



Javnost - The Public

Journal of the European Institute for Communication and Culture

ISSN: (Print) (Online) Journal homepage: www.tandfonline.com/journals/rjav20

The Caring Public Sphere: Reframing the Concept in Era of Care Crises

Anastasia Kavada

To cite this article: Anastasia Kavada (13 Mar 2024): The Caring Public Sphere: Reframing the Concept in Era of Care Crises, Javnost - The Public, DOI: [10.1080/13183222.2024.2314841](https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2024.2314841)

To link to this article: <https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2024.2314841>



© 2024 The Author(s). Published by Informa UK Limited, trading as Taylor & Francis Group



Published online: 13 Mar 2024.



Submit your article to this journal [↗](#)



View related articles [↗](#)



View Crossmark data [↗](#)

THE CARING PUBLIC SPHERE: REFRAMING THE CONCEPT IN ERA OF CARE CRISES

Anastasia Kavada 

This article reframes the public sphere concept by bringing it dialogue with feminist theories of care. Care ethics foreground vulnerability and interdependence, suggesting that vulnerability is a shared condition and that we are all dependent on each other in order to survive. This helps to rethink the role of the public sphere within the democratic system, as a space not only for opinion formation, but also for the development of citizens with the necessary skills and dispositions to take care of the issues discussed in public. A focus on care also aids in reconsidering public affairs as issues that are intimately connected with needs and vulnerabilities; listening as an act of care; the processing of emotions as a key function of the deliberative process; and personal testimony as an important type of argumentation. The concept of care further helps in refining the universal access principle by highlighting the importance of intimate spaces, where participants feel safe to be vulnerable, and of how these multiple publics can be interconnected through mobilising relationships of interdependence. Finally, it allows us to consider "care work" for communication infrastructure, including both media technologies and people's bodies, as a constitutive part of the public sphere.

KEYWORDS public sphere; care; vulnerability; interdependence; social media; misinformation; emotion

Introduction: Crises of Care

In the thirty years since the English translation of Habermas' "Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere" new concerns have emerged with regards to politics, media and the relationship between them. Changing historical conditions thus call for a reconsideration of the framework, so that it can more readily respond to the current political and communication environment. This article attempts such a reframing by bringing the concept of the public sphere in dialogue with theories of care developed within feminist scholarship. As this article shows, the foregrounding of care can help in imagining different ways in which our democracies can operate so that they can address some of the major crises of the last fifteen years.

The 2008 economic crisis challenged the fundamental compromise between capitalism and electoral democracy. This provided fertile ground for a wave of movements in the early to mid-2010s demanding "real democracy," a system that serves the people rather than the elites and capitalism. More recently, liberal representative democracy has come under assault by the rise authoritarianism and right-wing populism that have transformed

popular indignation towards inequality into an attack on minorities, immigrants and progressive values.

The political crisis is accompanied by a social one that is manifest in the weakening social protections for the poor and the vulnerable. The rise of individualism and the breakdown of traditional of social bonds compounds these conditions (Brown 2015; The Care Collective 2020). At the same time, climate change and biodiversity loss are presenting an existential threat to humanity, eliciting feelings of deep anxiety and frustration with a political system that seems unable to stem environmental destruction. The combination of these conditions has led to a crisis of mental health, to an increasing sense of isolation, anxiety, and —particularly for those at the edges of society—the emotionally exhausting struggle for everyday survival (Butler 2015).

Our systems of public communication seem unable to address these crises. Indeed, they often tend to exacerbate them. Trolling, hate speech and disinformation have weakened trustworthiness in public communication and a sense of mutual respect. Commercial social media platforms have been at the eye of the storm in recent years as they dominate public debate. They have become popular sources of news consumption, particularly for younger citizens, even though these platforms are not considered as news producers and are thus not bound by the same values of (at least relative) objectivity and fact-checking as broadcasting or the press. With a business model based on metrics and user interaction, their algorithms are designed to prioritise content that fuels quick reactions by as many users as possible, often at the expense of considered opinions and respectful debate (Albright 2017; Fuchs 2021).

These interlocking crises can be broadly recast as crises of care: as a structural inability to “care well” for the poor and the downtrodden, for the natural environment and for other species, for the polis and the common good, for the truth and the integrity of our communication with each other. Yet, while this inability to “care well” is the overlaying characteristic of these crises, care can also be a means of addressing their roots—the intersecting systems of oppression and injustice currently in operation and their effect on systems of production, reproduction and governance.

Combined with some of the key normative values on which the public sphere is based, such as a belief in equality and the power of deliberating with others on issues of the common good, care can help us to reconsider the forms of deliberative democracy outlined by Habermas so that it can produce what Nieto-Romero et al. (2023) call “care-tizens,” citizens who are ready to take care of the common good. This can be achieved by firmly embedding care within the norms and rules of the deliberative process. A focus on care also highlights the aspects of “care work” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 4) that are necessary to support deliberation, including care for people’s bodies and for the spaces and technologies of communication that make up the infrastructure of the public sphere.

Since care is an activity that is normally undertaken by the marginalised and less powerful in society, including women, the working class, people of colour and, historically, slaves, the concept of care highlights disregarded perspectives and experiences within deliberation. It can thus shed light on some of its “canonical silences,” as Willems (2023) calls them. But most importantly, it aids in transforming the public sphere concept in ways that begin to address these silences, as well as the critiques of scholars on the exclusion of women (Benhabib 1992; Fraser 1992), the working class (Negt, Kluge, and Labanyi 1988) or race (Willems 2023) from public sphere theory. A focus on care can therefore aid in bringing to the centre concerns that only tend to be theorised from or within the periphery.

The sections that follow explain how the concept of care can aid in rethinking the function of the public sphere within the political system. It then considers how it changes the normative underpinnings of the deliberative process, and finally how it addresses constitutive silences in the “care work” involved in communication infrastructure. To ground this more theoretical analysis, I bring some examples from the deliberative practices of social movements which have constituted an inspiration for this theoretical analysis.

I also reflect on how this reframing of the public sphere can inform our inquiries into the role of the media by focusing on corporate social media platforms. As I attempt to show, a focus on care helps us recast questions around the troubling aspects of such platforms for the public sphere, including trolling, misinformation, fragmentation, as well as the exclusion and marginalisation of the less powerful. The emphasis in this respect is not on an exhaustive analysis of the role of social media in democracy, but of how the change in perspective suggested by this article can help in reframing some of the key questions that we ask regarding this role.

