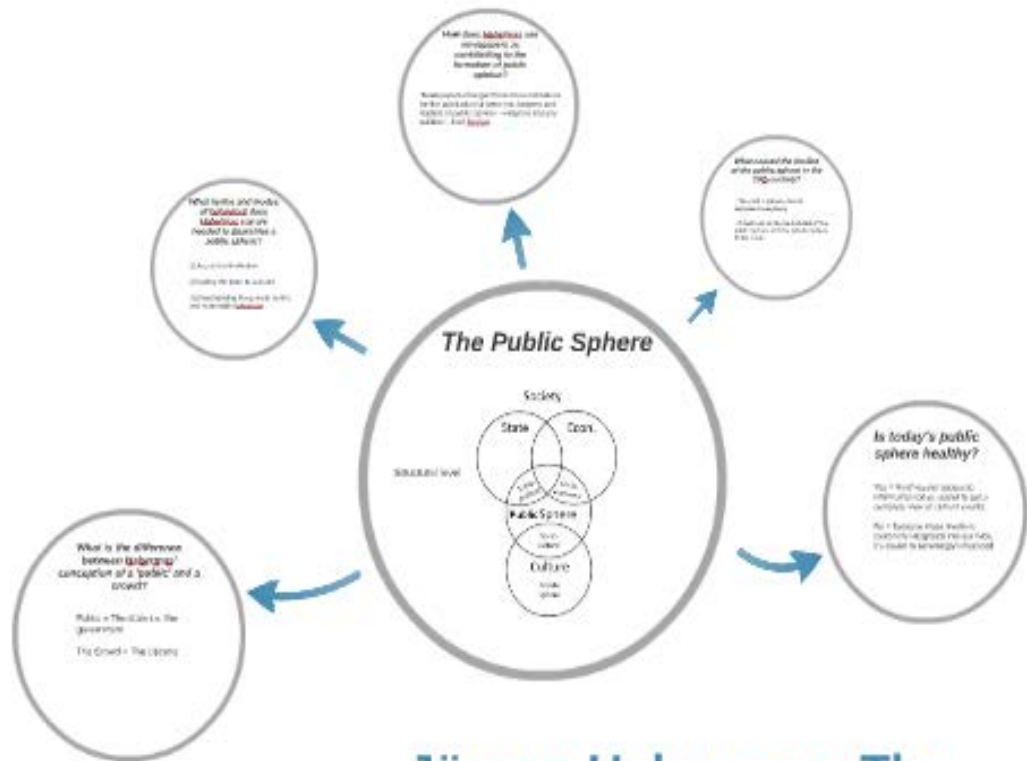


Figure 1
Habermas's blueprint of the 18th century bourgeois public sphere

Private Realm		Sphere of Public Authority
Civil society (realm of community exchange and social labor)	Public sphere in the political realm	State (realm of the "police")
Conjugal family's internal space (bourgeois intellectuals)	Public sphere in the world of letters (clubs, press) (market of culture products) "Town"	Court (courtly-noble society)

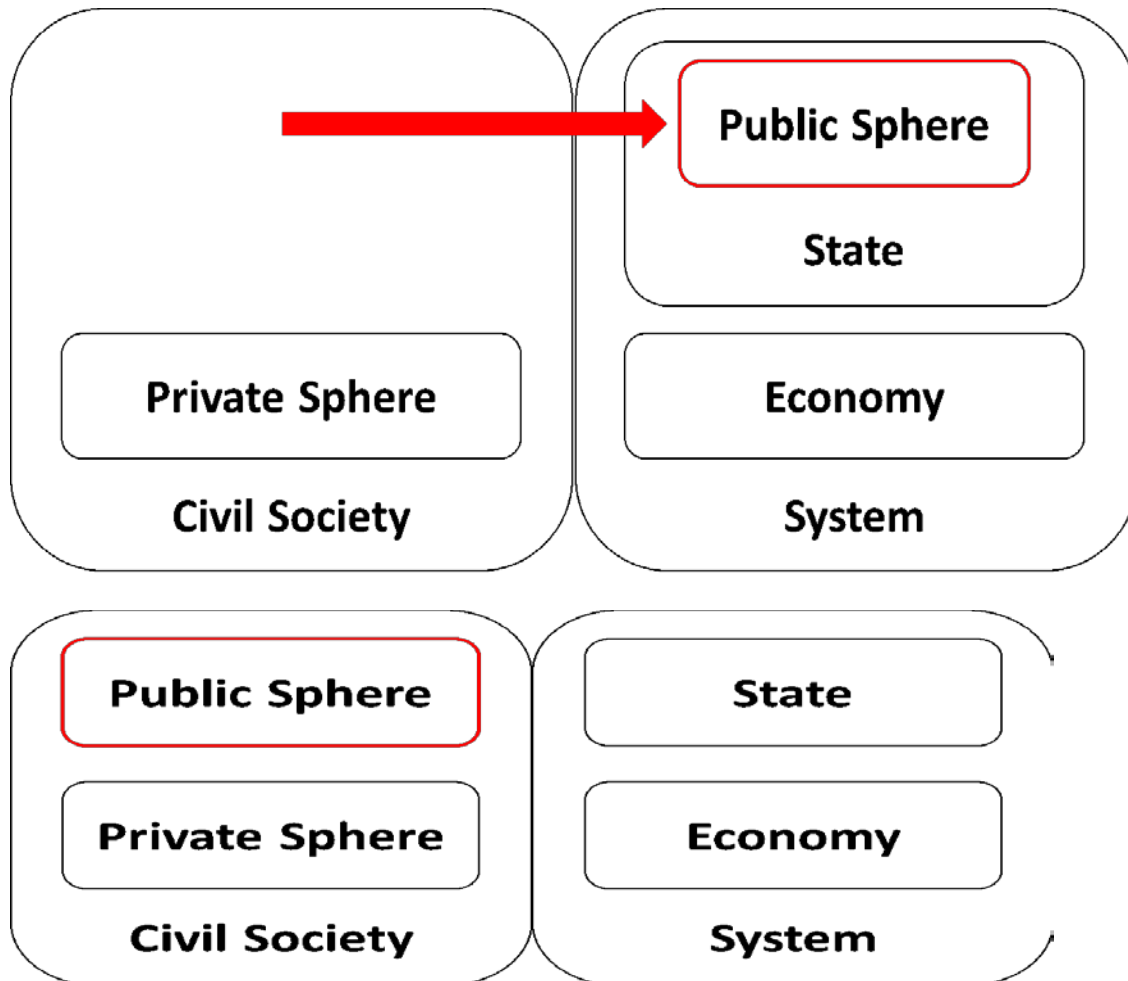
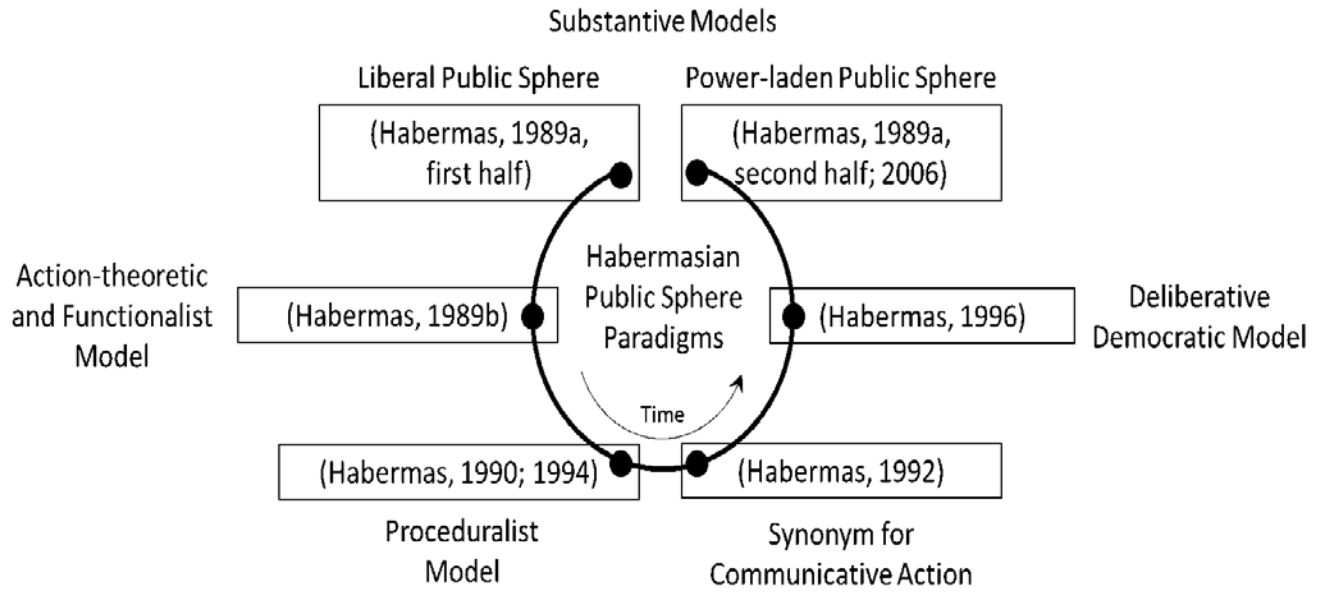
Source: Habermas (1989), p. 30

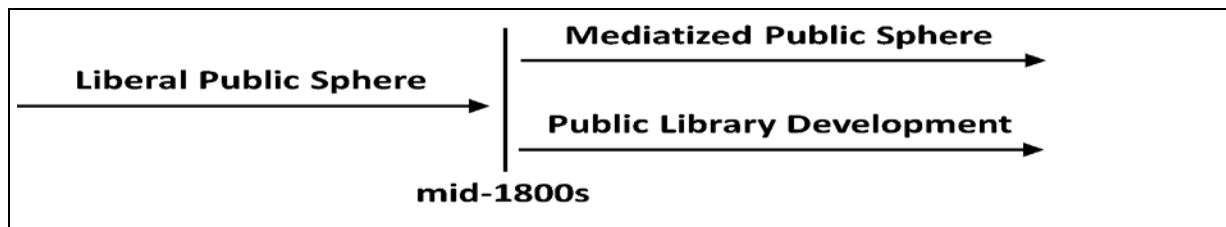
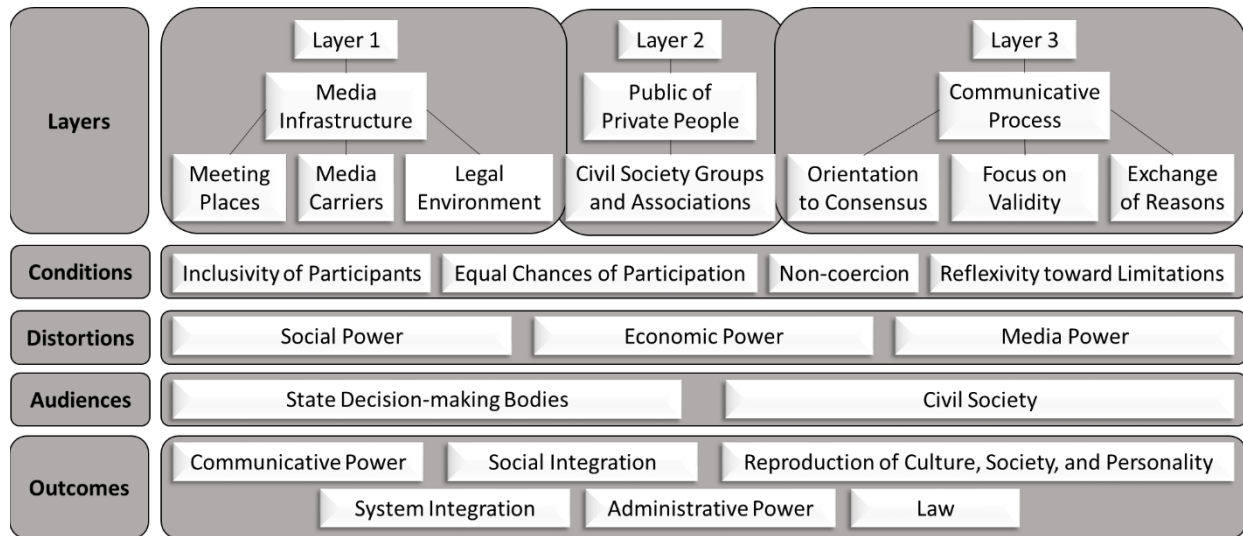




Jürgen Habermas: The Public Sphere







The 'Public Sphere'

- Locales included:
 - London coffee houses.
 - Paris salons.
 - The rapidly growing print media.*

*See my video on 'Print Culture in Britain, c. 1688-c.1800'.

