Mediated Visibility and Recognition: A Taxonomy

João Carlos Magalhães and Jun Yu

'It was not reason but a man-made instrument, the telescope,
which actually changed the physical world view'
(Arendt 1958: 274).

Introduction

The dramatic expansion of datafication – the transformation of various aspects of life into digital data for algorithmic analysis – has thrown the nature of visibility into a dizzying flux. For conspicuous evidences of this process, consider the COVID-19 pandemic. Unsubstantiated (and often politically motivated) ideas about coronavirus transmission, cures and vaccines have been viewed by millions of people on social media platforms. A few years ago, these ideas would have been the stuff of brief tabloid notes, fleeting TV reports, and fringe rumours; today, they have likely played a major role in the rising number of unnecessary deaths – while helping to shape (new) political subjectivities and social ties. On another yet related matter, the so-called 'contact tracing apps' exemplify a radically different way of making people visible to governments and large private conglomerates as data. These apps have triggered an expected range of reactions, from hopes of a techno-induced *deus ex machina*, to concerns about further expanding the unfair monitoring of citizens. It remains unclear in what exact ways these contact tracing apps will help or harm – or, more likely, do both.

The abundant literatures on platforms and surveillance have greatly assisted in better understanding the sort of issues the coronavirus crisis threw into sharp relief. However, what these scholarships perhaps still lack is a general conceptual vocabulary to make critical sense of how we have arrived at this juncture, i.e. an account of the historical transformation of the relations between media and visibility and the moral consequences of such transformation. The first goal of this chapter is to develop such vocabulary through the juxtaposition of what we

call *mediated visibility regimes*. This term can help us understand, in a comparative fashion, the complex forms of visibility afforded on and through mass media (newspapers, television broadcasting); networked communication technologies (websites, online forums); and datafied platforms (social media). Meanwhile, discussions of 'visibility' are also haunted by the idea that being in/visible would necessarily lead to linear ethical consequences in the form of necessary dis/empowerments. Our second aim is to demonstrate that this is a misconception: visibility is rather an epistemological condition, which usually maintains uncertain (though productive) relations with ethics. In fact, visibility regimes prefigure what is a fundamental ethical process, i.e. the constitution of subjectivities through the process of mis/recognition. By this, we mean not only the act of giving an account of ourselves, but also the process of having such account heard, demeaned, ignored, celebrated, and the ensuing affects, calculations, and self-understandings. After attracting much attention in the 1990s, the centuries-old concept of recognition has been subtly pushed to the background of social sciences and humanities. We argue against this tendency, pointing out the importance of making sense of what we term *recognition regimes*, if we are to understand why the management of visibility matters.

The third and central objective of this chapter is to theorise the relationships between these differing regimes of mediated visibility and recognition, offering a taxonomy of the ways in which being visibilised and being recognised on and through media become linked. By drawing on the works of Andrea Mubi Brighenti and Axel Honneth among others, we begin by discussing visibility regimes, recognition theory and the nature of their connections. This is followed by a panoramic conceptualisation of three mediated visibility regimes: *broadcast* (mass media), *networked*, and *algorithmic*, and how they varyingly prefigure regimes of recognition, which we term *representational*, *enabling* and *paradoxical*, respectively. Our argument surfaces two tendencies: the increasing conflation of two forms of mediated visibilisations (viewing / being *viewed* by others and being *read* by artefacts) and the resulting heightened barriers for the formation of autonomous subjects. We do not put these different sets of regimes within a historical teleology, however; they co-exist today in a complex manner. Rather, our aim is to specify the central tenets of what comprises mediated visibility through systematic theorisation and juxtaposition of different visibility regimes.