The Concept of Care

To conceptualise care, I draw on feminist political theory and particularly on the work of Tronto (1993; 2013) whose analysis of the concept in relation to democracy provides a rich basis for this enquiry. Fisher and Tronto (1990, 40) suggest that caring is

a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our “world” so that we can live in it as well as possible. That world includes our bodies, our selves, and our environment, all of which we seek to interweave in a complex, life-sustaining web.

Thus, care is not confined only to other human beings, but can include animals, objects or the natural environment (and, as will be clear later on, media infrastructure) (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017; Tronto 1993).¹

Care ethics focus on vulnerability and dependency. Vulnerability highlights our mutual need to care for others and to be cared for in order to survive. Thus, vulnerability is not a weakness, but a shared condition that can serve as the basis of political solidarity within a democratic system (Robinson 2011; Tronto 2013). This emphasis on vulnerability also points to our mutual dependency or interdependence, the fact that in order to survive we are always embedded in webs of caring relationships for our families, friends, colleagues, communities, and nature (Tronto 2013).

For Tronto (1993, 104), “Care is both a practice and a disposition” as it involves both a caring attitude and an active process or a set of “doings” that we can think of as “care work” (Puig de la Bellacasa 2017, 4). In this respect, Fisher and Tronto (1990) think of caring as a process that involves distinct phases, each one associated with a specific set of actions. The first one, “caring about” includes the recognition of needs and evaluation of whether and how these needs should be addressed (Tronto 1993, 106). The second phase, “caring for” refers to dividing and taking responsibility with regards to the needs that have to be met. “Care-giving,” the third phase, is the actual, often physical, work of care that focuses on the “direct meeting of needs” (Tronto 1993, 107). “Care-receiving,” the fourth phase, refers to the feedback regarding the care process particularly on the part of care-receivers. In later work, Tronto (2013) added a fifth phase, “caring with,” that includes deciding collectively and democratically how to undertake the activity of caring as a society. This phase

“requires that caring needs and the ways in which they are met need to be consistent with democratic commitments to justice, equality, and freedom for all.” (Tronto 2013, 23) Thus, by connecting care with democracy, Tronto’s conception of care provides a valuable springboard for rethinking the public sphere model, starting with the function itself of the public sphere within the democratic system.

Reframing the Role of the Public Sphere Within Democracy

Habermas (1989) considers the public sphere as a space of public opinion and will formation where citizens deliberate on issues of common concern. Its benefits are both cognitive and practical. In cognitive terms, the public sphere allows for a better-informed public opinion to arise, while in practical ones, it helps in “establishing relations of mutual understanding” (Habermas 1989, 151). The latter is crucial for citizens to enact their will as “The communicative power of shared convictions issues only from *structures of undamaged intersubjectivity*.” (Habermas 1989, emphasis added)

However, what care brings to our attention is that developing such relationships of “undamaged intersubjectivity” also requires different kinds of “care work” that go beyond the kinds of “communicative action” described by Habermas. Caring encompasses actions that are both communicative and predominantly physical or non-verbal. It involves caring for participants within the process of deliberation, as well as for the basic infrastructures that make communication possible, including human bodies, communication spaces and media technologies.

“Care work” may also be an outcome of the deliberative process in two different ways. Firstly, because a “caring public sphere” helps to train citizens in the work of care by fostering the necessary capacities and dispositions. “Caring about” develops people’s attentiveness to the needs of others; “caring for” strengthens our sense of responsibility; “care-giving” enhances our competence in performing the activities of caring; “care-receiving” facilitates our responsiveness to being cared for; and “caring with” builds trust and solidarity among the people involved in the caring process and enhances plurality and communication (Tronto 2013, 35). As Tronto (2013, xii) argues, this can facilitate caring “for and about democracy” itself, that is “a task for all citizens” within a democratic society.

The development of caring skills, dispositions, and relationships can then help citizens to assume responsibility and undertake “care work” regarding the issues discussed in the public sphere. Yet for this to happen, the framework should be more clearly connected to decision-making and execution, even though implementation does not form part of the public sphere itself. Such a conception brings the public sphere theory more in line with other interpretations and practices of democracy which emphasise direct participation in governance processes. The framework thus begins to be liberated from Habermas’ (2022) rather restrictive conception of the public sphere as part of a system of (national) liberal representative democracy. For Habermas, deliberation in the public sphere cannot result in binding decisions. Instead, the public opinion emerging from it should inform the decisions of parliaments, and their implementation by the organs of government that are invested with the power to act on these decisions. However, if “Care is both a practice and a disposition” (Tronto 1993, 104), then the “power to act” should be distributed more equally within the democratic system.

This reframing allows the model to more readily respond to concerns raised by contemporary movements and mobilisations. In the 2011 protest wave, the call for “real

democracy" was accompanied by the prefigurative practice of democracy in the squares occupied by these movements, where the emphasis was on a radical understanding of equality, as well as openness, transparency, direct participation and decision-making by consensus (Kavada 2023). Current mobilisations around climate change have also launched a critique towards the system of liberal representative democracy, which is seemingly unable to deliver the necessary change at a fast-enough pace. Groups like Extinction Rebellion (XR) have called for such decisions to be taken by citizens' assemblies as a way of moving past the institutional deadlock (Kavada 2021).

Therefore, instead of tying the public sphere model to a national system of representative democracy, a focus on care provides the model with the necessary suppleness to fit with different types of democratic practices, opening the way for imagining alternative ways in which democracy can operate and the combinations between direct, representative and deliberative democracy that can address the issues under debate most effectively.

Reframing the Deliberative Process

Apart from changing the place of the public sphere within the political system, the notion of care also helps in rethinking the principles of deliberation. It allows us to reframe some of the key tenets of the deliberative process as it aids in (1) defining public issues in terms of needs and vulnerabilities, (2) considering listening as part of "care-work," (3) including the processing of emotions within the deliberative process, and (4) placing personal storytelling and testimony in a more prominent position.