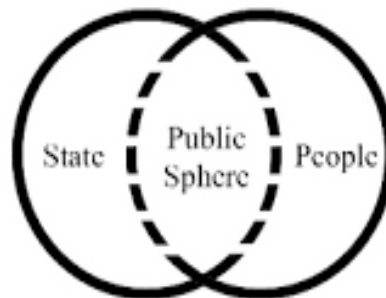
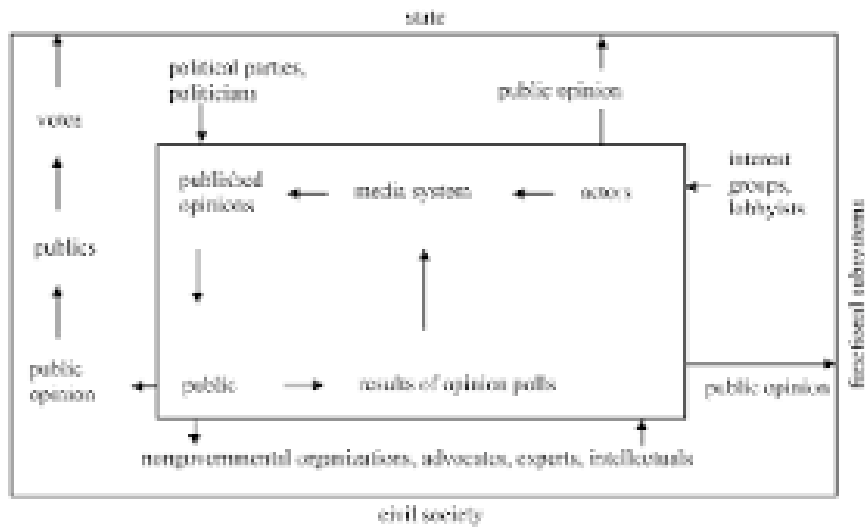
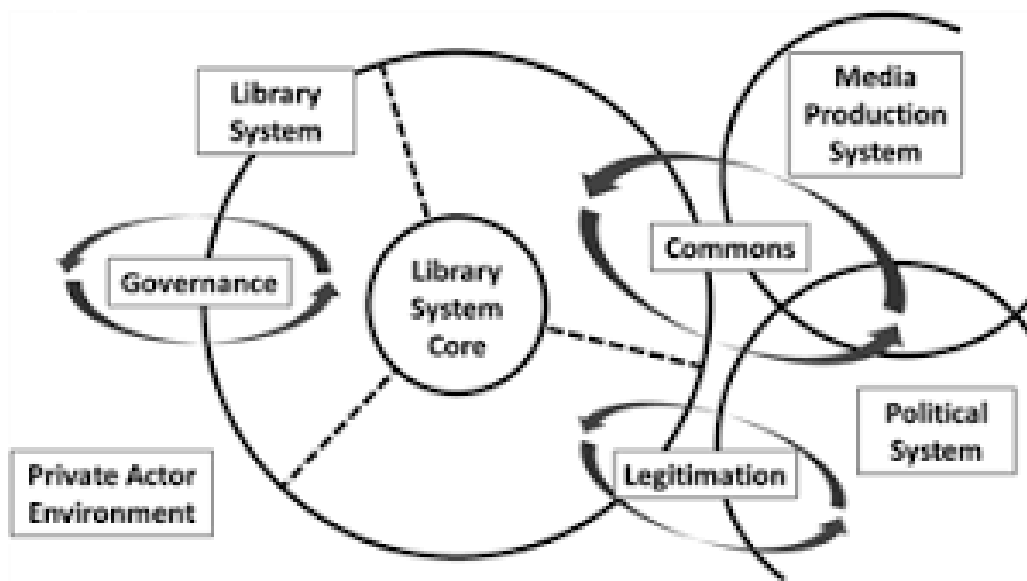
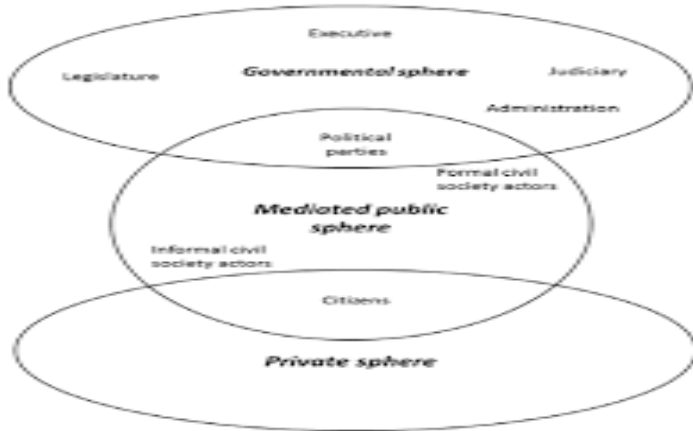


Fig. 1. Researchers' Model of Jurgen Habermas' Public Sphere Theory



Source(s): Habermas (2009, p. 166)





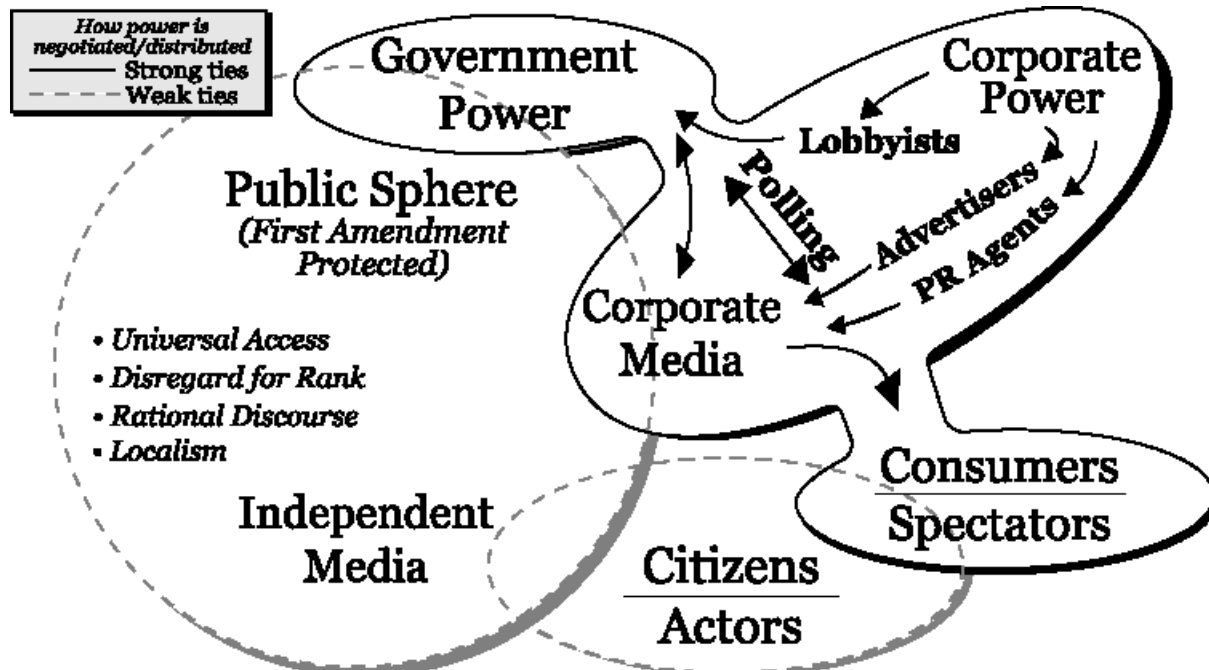
Conditions for the Public Sphere

- Free from the influences of :
 - -The market Place
 - -The State
 - -The Family
- Public Sphere = Public Opinion
- 'The critical state of democracy can be measured by taking the pulse of the life of its political public sphere'(Habermas,2004)

Jürgen Habermas

- *The Theory of Communicative Action* (1981)
- *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (1983/ tr 1995)
- *Postmetaphysical Thinking* (1988)
- *Dialektik der Säkularisierung. Über Vernunft und Religion* (with Joseph Ratzinger (2005) English: *The Dialectics of Secularization: On Reason and Religion*)





• *Elements of the Public Sphere* •

Voluntary Associations:

- Citizen Action Orgs.
- Nonprofits
- Civic Organizations
- Political Parties

Public Spaces:

