

# Varying Degrees of "Publicness" and the Evolution of New Structures

## Outline



### I. Introduction: The leading question

What conceptual approach to the public is best suited for the analysis of the shared use and shared production of digital media?

### II. A new form of public and attention

1. Multiplication of publics and varying degrees of "publicness"
2. Organic separation of lifeworlds based on computer-mediated freelance telework

### III. Presentation of an analytical approach from the field of action-theoretical sociology

1. Public is sharing
2. Public as processes of spacing and synthesis
3. Duality of space – the recursive emergence of structures

### IV. Questions for the discussion

# A new form of public and attention – another conceptional approach



## I. Introduction

One of the main topics **of our panel**: developing deconstructive perspectives on the public and the private and how they are related

### → **Leading question :**

What conceptual approach to the public is best suited for the analysis of the shared use and shared production of digital media?

## II. Two new phenomena - a new form of public and attention

→ An analytical concept that deconstructs the way public and private are commonly related to one another

**Phenomenon 1): Multiplication of publics and varying degrees of “publicness”** (Lange 2008), based on:

- multiple use of social media and
- shared digital-based workplaces (e.g. response presence of participants in global computerized foreign exchange trading)

**Phenomenon 2): Organic separation of lifeworlds,**

practiced by workers based on computer-mediated freelance telework

# III. Presentation of an analytical approach from the field of action-theoretical sociology



## 1. Public is sharing

- Public is action since it is any kind of space.
- Public is a shared, relational space of practices and relationships between embodied actors, artifacts, places and environments.
- Public is common shared plural attention.  
As such it is not restricted to the face-to-face encounter, but constitutes itself by means of symbols, artifacts and media through time and space.
- Public is given whenever actors make artefacts, symbols and practices *accessible* to others or know that other actors *relate* or *are able to relate* to the same object as they do themselves.
- Actors have to learn by practicing to be able to do so and to perceive adequately (Schmidt 2012: 227). Practising public is therefore a socialization process.
- Public is not the same as „visibility“ (as it is, for example, for Jürgen Habermas)

# III. Presentation of an analytical approach from the field of action-theoretical sociology



## 2. Relational spaces – varying degrees of public and private

Space is a *relational ordering of living entities and social goods* (Löw 2008: 35)

Two processes (in the case of public):

### 1. Spacing

Erection, building, or (self-)positioning

in a way that make artifacts, symbols, media, or embodied actors *accessible* to others

or in a way that actors know that others relate or are able to relate to the same object as they do themselves

### 2. Synthesis

Goods and people are connected to form publics through processes of perception, ideation, or recall

Synthesis: a primarily symbolic process

Synthesis and spacing are concurrent

# III. Presentation of an analytical approach from the field of action-theoretical sociology



## 3. Duality of Space - the recursive emergence of structures

Arrangements in public spaces are socially pre-structured.

Spatial structures exist

if the constitution of spaces (the relational ordering of living entities and social goods and their connections through processes of perception, ideation, or recall)

is ensured by rules and resources that are independent of the present place and moment.

- Publics are products of action that at the same time have structuring power.
- The structure [of public] manifests itself in a range of isolable and recursively reproduce structures.
- (Spatial) structures of public are enabling *and* constraining action.  
Failure to respect the structures incurs negative sanctions.

# Isolable and recursively reproduced structures



## A range of isolable and recursively reproduced structures

- **Legal structures** (e.g. guarantee privacy)
- **Social structures** (that prescribe different codes of conduct in public and in private)
- **Economic structures** (e.g. unpaid housework as opposed to gainful employment)
- **Spatial structures** (e.g. lockability of buildings; distinct rooms are accessible to the public by arrangement, others are not, etc.)

# Socialization for practising public



## IV. Questions for the discussion:

**Practising public and combining several publics need socialization.**

- **What does this process of socialization look like?**
- **How do actors tie in with skills and social perceptions acquired in diverse public contexts?**
- **How large is the range of variation of different codes of conduct concerning public and private practised by one single actor (e.g. concerning guarantee of privacy)?**

# Literature



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