Reframing the Meaning of Public Issues: From Interest to Need and Vulnerability

Care helps us cast a critical eye on what is discussed in the public sphere or on how we define public issues. Habermas notes that discussion in the public sphere should focus on "matters of 'public concern' or 'common interest'" (Fraser 1992, 112). The public sphere thus operates "as a space of communication for a generalisation of interests that includes all citizens," (Habermas 2022, 165) helping participants to shift from positions of self-interest to an orientation towards the common good that should lie at the basis of deliberation.

Care ethics can help us refine the meaning of "public concern" or "common interest" by highlighting that public affairs are issues that many of us care about because they are connected to our vulnerability and interdependence. These are matters that render us vulnerable or that are closely linked to shared vulnerabilities. But they also cannot be resolved individually, so interdependence is crucial.

This helps us to move away from the notion of "interest" to consider the needs that are associated with common vulnerabilities. While our interests are intimately connected to our needs, the notion of interest "can assume the quality of an attribute, a possession, as well as something that engages our attention." (Tronto 1993, 102) Shifting the focus from interests to needs foregrounds the visceral and vital nature of public debate that is concerned with issues of common survival. For instance, climate change is not something that we simply have a shared interest in addressing, but a life and death issue that is associated with our survival as a species.

However, this emphasis on needs and vulnerabilities challenges some of the key assumptions governing liberal democratic theory and, by extension, the public sphere model. One of the most fundamental is the distinction between private and public that associates the notion of “interest” with the public, while “needs” remain part of the private. As Benhabib (1992, 88–89, emphasis added) argues,

The discourse model of ethics is said to be about norms as opposed to values, about “*generalizable interests*” as opposed to “*culturally interpreted needs*,” about questions of “justice” as opposed to questions of the “good life.” In some rough fashion the distinction between these pairs of opposites is also said to correspond to public matters of norms versus private questions of value, to “public issues of justice” as opposed to “private conceptions of the good life,” to “*public interests*” as opposed to “*private needs*.” My claim is that in his moral theory Habermas inherits a number of dubious distinctions from the liberal social contract tradition that are at odds with the more critical and political intentions of his theory of late capitalist societies.

The “liberal contract tradition” is based on an understanding of the citizen as autonomous, rational and able to pursue his interests in public. Yet as Pateman (1989, 6) notes, “[f]ully to understand what it means to be an active citizen who is master of himself requires the mirror provided by the private sphere that lies outside citizenship, a sphere in which women are mastered by men.” Intimacy, vulnerability, connection, and many physical needs are fulfilled in the private (domestic) sphere, so that the citizen can emerge already cared for in public, able to pretend to a kind of individual autonomy that would be impossible without the “care work” undertaken in private. Placing an emphasis on needs rather than interests addresses this blind spot by foregrounding a view of the citizen as vulnerable and interdependent, deliberating on issues that are directly related to common needs.

In turn, this fosters a more inclusive public sphere in terms of both participants and issues. As Tronto (2013) argues, the vulnerable and the “needy” have often been excluded from democracy. The fact that some citizens may not have fulfilled basic needs of survival often raises suspicion regarding their capacity to participate in public debate. Furthermore, issues pertaining to care, housework and reproduction “have often been considered matters of the good life, of values, of nongeneralizable interests,” relegated “in Arendt’s terms, to the ‘shadowy interior of the household,’” (Benhabib 1992, 89–90) and thus excluded from public debate. Care helps us to reframe the model in ways that confront this legacy. The public sphere concept can thus become better able to respond to current challenges, where precarity—of life, of the environment—lies at the core of contemporary issues, including climate change, environmental destruction and multiple forms of inequality (Butler 2015).

This understanding of public affairs is also more fitting to the current media landscape where social media platforms blur the boundaries between private and public, since they are both “publicly private” and “privately public” as Papacharissi (2010, 142) puts it. These are spaces where, for instance, the expression of a private story of sexual harassment or of private grief over a loved one’s killing by police can become matters of public concern as exemplified by the #MeToo and the #BlackLivesMatter hashtag publics respectively. This greater permeability between public and private does not mean a total disappearance of the private, but greater fluidity in the boundary between the two.

An emphasis on care also allows us to critically think of inequalities and power asymmetries in the definition of public affairs. While vulnerability is a shared condition, we are not all equally vulnerable or in the same way. Thus, the prominence garnered by different issues offers an insight into whose vulnerabilities are privileged and why. As Tronto (1993, 124) puts it, care “is a way of making highly abstract questions about meeting needs return to the prosaic level of how these needs are met. It is a way of seeing the embodiments of our abstract ideas about power and relationships.” Therefore, a focus on care helps “us get closer to resolving fundamental questions of justice more than continued abstract discussions about the meaning of justice.” (Tronto 1993, 124)

Hence, the concept of care provides us with some guiding questions for deciding whether an issue should be debated in public, questions that relate to vulnerability and interdependence: With whose vulnerability is this issue related? Who does public discussion render more vulnerable? What relationships and between whom would need to be mobilised in order to find a solution to this issue? And what are the power asymmetries that specific definitions of public affairs involve?

Reframing Listening as an Act of Caring

A focus on care highlights the vulnerability of participants in the public sphere and thus the necessity for them to be taken care of within the deliberative process. Listening attentively to each other is one way in which participants can care for each other in deliberation.

This adds a different function to listening than the one it is traditionally accorded within public sphere theory. Habermas thinks of listening in terms of opinion transformation and consensus. In his conceptualisation of rational-critical discourse, participants need to listen to one another and to reflect on each other’s positions as this allows them to change their opinion based on emergent evidence and to arrive at a consensus.

Yet, listening is not only crucial for developing one’s opinion, but also constitutes an integral part of care within the deliberative process. The first phase of caring identified by Fisher and Tronto (1990) includes “caring about” which involves attentiveness to people’s needs, while the fourth one, “care receiving” notes the importance of listening to feedback from care recipients with regards to the caring process. If we think of public issues also in terms of “culturally interpreted needs” (Benhabib 1992, 88) rather than simply as “generalisable interests,” then citizens need to become cognizant of other people’s living conditions and experiences that affect their understanding of public affairs. Otherwise, care becomes a paternalistic exercise, where needs are attended to in ways that infantilise and marginalise the perspective of care recipients (Tronto 1993). This kind of attentiveness fosters empathy, considered here not in terms of the capacity of putting oneself in the shoes of another, but as an effort to see the world through the eyes of someone who has different experiences than us and who thus interprets the world differently.