- Coffeehouses
- Taverns
- Town Squares
- Parks

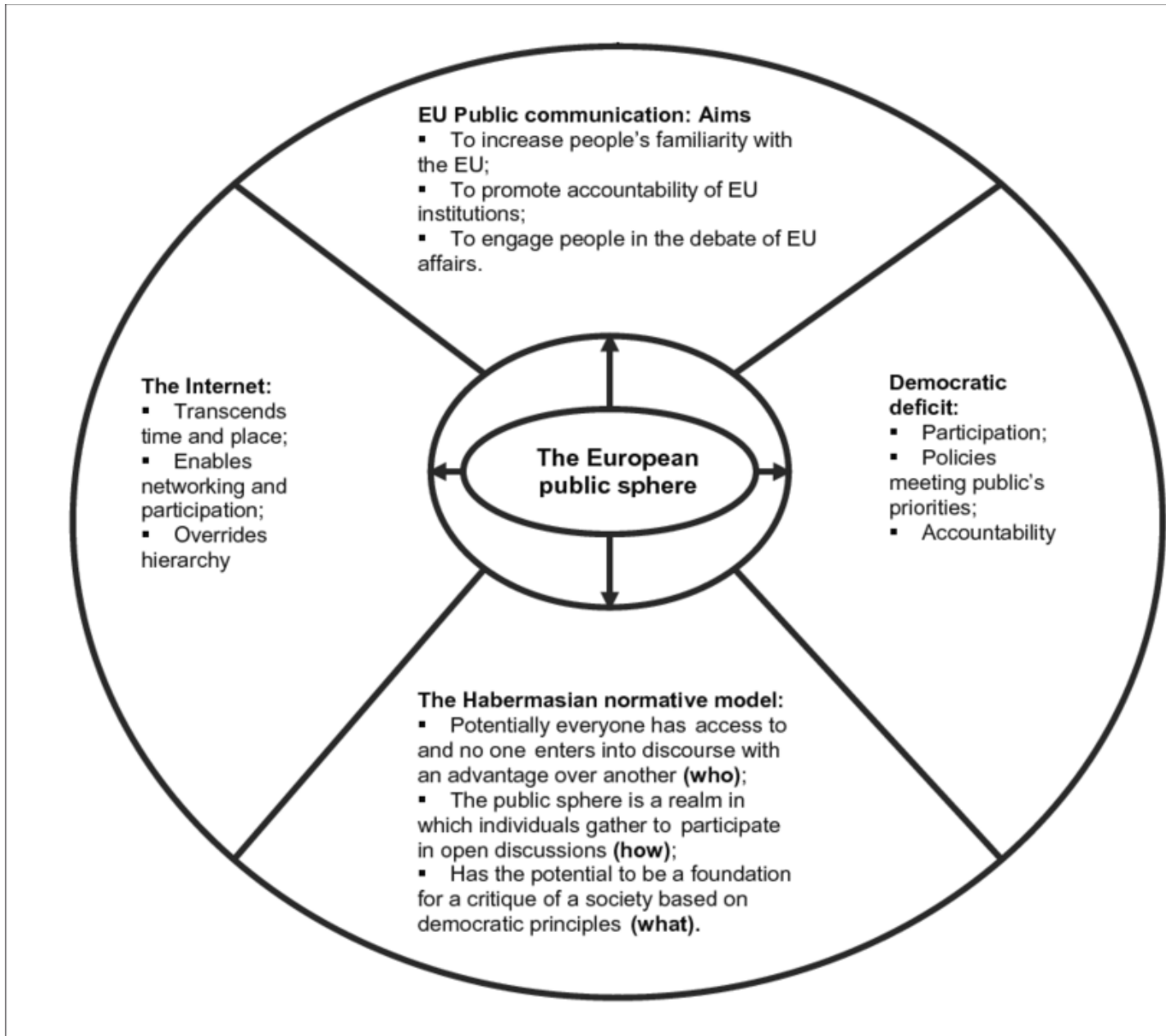
Public Media

Infrastructure:

- Internet
- LPFM • PATV
- Open Source Technology

Expression:

- Newspapers
- Journals • Books
- Lectures • Debates
- Forums • Music • Art



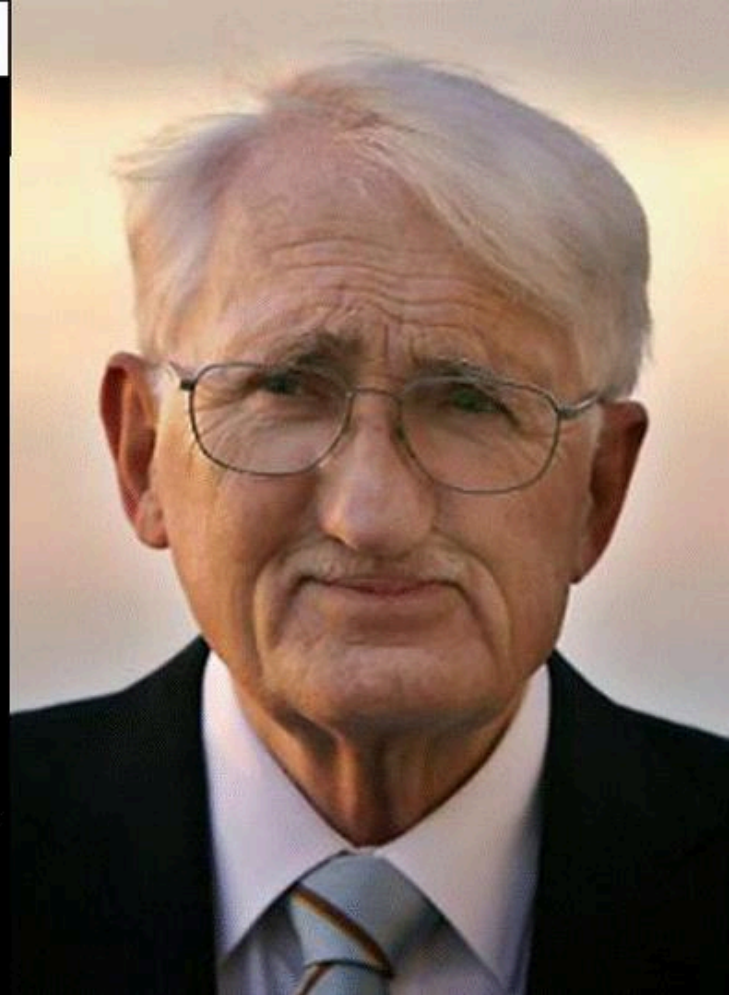


I ACKNOWLEDGE

CLASS WARFARE EXISTS

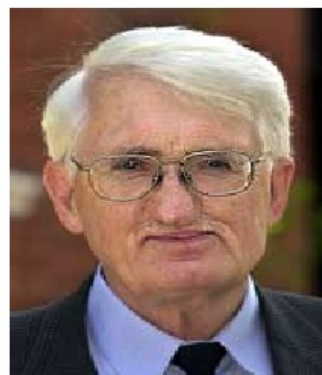
“I condemn the political parties. Our politicians have long been incapable of aspiring to anything whatsoever other than being re-elected. They have no political substance whatsoever, no convictions.”

~**Jürgen Habermas**
(German sociologist and philosopher)



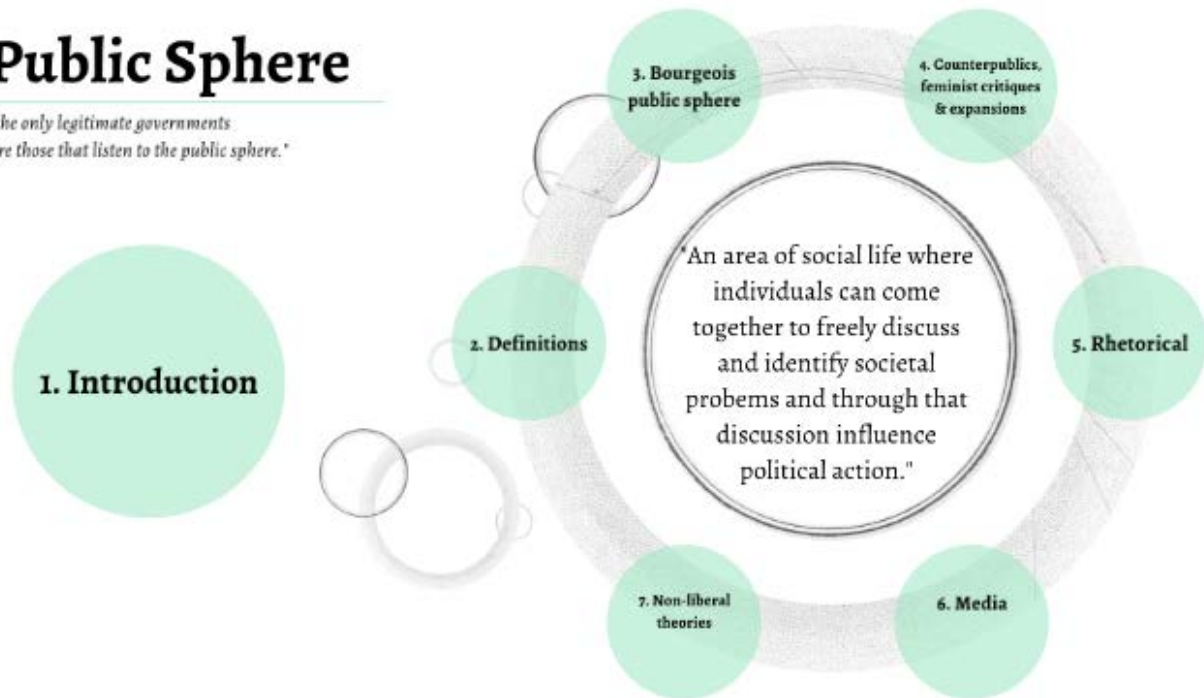
1 - Jürgen Habermas

- Internationally renowned philosopher and social scientist
- The public sphere
- The realm of our social life from which “public opinion” emerges



Public Sphere

*'the only legitimate governments
are those that listen to the public sphere.'*



What Habermas Argued

- Outlines rise and fall of the “Bourgeois Public Sphere” in 1700s and early 1800s Europe
- Market Capitalism led to institutions in-between economy and state: this included newspapers, salons, coffee-shops, and debating societies
- This led to the rise of public opinion in which “private citizens” came together to engage in “rational-critical debate” on public issues
- Decline came with immense social and economic changes, including the rise of consumer capitalism which blurred the lines between public/private, state/civil society and replaced “rational-critical debate” with “consumption” and it still exists to this day.

The public sphere

□ Habermas' *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*

□ Defines public sphere as

Autonomous (free from state/government intervention)

Deliberative forum for open, equal debate of public issues

Taking place in clubs, tea houses

Mainly comprised of economically rising but politically marginalised bourgeoisie

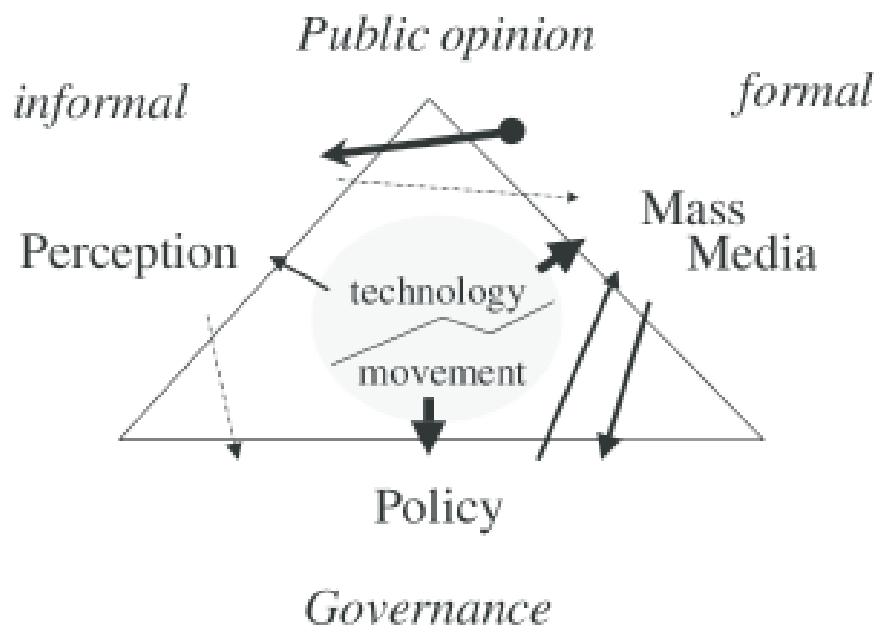
Distributed through (and taking place in) free press, which also confronts ruling elites with focus and state of public opinion