The Ethics of Visibility, the Epistemology of Recognition

Visibility is not the only term that has been used to refer to the kind of phenomenon we are interested in this chapter. Yet it remains the most useful one, not only because it has been more richly theorised (as opposed to Arendt's 'appearance') but also because it is ampler than others (e.g. 'attention' – see Brighenti 2017). This scope and intellectual history make it easier to understand the dyad which visibility, as an *epistemological* condition, forms with a primordial *ethical* process – the constitution of subjects through intersubjective recognition. The *political* (i.e. uncertain and disputable) nature of this dyad is the chief reason why visibility matters, as we suggest in this section.

Visibility Regimes

At a basic level, visibility is, as *a fundamental epistemological condition, one of the key conditions that allows someone or something to (be) perceive(d) and know(n)*. Unlike the other terms above, it refers to a particularly important way that reality can be brought about. For the sake of clarity, we do not argue that visibility is synonymous with human perception as a whole. If we are to preserve the conceptual specificity of the term, we must assume that it refers primarily to 'vision'. But vision is not just an 'another' sense; it is widely taken to be central to the ways all primates (including human beings) become aware of reality (see Hutmacher 2019). This may explain why other comparable epistemological conditions (e.g. audibility) have been understudied, in particular by critical scholars (Neville 2020).

Natural evolution, eyeballs, and neurological electrochemical signals alone can hardly explain visibility away, however. If we visibilise and are visibilised by someone or something, as suggested above, in/visibility necessarily emerges from our relationships with these people and things. This assumption gives the term a much broader and more realistic meaning. As Brighenti (2007) has seminally argued, visibility is never asocial, immaterial, unmediated. Instead, it should be understood as a processual phenomenon inherently dependent on sociomaterial structures, and the asymmetrical forms of power with which those structures are entangled. Thinking rigorously about visibility then demands to consider the rules, practices and – particularly important for our argument – *artefacts* that mediate and steer our sight, assembling bodies, actions, and thoughts[i] into controllable or dispensable subjects, visualisable

or absent entities. By artefacts, we do not mean only older physical objects such as walls, peepholes, presses, and pencils, but also newer technologies such as cameras, software, and databases. Such artefacts may not 'see' as human beings do, but still enable certain registers (pictures, texts, numbers, drawings, videos, charts) and so play a constitutive role in setting the forms of visibilisation (reading, watching, peeping, staring, observation). Therefore, visibility, importantly, depends also on how, when, and to what extent we are *read* by, through and with artefacts, in less or more automated manners. This conception suggests that patterns of visibility can be understood sociologically as *visibility regimes,* which are complicated by economic means and the systematised architecture of power.

The notion of *visibility regimes* is not new. One of its origins is the critical theorisations about how physical spaces are materialised to direct patterns of in/visibilisation with the goal of managing subjects, of which the most famous is the Foucauldian Panopticon (Foucault 1977). Our argument is inspired by such conceptualisation of visibility regimes, but here we build our argument more specifically on a reading of Brighenti (2010), who, while also inspired by Foucault, provides a more comprehensive perspective. Visibility regimes, Brighenti points out, are the 'systematic and routinary (i.e. invisible) set-up of visibilities in contemporary social-technological complexes' (Brighenti 2010: 39) whereby 'a repeated, agreed upon and more or less settled pattern of interactions' might emerge (Brighenti 2010: 45).

Unpacking this formulation, it is possible to differentiate between two main components. First, we can refer to the architectural blueprint of these patterns of interactions as *visibility diagrams*. Diagrams assign specific positions to certain social actors which, in turn, allow those actors to visibilise and be visibilised through distinct and often unequal *vectors* of visibility, interactional rules on who can and cannot visibilise whom, and how. These diagrams are inscribed in complex material arrangements – how not only walls, roads, and buildings, but also interfaces, devices, and computer codes are designed to co-exist in certain ways. Second, diagrams and their corresponding vectors end up settling 'a series of normative questions', such as 'what is worth paying attention to', 'what we have a right to observe' and 'what can be seen safely, taking pleasure from it' (Brighenti 2010: 45). In so doing, diagrams give a normative direction to their structuring of possible interactions – in other words, they enact what we will call *visibility norms*. In this chapter we are concerned with the general norm of how a regime of visibility defines *who ought to be in/visibilised by whom*. Importantly, these

regimes are themselves subjected to visibility conditions – typically, they are taken for granted and become 'invisible'.