Within the process of deliberation, active listening can also be considered as part of the actual work of “care-giving,” the third phase of the care process. Speaking in public can be a terrifying experience for most people as it leaves them vulnerable to critique. Thus, listening to each other is an act of not only recognising the interlocutors’ right to speak, but also of taking care of their vulnerability when they put themselves forward in a public forum. The purpose of this “care work” is to create a welcoming and validating

environment for everyone, even for those we do not agree with. This is particularly important for participants whose structural position has prevented them from not only speaking in public, but also from being listened to (see also Kavada 2023 for a longer discussion on this).

The reframing of listening as caring allows us to cast a critical eye on current social media platforms and their impact on public discourse. Firstly, it helps us question the impact of these platforms' attention economy on our capacity for empathy. Whose content, and thus needs, are being brought to our attention? And whose needs and vulnerabilities remain obscure, ignored and thus uncared for? Secondly, it allows us to consider whether and how these platforms facilitate the "care work" of listening. Do they allow for active and attentive listening? Are they designed to show speakers that they are being listened to? Do they reinforce inequalities by ensuring that those not normally being heard continue to be ignored? Do they exacerbate inequalities by placing speakers at risk of becoming the targets of trolling and hate speech? And who is most at risk of being targeted or not listened to?

Reframing the Role of Emotion in the Public Sphere

Caring for the vulnerability of participants within deliberation also trains our attention on the role of emotion in the public sphere. Habermas thought that discussion should follow the "ideal speech" situation of rational-critical discourse. His notion of rationality has been widely criticised for disregarding the inextricable links between emotion and reason (Fraser 1992; Young 2000). As Jasper (2011, 286) puts it, "We need to recognize that feeling and thinking are parallel, interacting processes of evaluating and interacting with our worlds, composed of similar neurological building block." Emotions are culturally constructed since the ways in which they are identified, expressed or managed are regulated by societal norms and cultural ideas (Jasper 2011).

Yet, an emphasis on care allows us to go a step further in our understanding of emotion within the public sphere. If we accept that deliberation needs to include different emotional expressions and that emotions and reason are inseparable, then the deliberative process should help participants not only to arrive at common understandings about issues of public concern, but also at shared emotional states that are conducive to enacting the participants' will. This becomes even more important if, as outlined previously, we reframe public affairs in terms of vulnerability and interdependence which means that such issues are associated with strong emotions (Barnes 2008). It is therefore important to consider the combinations of emotions that are expressed and worked through in the process of deliberation, as well as their sequencing. In other words, emotions can be considered both as an input and an output of deliberation, both as something that needs to be collectively processed within the deliberative process and as an outcome in itself.

This reframing of the role of emotion is instructive for our assessment of social media. Such platforms prioritise content that triggers strong emotional responses and thus fuels traffic and attention (Albright 2017). The main issue, in this respect, is not with emotional expression per se. It is rather that the constant stimulation of intense emotion with content that quickly disappears, only for the next triggering post to catch our attention, does not allow the collective processing of emotions. For instance, a post may elicit anxiety and frustration over an issue, but for the participants to be ready to enact their will, they may also

need to gain a sense of resolve and hope. In other words, the focus of our enquiry should not only be on the presence of emotion, but also on the ways it can be processed effectively within public deliberation.

Reframing Evidence Through Personal Storytelling and Testimony

If we consider the deliberative process as a space where people work through issues both cognitively and emotionally and where public affairs are intimately connected to our vulnerability and interdependence, then personal storytelling and testimony can constitute an important source of evidence. Notice, for instance, the power of personal testimony in the #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter movements that were fuelled by hashtags on social media where personal experiences with regards to sexism and racism were exchanged (Jackson, Bailey, and Welles 2020).

Relaying personal experience from one subjective perspective, instead of purporting to speak objectively about an issue, can provide important empirical detail that is situated and specific (Young 2000), thus shedding light on “culturally interpreted needs” (Benhabib 1992, 88). Personal testimony and storytelling can also allow people to more easily convey and process emotions. They help participants in the deliberative process to become better acquainted with each other and more knowledgeable about how issues are affecting others personally. However anecdotal this evidence may be, it still provides important information about the participants’ individual experiences and identity, thus fostering interpersonal trust.

However, personal storytelling and testimony can be judged on a different basis of validity than other kinds of expressions. Habermas (1984) acknowledges the existence of various types of argumentation within communicative rationality, each associated with different kinds of validity claims. The one that most clearly resembles what I am describing here is “therapeutic critique” that focuses on “the expression of one’s own desires and inclinations, feelings and moods, which appear with the claim to truthfulness or sincerity” (Habermas 1984, 21). The emphasis in this type of speech is not on whether what is relayed is factually true, but on whether it truthfully and sincerely conveys what one feels and thinks.

Still, Habermas (1984, 21) perceives therapeutic critique using the framework of the relationship between analyst and patient, where the analyst’s critique can help the patient to reflect on his subjectivity “and to see through the irrational limitations to which his cognitive, moral-practical, and aesthetic-practical expressions are subject.” In other words, Habermas (1984, 21) considers “therapeutic critique” in rather individualist terms, suggesting that its main purpose is to “clarify systematic self-deception” on the part of the individual.

By contrast, a focus on care shifts our attention to the function of “expressive speech” within relations of interdependence. The emphasis is on developing better interpersonal relationships as we become more familiar with people’s experiences and living conditions, rather than on ridding them from their self-deception. Whether they are truthful and sincere in relaying their personal story is an important marker here, even if we disagree with them or if we think that their interpretation is factually untrue. In other words, this type of evidence is judged based on authenticity, on whether it is authentic to people’s experience, filtered as it is through individual values and personal interpretations.

This leads us to ask different questions with regards to the “information disorder” (Nieminen 2024) observed on social media platforms where dis- and mis-information are

rife. Fact-checking has been promoted as the solution to this problem. For instance, beginning in 2016 Meta has been partnering “with independent third-party fact-checkers that are certified through the non-partisan International Fact-Checking Network (IFCN)” (Meta 2021) to review posts flagged as potentially false. However, fact-checking alone cannot deal effectively with the problem of authenticity, with the validation of whether someone is truthful and sincere in relaying their personal testimony. Other markers are necessary here regarding, for instance, whether people sincerely believe in the information that they share, even if it is factually incorrect. It is rather difficult to judge that without some measure of who people are, a problem exacerbated by the proliferation of bots and fake accounts on social media. This does not necessarily mean that users should employ their real names, as anonymity may enable participants to share personal experiences that they would otherwise self-censor, particularly if they live in repressive regimes. But it does emphasise the importance of consistency between individual identities and the personal testimony shared on social media, a kind of authenticity that goes beyond whether facts are presented accurately.