□ Largely blaming mass media (centralization/commercialization) for transformation (destruction) of public sphere

□ Degrading citizens from participants to audience

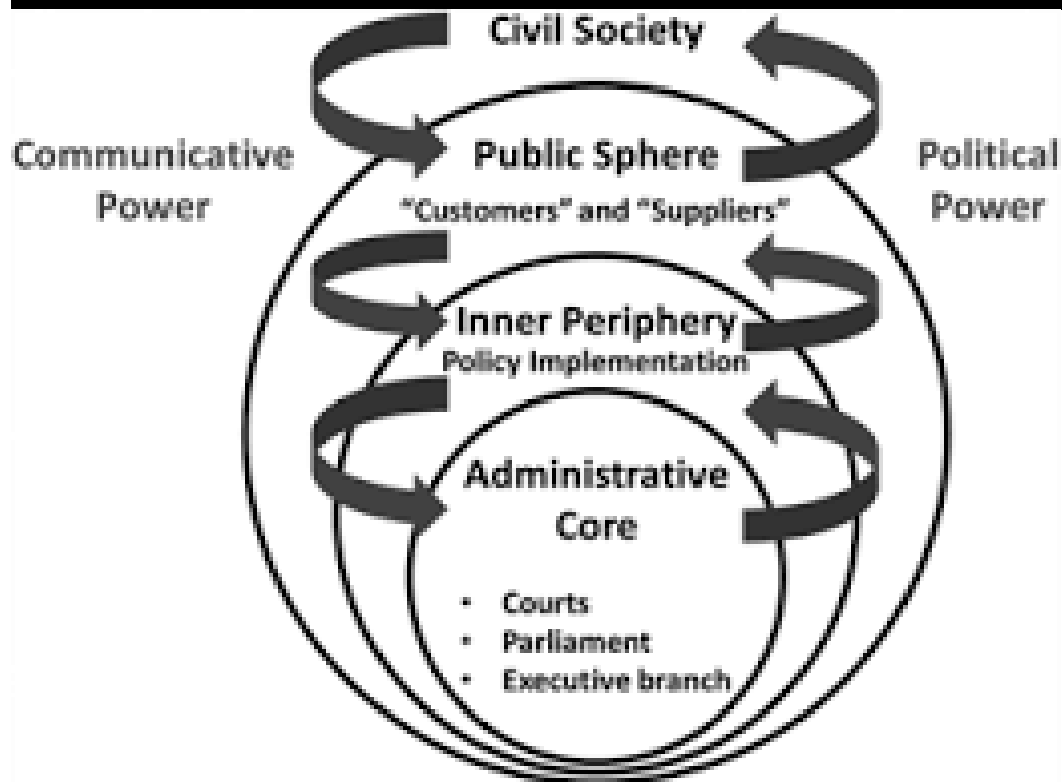
□ Critical public transformed into apathetic mass (atomised individuals, who are being fed information)

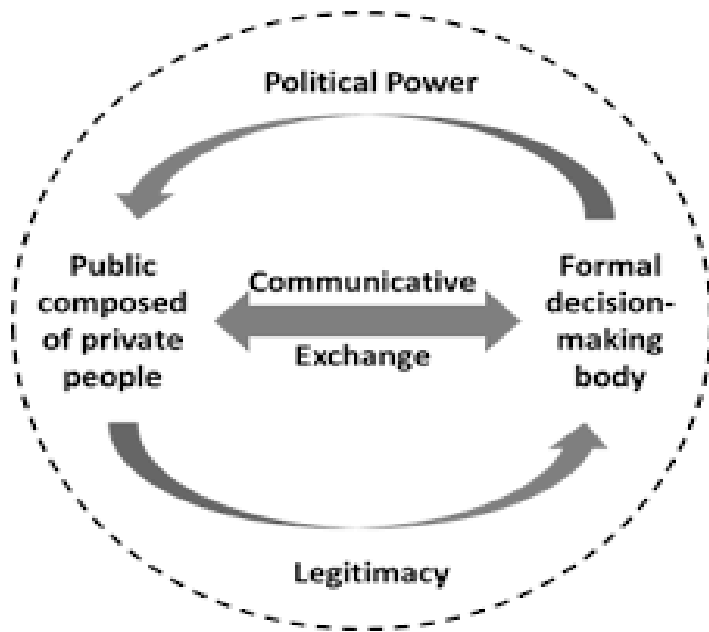
□ Reducing public opinion from collective opinion formation process into mere aggregation of (uninformed, unchallenged, underdeveloped, prejudicial) opinions



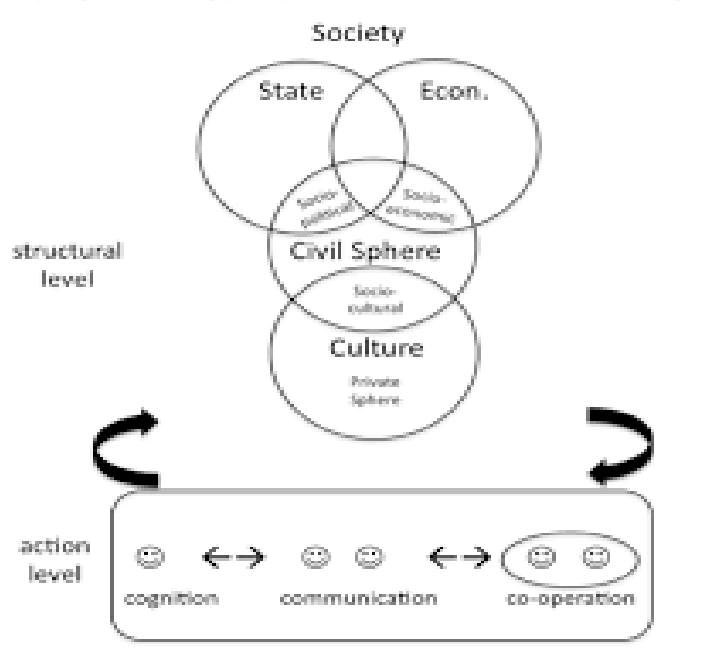
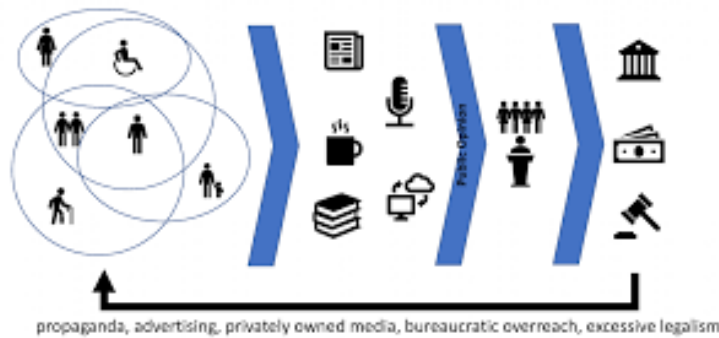
L2: The Public Sphere Overview

1. Habermas and TSTotPS
2. History/ies of the PS
3. Structural Decline/Refeudalisation
4. Critiques of the Habermasian PS
5. Beyond TSTotPS
6. The modern media and the PS
7. The internet and PS





Colonization of the Lifeworld



Featured snippet from the web

Jürgen **Habermas** defines the '**public sphere**' as a "realm of our social life in which something approaching **public** opinion can be formed. Access is guaranteed to all citizens". ... **Habermas** defines the **public sphere** as a "society engaged in critical **public** debate".

The public sphere

The public sphere is a complex social phenomenon composed of three layers. The first layer is media infrastructure. In the early-modern European account of the public sphere depicted in *Structural Transformation*, this media infrastructure consisted of meeting places such as salons, *Tischgesellschaften* (table societies), and coffee houses; media carriers such as journals, magazines, novels, newspapers, and their associated industries; and legal landscapes that protected free speech, freedom of the press, freedom of assembly, and author and publisher rights (Habermas, 1989a). In contemporary contexts, the form of Layer 1 remains unchanged, but its content differs significantly: media carriers are less bounded by time and distance, meeting places are more diverse and distributed in nature, and the legal landscape has evolved to accommodate new technologies.

The second layer of the public sphere consists of embodied people—the actual public of private people who communicate in virtual or face-to-face forums. These people include civil society groups and individuals, but they also include political parties, lobbyists, unions, for-profit and non-profit corporations, experts and researchers, and politicians (Habermas, 1996, 2006)

The third layer of the public sphere is the communicative process itself, the symbolic exchange of meanings with an emphasis on reasons and an orientation to consensus. Public sphere communication can at any time thematize perceived distortions from social, economic, and media power (Dahlberg, 2001, 2004; Habermas, 2006).

These three layers—media infrastructure, people, and communication—form a public sphere. A public sphere is distinct from a mass, crowd, or other social collective because

only a public approximates the necessary conditions of openness, common concern, and debate that apply across all three layers. The outcomes of a public sphere include the formation of communicative power and social integration. Communicative power affects state decision-makers; social integration affects the culture, society, and identity of members of civil society (Habermas, 1984, 1996). The complete public sphere structure is organized visually in Figure 1 below.

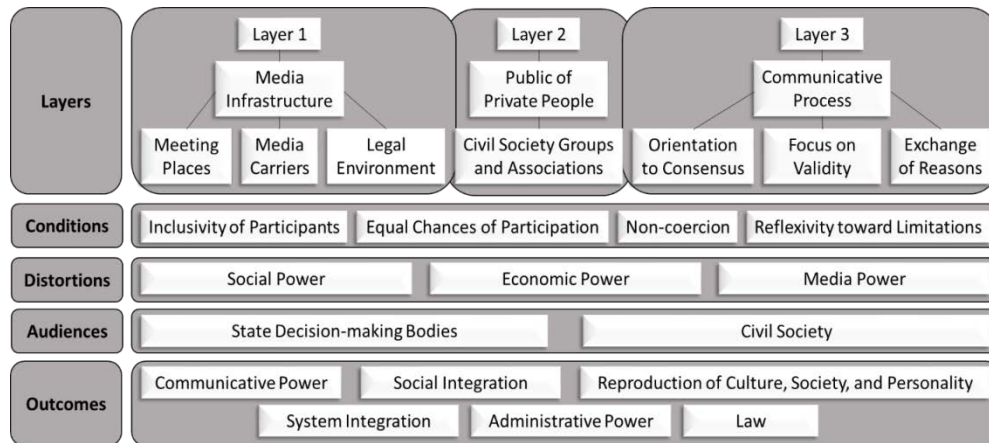


Figure 1: Structure of the public sphere

Public libraries and the public sphere: an overview

Associations between public libraries and the public sphere began in Germany following the publication of *Structural Transformation* (Habermas, 1962), then diffused throughout Europe, North America, and South America as the public sphere concept became more widely known. Table 1 below lists over 60 works that relate the public sphere concept with public libraries. The works were retrieved using a combination of techniques, including: literature searches for terms such as "public sphere and "public libraries in databases such as *Library Literature and Information Science*, *Library and Information Science Abstracts*, *Library, Information Science, and Technology Abstracts*, and *Proquest Dissertations and Theses*; grey literature searches in popular Web search engines using both English and non-English terms such as "Öffentlichkeit and "esfera pública; searches in proceedings of relevant conferences, such as *Conceptions of Library and Information Science*, *Association for Information Science and Technology*, and *iConference*; citation chaining; and word of mouth. The table is organized chronologically from oldest to most recent.