The intellectual tradition associated with the conceptualisation of regimes points to a key reason why we should study visibility in the first place. Beyond reminding us of the unequal and contestable terms under which some in/visibilise others, the Foucauldian interpretation of 'regime' highlights the ways in which these in/visibilisations bear upon the 'constitution of subjects' (Brighenti 2010: 45). This, we argue, is the key dimension in which visibility gets entangled with ethics: we can only become someone *and* retain our integrity as autonomous subjects to the extent that we can be made known by others – and being known often depends on being visible.[ii] That the constitution of free subjects is the gist of ethics is of course an ancient insight, and relatively recently Foucault (1984) himself tried to integrate such insight into his interest in the nature of power. But despite the robust literature his efforts generated (Faubion 2011), the ethical theory Foucault sought to compose remains considerably underdeveloped. A much more elaborated perspective to make critical sense of the social construction of subjectivities can be found in recognition theory.

Recognition Theory

In its neo-Hegelian form, recognition theory has mainly 'two features': one, that self-understandings are 'essentially . . . a *social* achievement' dependent on one's intersubjective engagement with others, but realised by individuals' own consciences; and two, that 'recognition is a *normative* attitude', for 'to recognize someone is to take her to be the subject of normative statuses, that is, of commitments and entitlements, as capable of undertaking responsibilities and exercising authority' (Brandom 2007: 136, original emphasis). As such, by constituting moral subjects, recognition may be understood as not only a foundational ethical process (which defines who and what one might possibly wish to be and do, i.e. the very matter of autonomy), but a key concept to study ethics through sociological lenses, an aspect that Axel Honneth's work has amply demonstrated. This chapter adopts key tenets of his writings.[iii]

Defining freedom as *the* ethical value of justice (Honneth 2014: 13), Honneth is chiefly interested in understanding the *sort* of recognition on which the constitution of autonomous

beings depends. The normative kernel of his conceptualisation rests in the notion of mutual recognition, which is realised through *social practices* embedded in and fostered by institutions. If an individual needs of the other to develop a self-understanding, this other ought to be conceived as being worthy of respect by her – otherwise, recognition of this other is not itself worthy of respect and, thus, not sufficient to instil in her the *confidence*, *respect* and *esteem* that allow her to conceive of herself as autonomous. These terms point to Honneth's 'patterns' of mis/recognition. The first involves the affective relationship between an infant and its main carer and, over time, between the individual and other family members, friends, and romantic partners. Through love, individuals are expected to develop a relation-to-self that allows for the confidence needed to properly enter social life. Second, Honneth posits, recognition is produced through a legal relationship with the state which is made possible by the general acceptance of an equalitarian moral status of all individuals in the condition of social beings. Being subject to rights and obligations infuses the individual with a basic sense of 'self-respect'. In this case, misrecognition means denial of rights. The third pattern is mediated by a shared set of norms, which orient the appraisal of 'achievements' and the 'social worth' of 'particular personality features' by calculating 'the degree to which [these features] appear to be in a position to contribute to the realization of societal goals' (Honneth 1995: 122). This sort of recognition, he says, instils 'self-esteem' in the individual. Misrecognition at this *social* level occurs when the individual's contributions to a community 'is so constituted as to downgrade individual forms of life and manners of belief as inferior or deficient', robbing 'the subjects in question of every opportunity to attribute social value to their own abilities' (Honneth 1995: 134).

These three patterns of mis/recognition depend on a sort of antecedent recognition, the 'spontaneous, nonrational recognition of others as fellow human beings' (Honneth 2008: 152), as an elementary foundation aiming at the equal 'dignity' of all citizens (Taylor 1992: 27). If we cannot understand the other as a person, how can the very possibility of recognition become tenable? Crucially, individuals or groups who are structurally misrecognised may engage in a 'struggle for recognition', whereby they attempt not only to be recognised but also to alter the very rules that underpin the granting of recognition (Honneth 1995: 143).