Reframing Universal Access

The importance of creating a space where emotions can safely be expressed and processed, and where people are able to judge whether personal testimony is true to people’s experiences and beliefs, all suggest the need for intimate spaces of deliberation. For people to feel comfortable enough to be vulnerable within the deliberative process, they need to have some sense of trust towards the space and its participants. This is more easily achieved in smaller groups where people can get to know each other and develop relationships of trust.

Therefore, a focus on care can lead to a refinement of the universal access principle that is a core aspect of public sphere theory. For Habermas (2022, 149, emphasis in original), deliberation within the public sphere “calls for the inclusion of *all those affected by possible decisions* as equal participants in the political decision-making process.” This seems to suggest the existence of a single public sphere where all citizens concerned with an issue can participate. As mentioned earlier, Habermas (2022) thinks of the public sphere as part of national system of liberal representative democracy, so he tends to consider it as a single space operating on the national level.

However, this principle of universality and, by extension, the emphasis on a single public sphere has been challenged in both empirical and normative terms. Habermas’ historical account in the *Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* has been criticised as too idealistic, since the seventeenth and eighteenth century bourgeois publics that he analysed were far from being accessible to all. Instead, scholars have noted the existence of parallel public spheres where those excluded from bourgeois publics could deliberate, involving, for instance, women’s associations and salons (Fraser 1992) and proletarian publics (Negt, Kluge, and Labanyi 1988). Fraser (1992) suggests that, historically, minority or less powerful groups gathered in their own spaces where they could speak more freely about the issues that concerned them. These “subaltern counterpublics,” (Fraser 1992) were important for developing solidarity and a common voice for their participants.

Yet beyond the empirical accuracy of Habermas’ historical account, scholars have argued for the existence of multiple publics also in normative terms. For instance, Fraser

(1992, 126) has suggested that in egalitarian societies, “under conditions of cultural diversity in the absence of structural inequality,” multiple publics are necessary for maintaining a plurality of opinion, forms of speech and cultural difference.

An emphasis on care reinforces the argument for multiple publics, noting the importance of smaller and more closed spaces from the point of view of intimacy. Such publics are necessary for developing relationships of trust among participants in deliberation and for providing a safer space to be vulnerable.

Social movements have used such exclusive spaces to foster both equality and intimacy. For instance, the women’s liberation movement of the 1970s and 1980s instituted “safe spaces” that were open only to women. As Clark-Parsons (2018, 2128) notes, “The archetypal feminist safe space was the separatist, women-only, consciousness-raising group, where the license to speak and act freely was instated not merely for the therapeutic purposes of voicing personal experiences,” but also for the collective identification of instances of oppression that would lead to concrete action.

The 2011 protest wave of the “movements of the squares” also encompassed such exclusive spaces. The movements’ decision-making process, which mainly took place in physical assemblies on the squares, was open to everyone who wanted to participate, putting in action Habermas’s principle of universal access. However, Occupy Wall Street soon instituted Caucuses that were accessible only to specific groups, such as the “People of Color Caucus” and the “Women’s Caucus” (Holmes 2023). Caucuses were meant to allow participants that felt marginalised in the assemblies to debate issues in exclusive spaces and from the point-of-view of minoritised identities.

However, such spaces always run the risk of becoming enclaves that are disconnected from other discursive processes. Care is not an antidote to this kind of isolationism or particularism. As Tronto (1993, 142) suggests, since care “involves an engagement with the concrete, the local, the particular,” then it can easily become parochial. If what we need is a kind of “promiscuous care,” as the Care Collective (2020, 34) brilliantly puts it, care that is “provided indiscriminately and across difference,” then we should guard against such intimate spaces becoming enclaves.

This issue has become even more urgent with the advent of the internet and social media that facilitate discussions about public issues in separate linguistic, ethnic or ideological bubbles. The algorithms of these platforms have been criticised for prioritising content that is ideologically similar to posts that users have engaged with in the past. While Meta has tried to tweak the Facebook algorithm to allow for more diverse content to appear on users’ home feeds, these platforms are still accused for constituting what Habermas (2022, 166) calls “semi-public spheres,” characterised by the “rejection of dissonant and the inclusion of consonant voices into their own limited, identity-preserving horizon of supposed, yet professionally unfiltered, ‘knowledge’.”

To address this limitation, it is necessary to reflect on how these multiple publics can become interconnected or whether their members would also need to meet in larger scale public spheres to deliberate on public affairs. For instance, while Fraser (1992, 126) argues for the value of multiple publics, she still points at the necessity “of an additional, more comprehensive arena in which members of different, more limited publics talk across lines of cultural diversity.” But how can this be achieved? How can the discussions between multiple publics become connected? What is the scale of these multiple publics and how can deliberation be scaled up (or down) depending on the issue under discussion?

While it is difficult to offer a comprehensive and definitive answer to these questions, the notion of care provides some insights into ways forward. Firstly, in terms of the scale of the public sphere, one could begin from the issue under discussion and the kinds of relationships of interdependence that are mobilised for its solution. These are not set in stone as the scale and connections between different publics can evolve as discussion on the issue progresses. As Wolin (2016, 56–57) suggests, “Boundaries are the outlines of a context; or, more precisely, boundaries signify the will to contextualize.” As the context changes, and as the need arises for the issue to become contextualised in a larger or smaller scale, then the scale of deliberation can also change and more or different connections can form between multiple publics.

For instance, the construction of a crude oil pipeline passing through indigenous lands, that the #NODAPL protests in the US have contested², may be first and foremost a local issue involving the publics of the indigenous tribes whose lands run the risk of pollution. This deliberation can, however, easily escalate to a national one over the government’s environmental policy or to a transnational one over the destructive practices of multinational oil companies in different countries.