Table 1: Works that associate the public sphere with public libraries

#	Author(s) and year	Nation	of Type	Methods/Approach
---	--------------------	--------	---------	------------------

		focus		
1	Thauer and Vodosek (1978)	Germany	Book	History
2	Schuhböck (1983)	Germany	Article	Multiple case study
3	Greenhalgh, Landry, and Worpole (1993)	UK	Book	Survey/Interview/Observation
4	Schuhböck (1994)	Germany	Article	History
5	Greenhalgh, Worpole, and Landry (1995)	UK	Book	Cultural criticism
6	Webster (1995)	UK	Book	Cultural criticism
7	Vestheim (1997a)	Norway	Thesis	History
8	Vestheim (1997b)	Norway	Article	Cultural criticism
9	Emerek and Ørum (1997)	Denmark	Article	History
10	Williamson (1998)	UK	Thesis	Interviews
11	Williamson (2000)	UK	Article	Cultural criticism
12	Ventura (2001)	Portugal	Thesis	Ethnography
13	Ventura (2002)	Portugal	Book	Ethnography
14	Leckie and Hopkins (2002)	Canada	Article	Ethnography
15	McCook (2003)	US	Article	Cultural criticism
16	Wiegand (2003a)	US	Article	Editorial
17	Wiegand and Bertot (2003)	US	Article	Editorial
18	Wiegand (2003b)	US	Article	Editorial
19	Buschman (2003)	US	Book	Cultural criticism
20	Alstad and Curry (2003)	Non-specific	Article	Cultural criticism
21	Buschman (2004)	US	Article	Cultural criticism
22	Leckie (2004)	Canada	Article	Conceptual
23	Kranich (2004)	US	Chapter	Cultural criticism
24	McCook (2004)	US	Chapter	Textbook
25	Frohmann (2004)	Canada, US, UK	Review	Cultural criticism
26	Audunson (2005)	Non-specific	Article	Conceptual
27	Aabø (2005)	Non-specific	Article	Conceptual
28	Andersen (2005)	Non-specific	Article	Cultural criticism
29	Buschman (2005a)	US	Article	Cultural criticism
30	Buschman (2005b)	US	Article	Cultural criticism
31	Ljødal (2005)	Norway	Report	Interviews
32	Black and Hoare (2006)	UK	Book	History

33	Buschman (2006)	US	Article	Cultural criticism
34	Taipale (2006)	Finland	Paper	Conceptual
35	Andersen and Skouvig (2006)	Denmark	Article	Conceptual
36	Leckie and Buschman (2007)	US and Canada	Chapter	Conceptual
37	Rothbauer (2007)	Non-specific	Chapter	Cultural criticism
38	Newman (2007)	UK	Article	Interviews
39	Buschman (2007)	US	Article	Cultural criticism
40	Audunson <i>et al.</i> (2007)	Norway	Paper	Survey
41	Vårheim, Steinmo, and Ide (2008)	OECD countries	Article	Survey/Interview
42	Burnett and Jaeger (2008)	US	Article	Conceptual
43	Braman (2009)	US	Chapter	Conceptual
44	Taipale (2009)	Finland	Thesis	Multiple case study
45	Jaeger and Burnett (2010)	US	Chapter	Conceptual
46	Aabø, Audunson, and Vårheim (2010)	Norway	Article	Survey
47	Burnett and Jaeger (2011)	US	Article	Conceptual
48	Buschman (2012)	US	Book	Cultural criticism
49	Aabø and Audunson (2012)	Norway	Article	Ethnography
50	Buschman (2013)	US	Article	Cultural criticism
51	Kranich (2013)	US	Article	Cultural criticism
52	Jaeger <i>et al.</i> (2014)	US	Article	Conceptual
53	Frota (2014)	Brazil	Article	Cultural criticism
54	Machado, Elias Junior, and Achilles (2014)	Brazil	Article	Cultural criticism
55	Trosow (2014/2015)	Non-specific	Article	Cultural criticism
56	McNally (2014/2015)	Non-specific	Article	Cultural criticism
57	Richards, Wiegand, and Dalbello (2015)	Non-specific	Book	History
58	Evjen (2015)	UK, Denmark, Norway	Article	Interviews
59	Ingraham (2015)	UK	Article	Discourse analysis
60	Widdersheim and Koizumi (2015a)	US	Paper	Content analysis

61	Widdersheim (2015b)	US	Poster	Content analysis
62	Widdersheim and Koizumi (2015b)	US	Paper	Content analysis
63	Widdersheim (2015a)	Non-specific	Article	Conceptual
64	Widdersheim and Koizumi (forthcoming)	US	Article	Content analysis

The above literature that associates the public sphere with public libraries can be organized into two main categories. In the first category are studies of how the public sphere materializes or manifests in public libraries. These studies explore how public libraries facilitate public sphere communication and what effects this communication has. In the second category are studies of how public libraries are themselves issues of public sphere communication.

Public libraries as public sphere infrastructure

In the first category of literature, public libraries represent Layer 1 of Figure 1 above: the media infrastructure of the public sphere. In other words, public libraries have replaced the coffee houses, salons, and table societies of Enlightenment-era Europe. Public libraries are the "windows of an information society (Ventura, 2002), its public sphere "platforms. As media infrastructures, public libraries act as media suppliers, virtual and physical meeting places, and protected spaces for communicative exchange.

Existing literature about the public sphere and public libraries emphasizes various facets of this infrastructure. One salient facet is the public library's role as a physical meeting place. Several studies survey how public libraries act as meeting places (Aabø and Audunson, 2012; Aabø *et al.*, 2010; Audunson *et al.*, 2007). In these studies, the asserted benefits of public sphere communication in public libraries are positive by-products of the communicative process itself, such as the creation of civic culture (Kranich, 2004, 2013; McCook, 2003, 2004) and social capital (Audunson *et al.*, 2007).

Existing literature also emphasizes the openness and diversity of media resources of public libraries. Webster (1995) and Buschman (2003) foreground public libraries' collections that contain diverse viewpoints and are in principle open to anyone. At the same time, it is said that public libraries are not neutral in the kinds of communication they support (Andersen, 2005; Andersen and Skouvig, 2006). There is a strong current in the literature that expresses scepticism about whether the types of culture and messages that are transmitted through libraries are genuinely undistorted, whether they are not commercialized or hegemonic. Following Webster (1995), Leckie and Hopkins

(2002) and Buschman (2003) express ambivalence about whether public libraries are too privatized and business-oriented to facilitate public sphere communication. Similar sentiments are expressed by Vestheim (1997a) and Taipale (2006, 2009).

Some studies describe public libraries as part of a larger media infrastructure for the formation of public opinion (Frota, 2014; Schuhböck, 1983). Widdersheim and Koizumi (2015a, 2015b) find that public libraries were used as a public sphere by civic groups, readings clubs, and communities. In their historical surveys of public library developments, Richards *et al.* (2015, p. 70) and Black and Hoare (2006, p. 7) remark that public libraries formed part of the public sphere infrastructure of modern societies.

There are several confusions in this category that are worth noting. First, in some studies, the noun public sphere (*der Öffentlichkeit*) in the public opinion and public communication sense is sometimes confused with the adjective public (*öffentlich*) in the sense of government ownership. For example, Webster (1995, p. 176) states that public libraries are public sphere institutions because they are "publicly funded and "staffed by professional librarians. Similarly, Leckie and Hopkins (2002, p. 357) claim that "the library is becoming increasingly co-opted by multiple private interests, implying that public communication necessitates public funding. These descriptions are mistaken because a public sphere does not require tax-based, government management. Early public sphere meetings occurred in private clubs and salons in private homes. Not privatization and commercialization per se, but certain types of privatization and commercialization potentially distort the public sphere. A second confusion is between public communication and information transfer. Jaeger *et al.* (2014) states that "libraries, schools, and other public sphere organizations...exist specifically to ensure that information continues to move between the small worlds. Public sphere communication requires information exchange, but this condition alone is insufficient. The "information equals democracy assumption has been previously interrogated (Lievrouw, 1994). Reducing the public sphere to information transfer leaves no room for distinctions of information quality and use. Williamson (1998, 2000) makes a third mistake by associating the public sphere with service provision. Services provided by public libraries, such as those for job seekers, are not necessarily related to public sphere communication. Such an association seems to confuse social integration with system integration (Habermas, 1989b)

Public libraries as a public sphere issue

The second category of existing literature that associates public libraries with the public sphere focuses on how public libraries are the topic of public sphere communication.

This literature discusses how public libraries have been or currently are legitimated by various groups in the public sphere. In some cases, public libraries were created due to popular pressure from civil society groups (Schuhböck, 1994, p. 218; Widdersheim, 2015b). Once institutionalized, public libraries themselves mobilize support on their behalf (Machado *et al.*, 2014; Widdersheim and Koizumi, 2015b). Recent studies use interviews or discourse analysis to study how various stakeholders, such as politicians, civil society groups, and librarians legitimate public libraries in the public sphere (Evjen, 2015; Ingraham, 2015; Newman, 2007). Insofar as public libraries constitute public sphere infrastructure, discourse about that infrastructure is said to be a "metasphere of the library (Ingraham, 2015, p. 156). Emerek and Ørum (1997) and Vestheim (1997a) establish that this metasphere affected the historical development of public libraries in Denmark and Norway.

Problems of public sphere status in public libraries

Associations between the public sphere and public libraries yield a nuanced understanding of the social functions of public libraries; however, by focusing exclusively on the similarities between public libraries and the public sphere, existing literature inadvertently overlooks two significant differences.

Late: the public sphere and anachronism

The first significant difference between public libraries and the public sphere is that the liberal model of the public sphere is a historically-bounded concept. As it was described in *Structural Transformation*, the public sphere emerged in eighteenth-century France, England, and Germany following a general shift from feudalism to mercantile capitalism and a gradual growth of state bureaucracy. As a social-historical category, the public sphere represented an unfulfilled promise, an ideology that failed to materialize authentically even in its heyday in the mid-nineteenth century. By the mid-nineteenth century, due to economic and technological changes, the public sphere in the liberal sense began to collapse into a mediatized, power-ridden (*vermachteten*) public sphere, one that was "refeudalized by state and corporate interests to form a staged and acclamatory public (Eley, 1992; Habermas, 1989a, p. 195). Habermas is unequivocal regarding the temporal location of the liberal public sphere model described in the first half of *Structural Transformation*:

Although the liberal model of the public sphere is still instructive today with respect to the normative claim that information be accessible to the public, it cannot be applied to the actual conditions of an industrially advanced mass democracy organized in the form of the social welfare state. (Habermas, 1974, p. 54)

It is clear from this passage and from Structural Transformation that the public sphere only describes cultural dynamics that peaked around the mid-nineteenth century but did not last beyond the late nineteenth century (Habermas, 1989a). Figure 2 below shows a simplified historical transformation of the public sphere.