How Visibility Prefigures Recognition

It is an intuitive conclusion that visibility and recognition are closely associated. But the exact nature of this association is a much murkier and seldom explored problem. Some scholars appear to assume that greater visibility would necessarily entail greater recognition (Hjarvard 2013: 150; see also Maia 2014). Yet, if visibility is primarily an epistemological condition, as we have argued, no linear or determinate ethical consequences can arise from being in/visible. Of course, in/visibilisations *do* become entangled with mis/recognitions, a point which this chapter will comment on extensively. But this entanglement cannot be defined *a priori* in terms of visibility per se, as otherwise we would have to accept that being in/visible will *always* have the *same* normative value.

Both Honneth and Brighenti offer different views. Honneth (2001: 115) argues that one might 'look through' people who are physically visible, a form of 'social invisibility' typical of interactions tinged by racial prejudice.[iv] Brighenti proposes a more specific differentiation. For him, the relationship between visibility and recognition might be understood through thresholds: there is an optimal 'fair' or 'correct' sort of visibility, which is conducive to recognition. Below the thresholds, individuals become 'socially excluded'; above them, they become 'overly visible' and their actions 'so enormous' that they might be paralysing (Brighenti 2010: 47). Brighenti contrasts this model of 'visibility-as-recognition' with the model of 'visibility-as-control' usually enabled by surveillance systems and an acute asymmetry between those who visibilise and those who are visibilised. Beyond the shared acknowledgment that some kind of visibility is a *sine qua non* for the possibility of recognition and that total invisibility may produce misrecognition, their conceptualisations point to different directions. In Honneth's view, visibility seems to merely lift the subject to a position where intersubjective recognition becomes possible, bringing her to a point where she can be identified – but the realisation of mis/recognitions are rarely associated with the government of visibility per se. Brighenti does see an entanglement between the power relations embedded in visibility regimes and actions of mis/recognition. Yet, he does so to a point that visibility and recognition become conflated. Surely, this conflation is not linear: less/more visibility does not always lead to mis/recognition (Brighenti 2007). But it still entails a sort of qualitative determinacy, as *some* kinds of visibility appear to *necessarily* entail mis/recognitions.[v]

In order to achieve a greater level of analytical granularity, we have to strike a middle ground. Our assumption is that visibility and recognition form a productive but ultimately uncertain

dyad: once transformed into an object of government, visibility is more than a mere physical condition for mis/recognition (as Honneth puts it), but not *necessarily* the very direct cause of mis/recognitions (as Brighenti says). We contend that more often, visibility, as a regime, *sets the terms* in which mis/recognitions happens. By this we mean that, in assigning asymmetrical visibilisation capacities, visibility regimes (through their diagrams and constituent vectors) also endow different social actors with particular means to exert and resist mis/recognition actions. Conceptually, regimes of visibility can be said to *prefigure* certain actions of mis/recognitions, and that the patterns of mis/recognitions that emerge from these *prefigurations* amount to a different sort of regime – *recognition regimes*.[vi]