This appears like more a pragmatic approach also in the current social media landscape that, on the one hand, facilitates the creation of secure enclaves and, on the other, allows for publicity to flow from one locale to the other, challenging the boundaries between publics and counterpublics, mainstream and alternative media, grassroots actors and large organised interests. Together with Thomas Poell (Kavada and Poell 2021), we have argued for a shift from the notion of counterpublics to “contentious publicness” to capture this more fluid character of counter-publicity on social media as debate over contentious issues constitutes different publics shaped by the spatial, temporal and material relations that are instantiated by these platforms and the issues under debate.

The suggestion, therefore, is to start from the issue, not from the political system, when deciding the scale of discussion and the flows and interconnections between multiple publics. Rather than tying the public sphere only to a national system of governance, simply because it is the system that has the power to act on the public opinion emerging from the public sphere, we should also look at the relations of interdependence that the issue mobilises. At a time when the capacity of national governments to solve a global issue like climate change is questionable, it seems to me that public sphere theory needs to be open enough to help us imagine how political systems can be reformed to address such existential crises effectively and at different scales.

Still, a key question that arises is whether these linkages between multiple publics are possible, whether participants would “share enough in the way of values, expressive norms, and therefore protocols of persuasion to lend their talk the quality of deliberations aimed at reaching agreement through giving reasons” (Fraser 1992, 126). Scholars like Mouffe (2000, 48–49) are very pessimistic in this regard, arguing that it is impossible to achieve a real consensus between participants with different identities as this would violate “the frontier between ‘us’ and ‘them’.”

Yet, as mentioned earlier, care highlights that issues under debate are intimately connected to people’s needs of survival. Vulnerability and interdependence mean that we may have to collaborate across difference in order to survive, in order to address our basic needs, even if our identities make it almost impossible to do so. In other words, certain issues are so vital that people will deliberate in the public sphere simply because they have to.

Furthermore, the practice of care-giving within the deliberative process may create the basis for a “promiscuous” kind of caring relationships (The Care Collective 2020, 34).

The practice of identifying needs from the perspective of another, of undertaking responsibility for them, and the actual work of giving and receiving care can foster a sense of solidarity across difference (Tronto 2013). It may also provide the basis for more self-reflective public spheres, where participants are willing to collectively reflect on and alter the norms and rules of deliberation, so that they are more inclusive of minority practices and perspectives. This may go some way in creating a fertile ground for caring public spheres that operate on multiple levels and for establishing flows and connections between them as the need arises.

Reframing “Care Work” for Communication Infrastructure as Part of the Public Sphere

So far, I have discussed “care work” mostly as part of the process of deliberation and of the way it affects our understanding of public issues, deliberative norms and the handling of emotions. Yet, the “care work” that makes the public sphere possible also includes the infrastructure that supports it. In this section, I would like to consider the implications for the public sphere model if we bring the “care work” for infrastructure more clearly to the fore and render it part of the theory.

Following Star (1999), we can conceptualise infrastructure in relational terms, as an entity that emerges through the relations among people and between people and technical objects. Infrastructure also encompasses the set of organisational practices and social norms that are associated with its development and use (Bowker et al. 1993). While Star (1999) and Bowker et al. (1993) focus on technical infrastructure, Butler (2015) reminds us that the human body is also part of the communication infrastructure that makes deliberation possible.

Thus, caring for communication infrastructure strengthens our focus on people’s bodily needs and their effect on the deliberative process. Are they in a safe physical space? Are they tired, hungry or cold? Are they physically vulnerable and therefore unable to contribute? Caring for people’s bodies involves various activities, such as cooking and cleaning, that are not included in Habermas’ communicative action.

Alongside human bodies, we can consider the “care work” that is invested in maintaining the communicative space where deliberation takes place. This brings our attention to contemporary media infrastructures and the considerable work that is invested in taking care of them, from internet cables, to satellites to telephone masts, to media devices, to digital applications, to software programmes, to internet servers and databanks.

This expands Habermas’ understanding of the communication infrastructure that supports the public sphere. In a recent article, he (2022, 157) thinks of such infrastructure in terms of “the news services, the media and publishing houses,” also including the “specialists who perform authorial, editorial, proofreading and managerial functions.” Habermas thus focuses on those who produce and curate information, rather than on those who care for the material infrastructure of human bodies and communication spaces. In other words, while Habermas (1989) extolls the function of coffeehouses for the emergence of bourgeois publics, he spares little thought for the people who made the coffee.

There are various reasons for this silence. As Negt, Kluge, and Labanyi (1988, 63) argue, Habermas tends to disregard the work undertaken by the lower classes and the

proletarian experience of the time. More “lowly work” is classed, gendered, and racialised as it is undertaken by the less powerful in society. This is particularly the case for “care work” whose more traditional forms, such as housekeeping or caring for the young, sick and frail, tend to either be badly paid or not paid at all as they are often part of domestic duties.

As discussed earlier, such domestic activities also tend to be designated as “private” within liberal democratic theory and thus left outside the public sphere (Benhabib 1992). Yet, as I have argued elsewhere (Kavada 2023), caring for the civic body should be considered as part of democracy, as a key civic duty that should be undertaken democratically (see also Tronto 2013). This was the case, for instance, in the movements of the squares that offered free meals to all participants by operating quite sophisticated kitchen operations in the occupied squares and parks (Kavada 2023).

This silence is compounded by the fact that “When infrastructure is working properly, it is invisible to the user.” (Donovan 2016, 605). This is the case even for the people caring for it as once bodies become part of infrastructure, they also recede into the background. While the owners of platforms, such as Elon Musk and Mark Zuckerberg, garner much publicity, infrastructure workers remain rather anonymous and disregarded even though their labour is crucial “care work” for maintaining the public sphere.

Therefore, the lens of care brings communication infrastructure more clearly to the fore. It reveals that infrastructure is necessary for the public sphere to exist in the first place and is thus part of the “care work” required for public deliberation. Once we make this conceptual shift, it becomes evident that work around media infrastructure needs to be equally shared and democratically decided, as part of the “caring with” step of the care process. This entails questioning the inequalities associated with this work, as well as its invisibility. The political economy of digital infrastructure, for instance, has revealed all kinds of inequalities and worker exploitation from the mines extracting first materials for digital devices to the factories that produce them to the workers offering technical support (Fuchs 2021). This involves an intersectional perspective that considers the interlocking systems of class, race, gender or colonialism, among others, in shaping the inequality of this “care work.”