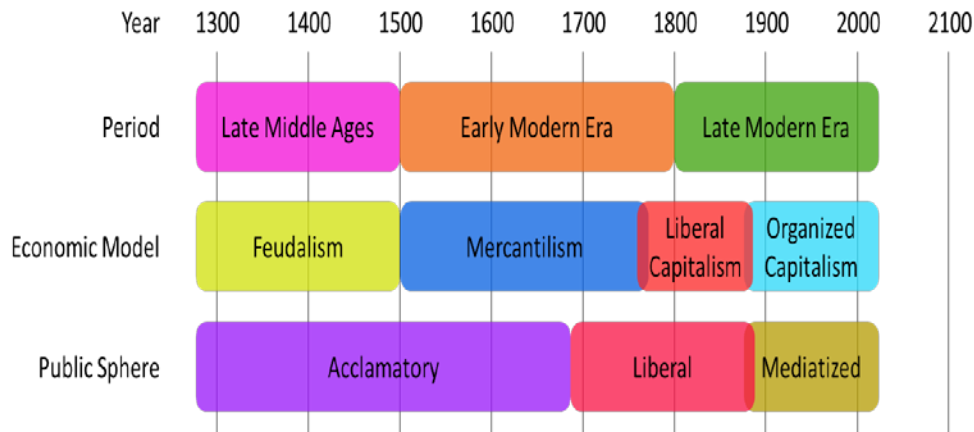


Figure 2: Simplified historical transformation of the European public sphere

The year 1850 is an important date for the purpose of this discussion because public libraries did not develop significantly in any nation before that date. Public libraries in this case refer to state-sponsored libraries, not libraries that are privately owned but open for public use, such as the *Gebrauchsöffentlichkeit* mentioned by Schuhböck (1994, p. 217) and Vestheim (1997b, p. 121). Table 2 below shows significant formative developments in public libraries internationally. The data in Table 2 is drawn from Richards *et al.* (2015).

Table 2: Formative developments in public libraries internationally	
Nation	Significant early events in public library development
United Kingdom of Britain and Northern Ireland	Public Libraries Act of 1850 The Library Association founded in London (1877)
Denmark	State Libraries Agency (1882) Professional association established (1915) Public Libraries Act (1920)
Norway	Opening of Deichmanske Bibliotek (1898) Professional association established (1915)
Sweden	Establishment of state funding (1905)
Russia	Founding of public library by Liubov Borisovna Khavkina (1886)

Poland	Founding of public library in Warsaw by Zaluski brothers (1747); removed by Russia in 1795 Warsaw Philanthropic Society opens free readings rooms (1861)
Bulgaria	Law requiring all communities to form reading societies (1927)
Germany	Karl Benjamin established Sunday school with library open to public (1828); accepted as town library in 1833 Friedrich von Raumer established four public libraries in 1850 Book hall movement (Bücherhallenbewegung) started by Eduard Reyer and Constantin Nörrenberg (1895)
Czechoslovakia	Matica Slovenská founded in 1863 Martin (now the Slovak National Library in Slovakia)
Belgium	Willemsfond establishes public library opens in Ghent (1856) and small libraries across Flanders Davidsfonds establishes small libraries across Flanders (1875) Ligue de l'enseignement establishes small libraries with primary schools in Brussels (1864)
Netherlands	Libraries established at Utrecht (1892) and Dordrecht (1898) Central Association for Public Reading Rooms and Libraries established (1908)
France	Establishment of hundreds of small libraries run by volunteers (1860-1900) Eugène Morel publishes Bibliothèque (1908-1909) and begins training courses for librarians (1910-1913)
Italy	Antonio Bruni opens the first popular library in Prato (1861) Municipal libraries established in Milan (1867) and Turin (1869)
Spain	Small public libraries open (1869)
Portugal	Decree opens small public libraries (1870)
United States	Massachusetts passed legislation to fund a public library in Boston (1848); Boston Public Library opened in 1854 American Library Association formed (1876) New York Public Library established (1895)
Canada	Ontario (1882), Manitoba (1899), Saskatchewan (1906), Alberta (1907), New Brunswick (1929), Nova Scotia (1937), and Quebec (1959) adopt public library legislation

Supposing that Table 2 above is correct, and that few significant public library developments occurred in any country before the mid-nineteenth century; and supposing also that *Structural Transformation* is correct that the liberal public sphere—as an empirical category tied to economic and cultural conditions—began to disintegrate around the mid-1800s, then the following question must be addressed: how can the public sphere describe public libraries when the public sphere began to collapse just as public libraries began to develop? Existing literature that associates the public sphere with public libraries must confront allegations of anachronism—the application of the public sphere concept to a period where it does not belong. Literature that associates the public sphere with public libraries appropriates the public sphere concept, but only incompletely: it fails to account for its temporal boundedness. The same literature that borrows the public sphere concept to describe public libraries in the late nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries also implicitly repudiates the claim that the public sphere is a temporally-bounded concept. How is it that contemporary public libraries can be classed as public spheres in a way that is non-illusory and non-ideological? It remains to be explained how public libraries can be associated with the public sphere in a non-anachronistic way.

Lost: the public sphere and anachronism

A second significant difference between the public sphere and public libraries, besides temporal location, is geographical location. Geography in this sense does not mean physical geography, it means categorical geography. Traditionally defined, the public sphere inhabits a space in civil society that mediates between civil society and the state. In this position, it affects both (Eley, 1992; Habermas, 1989a). The public sphere affects civil society through political-cultural critiques of everyday practices (Cohen and Arato, 1995), and it affects the state by influencing laws and legislation (Habermas, 1996). This in-between position of the public sphere, as a specifically non-state entity, is explained in *Structural Transformation* (Habermas, 1989a, p. 30). This conceptual geography is visualized in Figure 3.

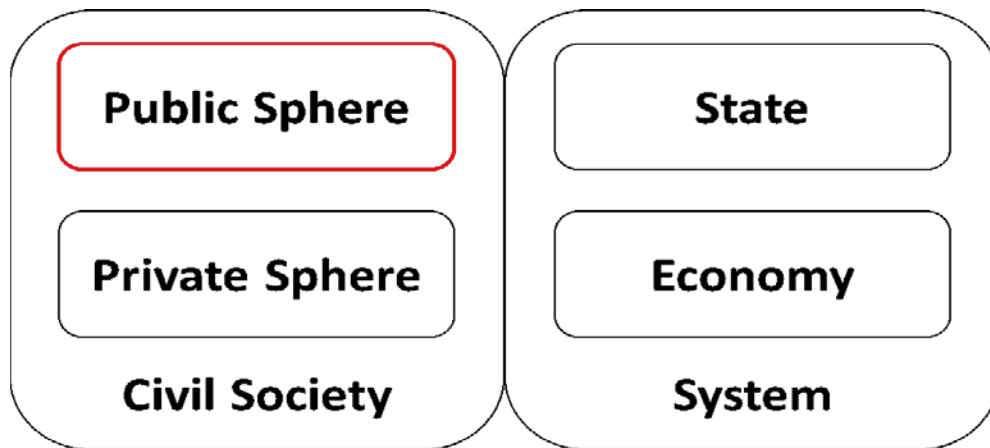


Figure 3: Traditional location of the liberal public sphere

This conceptual geography differs significantly from the empirical reality of public libraries because public libraries are state authorities—they are state-owned, state-managed, and state-funded. It is true that public libraries vary in their specific relationships with the state (Joeckel, 1935; Usherwood, 1993): some are trusts, some are non-profit organizations, and others are municipal departments. Whatever the specific relationship to local governments, however, public libraries are by definition state-sponsored agencies. Many are funded by wealth transfer from the economy to the state, which is enforced through tax legislation. Because public libraries are state authorities, literature that associates the public sphere with public libraries must confront the objection of anatopism—the application of the public sphere concept to a categorical location where it does not belong. Associations between the public sphere and public libraries inadvertently shift the categorical location of the public sphere from civil society to the state. This anatopic shift is visualized in Figure 4. Existing literature has not explained how the public sphere concept can describe state authorities like public libraries without succumbing to objections of conceptual anatopism.

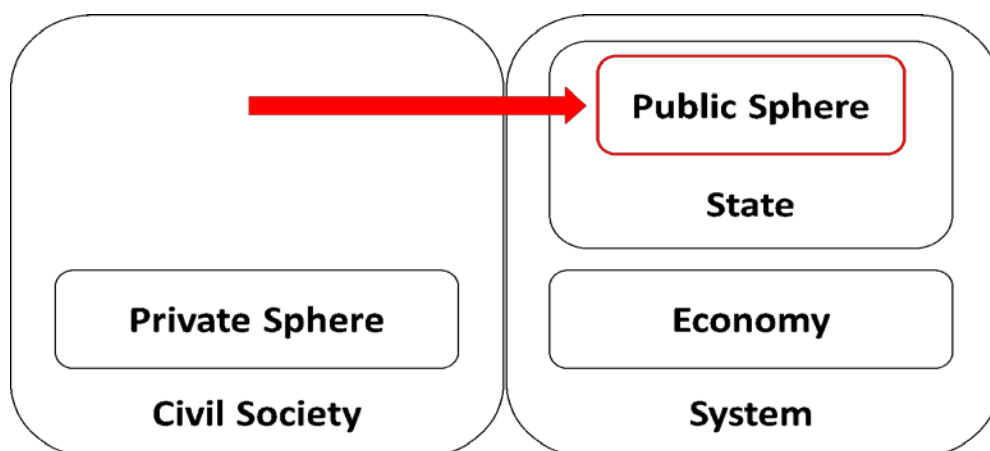


Figure 4: Anatopic shift of the public sphere in library literature

Renewed status? Accommodation strategies for the public sphere in public libraries

Problems of anachronism and anachronism are obscured in existing literature that associates the public sphere with public libraries. Because the problems have been overlooked, no solutions yet exist. The problems of anachronism and anachronism undermine a substantial body of literature about public libraries that has accrued over several decades. Existing literature would benefit from an explanation of how studies of public libraries could accommodate a public sphere conception while also avoiding objections of anachronism and anachronism.

Strategy 1: multiple public sphere paradigms

One strategy of accommodation is to recognize public sphere paradigms that are more flexible in terms of temporal and conceptual location. Existing literature largely appropriates the conception of the public sphere from *Structural Transformation* (Habermas, 1989a). This work actually contains two empirical conceptions of the public sphere: the liberal model that existed from the late eighteenth century to the late nineteenth century, on the one hand, and the power-ridden (*vermachtet*) model that began to form in the mid-nineteenth century and continues today (Habermas, 2006). These conceptions describe cultural and technological conditions, and because they make claims about the actual content of the public sphere, they are "substantive models of the public sphere (Fraser, 1990, note 34). Debates about the "existence of the public sphere implicitly work within the substantive paradigm (Leckie and Buschman, 2007, p. 13). It might be said that *Structural Transformation* also contains a normative or transhistorical model of the public sphere as well (Kramer, 1992), but this model actually developed in later works (Habermas, 1984, 1989b).

Substantive, empirical models only represent one possible paradigm. Since *Structural Transformation*, the public sphere has been used by Habermas in a discourse-theoretic and proceduralist way (Habermas, 1990, 1994), a functionalist or action-theoretic way (Habermas, 1989b), as a synonym for communicative action (Habermas, 1992), and in a normative political theory related to law and deliberative democracy (Habermas, 1996). Paradigms of the public sphere have therefore evolved and changed over time (Baxter, 2011; Johnson, 2006). One interpretation of these various public sphere paradigms is visualized in Figure 5 below. If *Structural Transformation* represents the first set of public sphere models, then over time several paradigms have emerged, coming "full circle with a return to the substantive paradigm (Habermas, 2006).

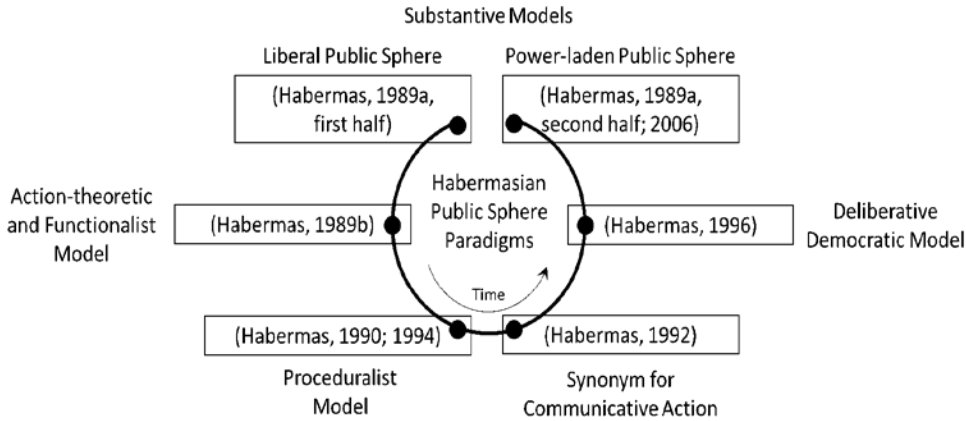


Figure 5: Habermasian public sphere paradigms

Literature that associates the public sphere with public libraries could better distinguish between different public sphere paradigms and apply those that are not tethered to temporal and conceptual locations. Existing literature mentions these alternative models: for example, the deliberative democracy model (Kranich, 2013; Vestheim, 1997b) and the action-theoretic model (Vestheim, 1997b); but these models have not been associated with public libraries in detail. That existing literature assumes a single, monolithic public sphere concept is belied by statements such as "the library also appears to be a part of the public sphere in the Habermasian sense (Aabø *et al.*, 2010, p. 25). As Figure 5 shows, however, there is no single Habermasian sense. Alternative paradigms present attractive future research directions because, unlike the substantive and empirical models, normative, proceduralist, and ideal-typical models do not describe the culture of a particular place and time, but instead explain hypothetical rules and normative possibilities.

Strategy 2: revision of the substantive model

Besides recognizing and applying more flexible models of the public sphere, another strategy to accommodate associations between the public sphere and public libraries is to revise the conditions of the substantive paradigm. The traditional, substantive paradigm of the public sphere as described in *Structural Transformation* supposes that the liberal public sphere began to collapse in the mid-nineteenth century, forming a power-laden and mediatised version, one designed for manipulation and consumption training (Habermas, 1989a). Around this same time, public libraries began to develop internationally. These two processes are visualized in Figure 6 below.

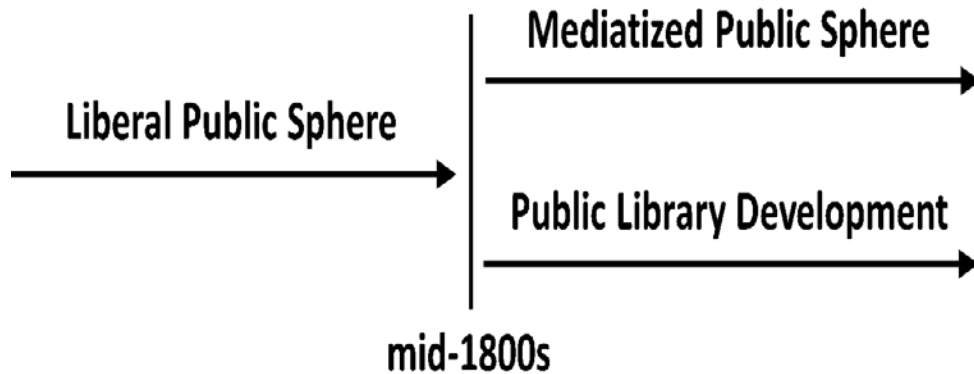


Figure 6: Public sphere and public library trajectories

It is tempting to suppose, based on Figure 6, that the development of public libraries represents a continuation of the liberal public sphere in new garb, one parallel to but distinct from the mediatized public sphere. This is the basic argument of Vestheim (1997a, 1997b) and Emerek and Ørum (1997) in their historical accounts of public library developments in Norway and Denmark. Vestheim (1997a) and Buschman (2003) claim that the public sphere that had manifested in public libraries in Norway and the US, respectively, collapsed later. These histories, however, do not sufficiently acknowledge their conflict with the central thesis in *Structural Transformation*. A fuller explanation is still needed for how the public sphere "lived on in public libraries even as the public sphere, in general, collapsed otherwise, and why the public sphere shifted in location from civil society to the state (Leckie and Buschman, 2007).

Supposing that the public sphere "lived on in a substantive way in public libraries, then public libraries represent an exception that was overlooked by Habermas (1989a) in his general account of public sphere collapse. Perhaps the structural transformation of the media infrastructure sustained by public libraries followed an alternate trajectory. More detailed, cautious, and empirically-based arguments are needed that describe the public sphere in public libraries in a non-illusory and non-ideological way. Did the location of the public sphere shift from civil society to the state as the state grew in complexity and public/private intermingled? This is still an open question. Just as the mass-democratic social-welfare state began to provide material and bio-political infrastructure in the mid-nineteenth century, perhaps it also supplied the symbolic infrastructure for a distinct kind of public sphere. Such a thesis, if developed further, could contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the dynamics of public sphere conditions.

Conclusion

This paper used conceptual analysis to identify two differences between the public sphere concept and public libraries. The differences raise two problems, anachronism and anatopism. These problems are overlooked in existing literature and potentially undermine any association between the public sphere and public libraries. In order to address these problems, and in order to show how the public sphere concept might still apply to public libraries, this paper proposed two argumentative strategies. The first acknowledges a multiplicity of public sphere conceptions, and the second suggests a revision of the substantive paradigm. These strategies remain speculative and require further elaboration, but they raise several new research questions and contribute to an ongoing international conversation that is central to the public library field.

About the author

Michael M. Widdersheim is a PhD candidate in the School of Information Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh, USA. He can be reached at mmw84@pitt.edu.

References

- Aabø, S. (2005). The role and value of public libraries in the age of digital technologies. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 37(4), 205-211. doi: 10.1177/0961000605057855
- Aabø, S., & Audunson, R. (2012). Use of library space and the library as place. *Library & Information Science Research*, 34(2), 138-149. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2011.06.002>
- Aabø, S., Audunson, R., & Vårheim, A. (2010). How do public libraries function as meeting places? *Library & Information Science Research*, 32(1), 16-26.
- Alstad, C., & Curry, A. (2003). Public space, public discourse, and public libraries. *Libres*, 13(1).
- Andersen, J. (2005). Information criticism: Where is it? *Progressive Librarian*, 25, 12-22.
- Andersen, J., & Skouvig, L. (2006). Knowledge organization: A sociohistorical analysis and critique. *Library Quarterly*, 76(3), 300-322.
- Audunson, R. (2005). The public library as a meeting-place in a multicultural and digital context: The necessity of low-intensive meeting-places. *Journal of Documentation*, 61(3), 429-441. doi: 10.1108/00220410510598562
- Audunson, R., Vårheim, A., Aabø, S., & Holm, E. D. (2007). Public libraries, social capital, and low intensive meeting places. *Information Research*, 12(4).
- Baxter, H. (2011). *Habermas: The discourse theory of law and democracy*. Stanford, CA: Stanford Law Books.
- Black, A., & Hoare, P. (2006). Libraries and the modern world. In A. Black & P. Hoare (Eds.), *The Cambridge history of libraries in Britain and Ireland (Vol. 3, pp. 7-18)*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Braman, S. (2009). Theorizing the state of IT on library-state relations. In G. J. Leckie & J. Buschman (Eds.), *Information technology in librarianship: New critical approaches (pp. 105-125)*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.

- Burnett, G., & Jaeger, P. T. (2008). Small worlds, lifeworlds, and information: The ramifications of the information behaviour of social groups in public policy and the public sphere. *Information Research*, 13(2).
- Burnett, G., & Jaeger, P. T. (2011). The theory of information worlds and information behaviour. In A. Spink & J. Heinström (Eds.), *New directions in information behaviour* (pp. 161-180). Bingley, UK: Emerald.
- Buschman, J. E. (2003). *Dismantling the public sphere: Situating and sustaining librarianship in the age of the new public philosophy*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Buschman, J. E. (2004). Staying public: The real crisis in librarianship. *American Libraries*, 35(7), 40-42.
- Buschman, J. E. (2005a). Libraries and the decline of public purposes. *Public Library Quarterly*, 24(1), 1-12.
- Buschman, J. E. (2005b). On libraries and the public sphere. *Library Philosophy & Practice*, 7(2), 1-8.
- Buschman, J. E. (2006). "The integrity and obstinacy of intellectual creations: Jürgen Habermas and librarianship's theoretical literature. *Library Quarterly*, 76(3), 270-299. doi: 10.1086/511136
- Buschman, J. E. (2007). Democratic theory in library information science: Toward an emendation. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology*, 58(10), 1483-1496. doi: 10.1002/asi.20634
- Buschman, J. E. (2012). *Libraries, classrooms, and the interests of democracy: Marking the limits of neoliberalism*. Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press.
- Buschman, J. E. (2013). Libraries and the right to the city: Insights from democratic theory. *Urban Library Journal*, 13(1), 1-13.
- Cohen, J. L., & Arato, A. (1995). *Civil society and political theory*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Dahlberg, L. (2001). Computer-mediated communication and the public sphere: A critical analysis. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 7(1). doi: 10.1111/j.1083-6101.2001.tb00137.x
- Dahlberg, L. (2004). Net-public sphere research: Beyond the "first phase". *The Public*, 11(1), 27-44.
- Eley, G. (1992). Nations, publics, and political cultures: Placing Habermas in the nineteenth century. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Habermas and the public sphere* (pp. 289-339). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Emerek, L., & Ørum, A. (1997). The conception of the bourgeois public sphere as a theoretical background for understanding the history of Danish public libraries. In N. W. Lund (Ed.), *Nordic Yearbook of Library, Information, and Documentation Research* (Vol. 1, pp. 27-57). Oslo, Norway: Novus.
- Evjen, S. (2015). The image of an institution: Politicians and the urban library project. *Library & Information Science Research*, 37(1), 28-35. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2014.09.004>