Focusing on infrastructure may also reveal broader inequalities that are constitutive of the publics under study. For instance, Willems (2023) has demonstrated how the seventeenth century UK newspapers and coffeehouses were directly or indirectly involved in the slave trade that enriched the bourgeois publics analysed by Habermas. In other words, communication infrastructures are not simply used to support deliberation over public issues, but may also be embedded in larger networks of trade and exchange that reinforce global inequalities. By including “care work” for communication infrastructure within public sphere theory, we can better address these “constitutive silences” (Willems 2023) by raising questions around the broader uses of infrastructure. Can we be content with the function of social media platforms as spaces of deliberation, if this infrastructure is employed to reinforce the same inequalities that public deliberation aims to address?

Conclusion

This article argues that by bringing care to the fore within public sphere theory, the concept can be reframed in ways that address some of its “constitutive silences” (Willems 2023) and allow it to more readily respond to contemporary conditions. A focus on care adds another layer to the function of the public sphere within the political system. It

suggests that for opinion and will-formation to occur in ways that are oriented to the common good, deliberation within the public sphere needs to develop the participants' caring dispositions and produce citizens ready to undertake the necessary "care work" to practically address the issues under debate.

Yet for this to happen, deliberation within the public sphere needs to include norms beyond those suggested by Habermas, norms that can help to develop such caring relationships and dispositions. Firstly, public affairs should be viewed not only in terms of interests, but also in terms of "culturally interpreted needs" (Benhabib 1992, 88) and vulnerabilities that can be addressed only through relations of interdependence.

Secondly, participants need to take care of each other during the process of deliberation by creating a safe environment where people's vulnerabilities are attended to and where caring relationships can flourish. Listening attentively to each other can contribute to this as it helps participants not only to increase their understanding of each other's position, but also to create an environment where people feel safe to put themselves forward in public and talk about issues that render them vulnerable.

Thirdly, a focus on care helps us acknowledge the strong emotions associated with the issues that render us vulnerable (Barnes 2008). The public sphere should thus operate not only as a space of cognitive opinion formation, but also of emotional state formation through the processing of collective emotions associated with public issues so that citizens feel ready to enact their will as a collective.

Fourthly, the concept of care points to a reframing of the notion of evidence. If the emphasis is on relating "culturally interpreted needs" (Benhabib 1992, 88), then personal storytelling and testimony gain considerable importance within public deliberation. Validating such speech also focuses on sincerity and truthfulness rather than simply factual accuracy. The emphasis is on ascertaining whether people sincerely believe what they say and whether their personal testimony is consistent with their individual identities and experiences.

Yet apart from reframing the process of deliberation itself, a focus on care helps us address perennial questions around the scale of the public sphere and its singularity or multiplicity. It suggests the need for small scale and closed spaces where people can be vulnerable with each other. However to prevent the formation of secure enclaves, care also points to ways in which the scale of deliberation can change, as discussion about an issue can progressively mobilise relations of interdependence at different scales in order for issues to be resolved. This also highlights the interconnections and overlaps that can form between multiple publics, where the caring norms of public deliberation can facilitate participants to speak across difference and establish some shared ground, particularly when they have to collaborate to solve issues of common survival.

Finally, a focus on care addresses a constitutive silence within public sphere theory that tends to ignore the fundamental role of "care work" for the infrastructure that makes deliberation possible. This includes not only technical infrastructure, but also people's bodies, bringing to the fore all sorts of disregarded activities that are most often undertaken by the less powerful in society.

This reframing can aid our enquiry into the role of communication media within the public sphere by providing a different set of questions to guide our research. Due to constraints of space, this article focused on corporate social media platforms, suggesting that the "caring public sphere" raises questions around: whose vulnerabilities are privileged in the definition and prominence of the issues discussed in public; whether these platforms facilitate active listening (and of whom) and the processing of emotions; whether they

allow us to judge the truthfulness and sincerity of personal testimony, alongside factual accuracy; whether they facilitate connections between multiple publics; whether caring for their technical infrastructure is a process undertaken democratically and whether this infrastructure is reinforcing broader inequalities that make the development of such caring relationships impossible in the first place.

The rethinking of the public sphere suggested in this article revolves around a central paradox: that to address contemporary crises of care, the public sphere needs to employ the same thing that is currently lacking—the participants' capacity to "care well" for each other within deliberation and for the infrastructures that support it. This may seem like an impossible feat. But at a time when our common survival depends on working across difference and in multiple scales to address issues of life and death, developing the citizens' caring skills and dispositions is an absolute necessity. By foregrounding care within the public sphere framework, this article shows that the concept can be reframed in ways that make "hope practical, rather than despair convincing" (Williams 1989, 207). In an era of care crises, this is as much a necessity as it is a duty.

NOTES

1. Due to issues of space, this article does not include an exhaustive review of the care concept, but focuses only on the writings that have informed the reframing of the public sphere proposed here. Within media studies, Scannell (2014) has drawn on Heidegger to theorise the "care structures" of the media, discussing the taken for granted ways that live broadcasting constructs the everyday lived experience of audiences. However, Scannell's account does not focus on interdependence and vulnerability or the power asymmetries within care processes that form a crucial aspect of the analysis in this article.
2. The #NoDAPL protests began in 2016, targeting "the completion of the Dakota Access Pipeline as it received approval from the US government to cross through Sioux and Lakota tribal lands and sacred sites in violation of US treaties. The Standing Rock Sioux and other groups allied to thwart construction through legal action and then through large-scale in-person protests at the site" (Hinzo and Clark 2019, 792).

DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

ORCID

Anastasia Kavada  <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-8969-5723>

REFERENCES

- Albright, Jonathan. 2017. "Welcome to the Era of Fake News." *Media and Communication* 5 (2): 87–89. <https://doi.org/10.17645/mac.v5i2.977>.
- Barnes, Marian. 2008. "Passionate Participation: Emotional Experiences and Expressions in Deliberative Forums." *Critical Social Policy* 28 (4): 461–481. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0261018308095280>.