- Fraser, N. (1990). Rethinking the public sphere: A contribution to the critique of actually existing democracy. *Social Text*(25/26), 56-80.
- Frohmann, B. (2004). Review of *Dismantling the Public Sphere: Situating and Sustaining Librarianship in the Age of the New Public Philosophy* by John E. Buschman. *Progressive Librarian*, 23, 75-86.
- Frota, M. G. d. C. (2014). Biblioteca Pública - espaço de formação da opinião pública? [Public Library - Space of public opinion formation?]. *Perspectivas em Ciencia da Informacao*, 19(special issue), 79-94. doi: 10.1590/1981-5344/2271
- Furner, J. (2004). Conceptual analysis: A method for understanding information as evidence, and evidence as information. *Archival Science*, 4(3-4), 233-265. doi: 10.1007/s10502-005-2594-8
- Greenhalgh, L., Landry, C., & Worpole, K. (1993). *Borrowed time? The future of public libraries in the UK*. Gloucestershire, UK: Comedia.
- Greenhalgh, L., Worpole, K., & Landry, C. (1995). *Libraries in a world of cultural change*. London, UK: UCL Press.
- Habermas, J. (1962). *Strukturwandel der Öffentlichkeit: Untersuchungen zu einer Kategorie der bürgerlichen Gesellschaft*. Frankfurt a. M.: Suhrkamp.
- Habermas, J. (1971). *Borgerlig offentlighet : dens framvekst og forfall : henimot en teori om det borgerlige samfunn*. Oslo, Norway: Gyndendal.
- Habermas, J. (1974). The public sphere: An encyclopedia article (1964). *New German Critique*(3), 49-55. doi: 10.2307/487737
- Habermas, J. (1984). *The theory of communicative action, volume 1: Reason and the rationalization of society* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (1989a). *The structural transformation of the public sphere: An inquiry into a category of bourgeois society* (T. Burger & F. Lawrence, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (1989b). *The theory of communicative action, volume 2: Lifeworld and system: A critique of functionalist reason* (T. McCarthy, Trans.). Boston, MA: Beacon Press.
- Habermas, J. (1990). *Discourse ethics: Notes on a program of philosophical justification* (C. Lenhardt & S. W. Nichol森, Trans.) *Moral consciousness and communicative action* (pp. 43-115). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (1992). Further reflections on the public sphere. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Habermas and the public sphere*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (1994). *Justification and application: Remarks on discourse ethics*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (1996). *Between facts and norms: Contributions to a discourse theory of law and democracy* (W. Rehg, Trans.). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Habermas, J. (2006). Political communication in media society: Does democracy still enjoy an epistemic dimension? The impact of normative theory on empirical research. *Communication Theory*, 16(4), 411-426. doi: 10.1111/j.1468-2885.2006.00280.x

- Ingraham, C. (2015). Libraries and their publics: Rhetorics of the public library. *Rhetoric Review*, 34(2), 147-163. doi: 10.1080/07350198.2015.1008915
- Jaeger, P. T., & Burnett, G. (2010). *Information worlds: Social context, technology, and information behavior in the age of the Internet*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Jaeger, P. T., Gorham, U., Bertot, J. C., Taylor, N. G., Larson, E., Lincoln, R., . . . Wentz, B. (2014). *Connecting government, libraries and communities: Information behavior theory and information intermediaries in the design of LibEGov.org*. *First Monday*, 19(11).
- Joeckel, C. B. (1935). *The government of the American public library*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Johnson, P. (2006). *Habermas: Rescuing the public sphere*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Kramer, L. (1992). Habermas, history, and critical theory. In C. Calhoun (Ed.), *Habermas and the public sphere* (pp. 236-258). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kranich, N. (2004). Libraries: The information commons of civil society. In D. Schuler & P. Day (Eds.), *Shaping the Network Society: The new role of civil society in cyberspace* (pp. 279-299). Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Kranich, N. (2013). Libraries and strong democracy: Moving from an informed to a participatory 21st century citizenry. *Indiana Libraries*, 32(1), 13-20.
- Leckie, G. J. (2004). Three perspectives on libraries as public space. *Feliciter*, 50(6), 233-236.
- Leckie, G. J., & Buschman, J. E. (2007). Space, place, and libraries: An introduction. In J. E. Buschman & G. J. Leckie (Eds.), *The library as place: History, community, and culture* (pp. 3-25). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Leckie, G. J., & Hopkins, J. (2002). The public place of central libraries: Findings from Toronto and Vancouver. *Library Quarterly*, 72(3), 326-372.
- Lievrouw, L. A. (1994). Information resources and democracy: Understanding the paradox. *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, 45(6), 350-357.
- Ljødal, H. K. (2005). *Folkebiblioteket som offentlig møteplass i en digital tid [The public library as a public meeting place in a digital time]* ABM-skrift (Vol. 18). Oslo, Norway: ABM-utvikling.
- Lunt, P., & Livingstone, S. (2013). Media studies' fascination with the concept of the public sphere: critical reflections and emerging debates. *Media, Culture & Society*, 35(1), 87-96. doi: 10.1177/0163443712464562
- Machado, E. C., Elias Junior, A. C., & Achilles, D. (2014). A biblioteca pública no espaço público: Estratégias de mobilização cultural e atuação sócio-política do bibliotecário [Public libraries in the public sphere: Librarian's strategies for cultural mobilization and sociopolitical activism]. *Perspectivas em Ciencia da Informacao*, 19(special issue), 115-127. doi: 10.1590/1981-5344/2263
- McCook, K. d. I. P. (2003). Suppressing the commons: Misconstrued patriotism vs. psychology of liberation. *Reference and User Services Quarterly*, 43(1), 14-17.

- McCook, K. d. l. P. (2004). *Introduction to public librarianship*. New York, NY: Neal-Schuman.
- McNally, M. B. (2014/2015). Response to Dr. Samuel E. Trosow's Keynote Address. *Progressive Librarian*, 43, 30-34.
- Newman, J. (2007). Re-mapping the public. *Cultural Studies*, 21(6), 887-909. doi: 10.1080/09502380701470916
- Richards, P. S., Wiegand, W. A., & Dalbello, M. (2015). *A history of modern librarianship: Constructing the heritage of western cultures*. Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited.
- Rothbauer, P. (2007). Locating the library as place among lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer patrons. In J. E. Buschman & G. J. Leckie (Eds.), *The library as place: History, community, and culture* (pp. 101-115). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited.
- Schuhböck, H. P. (1983). Die gesellschaftliche Funktion von Bibliotheken in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland: Zur neueren Diskussion nach 1945 [The societal function of libraries in the Federal Republic of Germany: The recent discussion since 1945]. *Bibliothek: Forschung und Praxis*, 7(3), 203-222.
- Schuhböck, H. P. (1994). *Bibliothek und Öffentlichkeit im Wandel* [Libraries and the public sphere in transition]. *Bibliothek Forschung und Praxis*, 18(2), 217-229.
- Taipale, K. (2006). From Piazza Navona to Google or, from local public space to global public sphere. Paper presented at the Public Spheres and their Boundaries, University of Tampere, Finland.
- Taipale, K. (2009). *Cities for sale: How economic globalization transforms the local public sphere*. (PhD), Helsinki University of Technology, Helsinki, Finland.
- Thauer, W., & Vodosek, P. (1978). *Geschichte der Öffentlichen Bücherei in Deutschland* [History of the public library in Germany]. Wiesbaden, West Germany: Otto Harrassowitz.
- Trosow, S. E. (2014/2015). The commodification of information and the public good: New challenges for a progressive librarianship. *Progressive Librarian*, 43, 17-29.
- Usherwood, B. (1993). *Public library politics: The role of the elected member*. London, UK: Library Association Publishing.
- Vårheim, A., Steinmo, S., & Ide, E. (2008). Do libraries matter? Public libraries and the creation of social capital. *Journal of Documentation*, 64(6), 877-892. doi: 10.1108/00220410810912433
- Ventura, J. J. B. G. (2001). *As bibliotecas e a esfera pública* [Libraries and the public sphere]. Superior Institute for Labor and Business Sciences, University Institute of Lisbon, Lisbon, Portugal.
- Ventura, J. J. B. G. (2002). *Bibliotecas e esfera pública* [Libraries and the public sphere]. Oeiras, Portugal: Celta Editora.
- Vestheim, G. (1997a). Fornuft, kultur og velferd: Ein historisk-sosiologisk studie av norsk folkebibliotekpolitikk [Reason, culture and welfare: A historical-

sociological study of Norwegian public library policy]. (Fil.Dr.), Goteborgs Universitet, Sweden.

- Vestheim, G. (1997b). Libraries as agents of the public sphere: Pragmatism contra social responsibility. In N. W. Lund (Ed.), *Nordic Yearbook of Library, Information, and Documentation Research* (Vol. 1, pp. 115-124). Oslo, Norway: Novus.
- Webster, F. (1995). *Theories of the information society*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Widdersheim, M. M. (2015a). Governance, legitimation, commons: A public sphere framework and research agenda for the public library sector. *Libri*, 65(4), 237-245.
- Widdersheim, M. M. (2015b). System dreams: Public libraries and the politics of regional library service in Allegheny County, 1935-1989. Paper presented at the Pennsylvania Library Association Annual Conference, State College, PA. <http://d-scholarship.pitt.edu/26293/>
- Widdersheim, M. M., & Koizumi, M. (2015a). Conceptual modelling of the public sphere in public libraries. Paper presented at the iConference 2015, Newport Beach, CA. <https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/73675>
- Widdersheim, M. M., & Koizumi, M. (2015b). Signal architectures of US public libraries: Resolving legitimacy between public and private spheres. Paper presented at the ASIS&T Annual Meeting, St. Louis, MO. <https://www.asist.org/files/meetings/am15/proceedings/submissions/papers/50paper.pdf>
- Widdersheim, M. M., & Koizumi, M. (forthcoming). Conceptual modelling of the public sphere in public libraries. *Journal of Documentation*, 72(3). doi: 10.1108/JD-06-2015-0079
- Wiegand, W. A. (2003a). Broadening our perspectives. *Library Quarterly*, 73(1), v-x. doi: 10.2307/4309616
- Wiegand, W. A. (2003b). To reposition a research agenda: What American Studies can teach the LIS community about the library in the life of the user. *Library Quarterly*, 73(4), 369-382. doi: 10.2307/4309683
- Wiegand, W. A., & Bertot, J. C. (2003). New directions in LQ's research and editorial philosophy. *Library Quarterly*, 73(3), i-ix. doi: 10.2307/4309661
- Williamson, M. J. (1998). *The public library and social inclusion: Information services to jobseekers*. (PhD), University of Brighton, UK.
- Williamson, M. J. (2000). Social exclusion and the public library: A Habermasian insight. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 32(4), 178-186.

How to cite this paper

Widdersheim, M.M. (2017). Late, lost, or renewed? A search for the public sphere in public libraries. *Information Research*, 22(1), CoLIS paper 1644. Retrieved from

<http://InformationR.net/ir/22-1/colis/colis1644.html> (Archived by WebCite® at
<http://www.webcitation.org/6oJgbf42C>)