- Benhabib, Seyla. 1992. "Models of Public Space: Hannah Arendt, the Liberal Tradition, and Jürgen Habermas." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun, 73–98. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Bowker, Geoffrey C., Karen Baker, Florence Millerand, and David Ribes. 1993. "Toward Information Infrastructure Studies: Ways of Knowing in a Networked Environment." In *International Handbook of Internet Research*, edited by J. Hunsinger, M. Allen, and L. Klastrup, 97–117. Heidelberg: Springer Dordrecht.
- Brown, Wendy. 2015. *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. New York: Zone Books.
- Butler, Judith. 2015. *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Clark-Parsons, Rosemary. 2018. "Building a Digital Girl Army: The Cultivation of Feminist Safe Spaces Online." *New Media & Society* 20 (6): 2125–2144. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444817731919>.
- Donovan, Joan. 2016. "'Can You Hear Me Now?' Phreaking the Party Line from Operators to Occupy." *Information, Communication & Society* 19(5): 601–617. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2016.1139610>.
- Fisher, Berenice, and Joan C. Tronto. 1990. "Towards a Feminist Theory of Care." In *Circles of Care*, edited by E. Abel, and M. Nelson, 36–54. Albany: State University of New York Press.
- Fraser, Nancy. 1992. "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy." In *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, edited by Craig Calhoun, 109–112. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Fuchs, Christian. 2021. *Digital Capitalism: Media, Communication and Society*. Vol. 3. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1984. *The Theory of Communicative Action*. Vol I. Cambridge: Polity.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 1989. *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry Into a Category of Bourgeois Society*. Cambridge: Polity.
- Habermas, Jürgen. 2022. "Reflections and Hypotheses on a Further Structural Transformation of the Political Public Sphere." *Theory, Culture & Society* 39 (4): 145–171. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02632764221112341>.
- Hinzo, Angel M, and Lynn Schofield Clark. 2019. "Digital Survivance and Trickster Humor: Exploring Visual and Digital Indigenous Epistemologies in the #NoDAPL Movement." *Information, Communication & Society* 22 (6): 791–807. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2019.1573911>.
- Holmes, Marisa. 2023. *Organizing Occupy Wall Street: This Is Just Practice*. Brooklyn, NY: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Jackson, Sarah J., Moya Bailey, and Brooke Foucault Welles. 2020. *Hashtag Activism: Networks of Race and Gender Justice*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Jasper, James M. 2011. "Emotions and Social Movements: Twenty Years of Theory and Research." *Annual Review of Sociology* 37: 285–303. <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev-soc-081309-150015>.
- Kavada, Anastasia. 2021. "Progressive Social Movements." *IPPR Progressive Review* 27 (4): 344–353. <https://doi.org/10.1111/newe.12231>.
- Kavada, Anastasia. 2023. "Project Democracy in Protest Camps: Caring, the Commons and Feminist Democratic Theory." In *Feminism and Protest Camps: Entanglements, Critiques and Re-Imaginations*, edited by Catherine Eschle, and Alison Bartlett, 176–194. Bristol: Bristol University Press.

- Kavada, Anastasia, and Thomas Poell. 2021. "From Counterpublics to Contentious Publicness: Tracing the Temporal, Spatial, and Material Articulations of Popular Protest Through Social Media." *Communication Theory* 31 (2): 190–208. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ct/qtaa025>.
- Meta. 2021. "How Meta's Third-Party Fact-Checking Program Works." 1 June 2021. <https://www.facebook.com/formedia/blog/third-party-fact-checking-how-it-works>.
- Mouffe, Chantal. 2000. *The Democratic Paradox*. London: Verso.
- Negt, Oskar, Alexander Kluge, and Peter Labanyi. 1988. "The Public Sphere and Experience: Selections." In *Alexander Kluge: Theoretical Writings, Stories, and an Interview*, Vol. 46, 60–82. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.
- Nieminen, Hannu. 2024. "Why Does Disinformation Spread in Liberal Democracies? The Relationship Between Disinformation, Inequality, and the Media." *Javnost - The Public* 31 (1), <https://doi.org/10.1080/13183222.2024.2311019>.
- Nieto-Romero, Marta, Gustavo García-López, Paul Swagemakers, and Bettina Bock. 2023. "Becoming a Care-Tizen: Contributing to Democracy Through Forest Commoning." *International Journal of the Commons* 17 (1): 271–287. <https://doi.org/10.5334/ijc.1197>.
- Papacharissi, Zizi. 2010. *A Private Sphere: Democracy In A Digital Age*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Pateman, Carole. 1989. *The Disorder of Women: Democracy, Feminism and Political Theory*. Malden, MA: Polity Press.
- Puig de la Bellacasa, María. 2017. *Matters of Care: Speculative Ethics in More Than Human Worlds*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Robinson, Fiona. 2011. "Stop Talking and Listen: Discourse Ethics and Feminist Care Ethics in International Political Theory." *Millennium: Journal of International Studies* 39 (3): 845–860. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0305829811401176>.
- Scannell, Paddy. 2014. *Television and the Meaning of Live: An Enquiry Into the Human Situation*. Cambridge, MA: Polity Press.
- Star, Susan Leigh. 1999. "The Ethnography of Infrastructure." *American Behavioral Scientist* 43 (3): 377–391. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00027649921955326>.
- The Care Collective: Chatzidakis, Andreas, Jamie Hakim, Jo Littler, Catherine Rottenberg, and Lynne Segal. 2020. *The Care Manifesto: The Politics of Interdependence*. London: Verso.
- Tronto, Joan C. 1993. *Moral Boundaries: A Political Argument for an Ethic of Care*. New York: Routledge.
- Tronto, Joan C. 2013. *Caring Democracy: Markets, Equality, and Justice*. New York: New York University Press.
- Willems, Wendy. 2023. "The Reproduction of Canonical Silences: Re-Reading Habermas in the Context of Slavery and the Slave Trade." *Communication, Culture and Critique* 16: 17–24. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ccc/tcac047>.
- Williams, Raymond (Xenos, Nicholas, ed.). 1989. *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*. London: Verso.
- Wolin, Sheldon S. 2016. *Fugitive Democracy and Other Essays*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Young, Iris Marion. 2000. *Inclusion and Democracy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Anastasia Kavada (corresponding author) is a Reader in Media and Politics at the Westminster School of Media and Communication at the University of Westminster, London, UK. Email: A.Kavada@westminster.ac.uk