As used here, the concept of prefiguration stems from Theodore Schatzki's reading of the late Foucault's view of power, attuned to how action emerges out of the relations between self-government and normative 'field of possibilities' engendered by structures of government (Foucault 2002: 341). This field only rarely 'constrains or forbids absolutely'; more often it 'incites, it induces, it seduces, it makes easier or more difficult; it releases or contrives, makes more probable or less' (Foucault 2002: 341). Thus, rendering some actions possible or impossible (the absolute constraints he refers to) rarely impacts how people act; usually, control is exerted by assigning *other* meanings to particular courses of action, making them look like, for example, inciting, painful, etc. This suggests that government and self-government interact in terms that are much more precise than the notion of 'field of possibilities' entails. Schatzki (2002: 227-228) proposes the concept of 'relations of prefiguration' to understand this dynamic. He defines these relations as the means whereby 'social life bears on forthcoming activity by qualifying paths of action as easier or harder, longer or shorter, obligatory or proscribed' (Schatzki 2002: 227). In this formulation, prefiguration is unavoidable: all actions depend on being endowed with *some* meaning – as fleeting and inarticulate as this meaning might be. However, some actors constantly try to lead other actors to qualify certain 'paths of actions' in particular ways so as to prompt these people to carry out (or not) certain actions. The means through which social actors try to direct the prefiguration of certain actions might be said to have a structural nature – or, in Sewell's (1992) terms, human (e.g. discourse, actions) and, critical to our argument, non-human resources (e.g. physical and digital artefacts). At any rate, 'all the prefiguration in the world cannot sew up' action before action occurs (Schatzki 2002: 256): the process remains uncertain. Thus, when we say that visibility regimes prefigure mis/recognition regimes, we mean that these regimes endow certain practices of

mis/recognition with some meanings, without, however, determining the occurrence and form of these actions.

This section has argued that visibility is a fundamental epistemological condition whose sociomaterial arrangements (regimes) prefigure the equally fundamental ethical process of recognition, through which autonomous subjectivities can emerge. To this extent, visibility and recognition are theorised in ways that call for a delineation of how our way of seeing and knowing the social world would look like, and what we can expect from it. The rest of this chapter explores this entanglement in regard to one specific kind of visibility regime.

Three Mediated Visibility Regimes and Their Differing Regimes of Recognition

Visibility regimes are pervasive. They exist in public (cities, parliaments, squares) and private (homes, offices) spaces, often in overlapping ways. In this chapter, our interest lies in *mediated* visibility regimes, i.e. how different media forms afford certain visibility diagrams, and the visibility norms that emerge from these diagrams. The relationship between visibility and the media is not marginal or incidental but almost always inherent.[vii] Much of the social power of modern media institutions stems precisely from their unparalleled (albeit not monopolistic) and socially deep-seated capacity to popularise certain visibility diagrams and norms, an aspect that is closely linked with the ever-increasing cultural centrality of the media (Deuze 2011).

Echoing the relative lack of scholarly attention to the broader visibility-recognition dyad, little has been written about the links between mediated visibility and recognition theory. For instance, Honneth rarely discusses media, and even when he does talk about newspapers and 'the Internet' (see e.g. Honneth 2014: 300-304), the role of mediated visibility is not fully addressed, and that of materiality in this relation is almost completely overlooked (Deranty 2006). Moreover, among media and communications scholars, explicit theorisations of visibility (e.g. Thompson 2005, 2011) and recognition (e.g. Couldry 2010; Couldry et al. 2013) have been made mostly separately. In rarer instances when their relations are considered, either the link is not fully unpacked and eclipsed by, for instance, normative debates on democracy and participation (Habermas 2006; Dahlberg 2018), or, as said above, tend to be explained in a linear fashion, apparently under the assumption that the 'very . . . visibility of an individual

or group', in particular that of social minorities, 'may be a valuable recognition' (Hjarvard 2013: 150). While some others have noticed the ethical ambiguities of achieving and struggling for mediated visibility (Barnhurst 2007; Dayan 2013) and explored the complexities of granting recognition to mediated others (Chouliaraki 2013), there has been hitherto a lack of systematic conceptualisation of the relationship between mediated visibility and recognition. This is striking given that media institutions and varying forms of mediated communications have long been assumed to be a 'social centre' (Couldry 2003), through which to *see* and understand others and worlds beyond the horizons of our immediate experiences. Thus, we attempt to probe deeper into that relationship in the following sections.

For the sake of clarity, let us outline some of the basic traits of the mediated visibility regimes that we will comment on below. We will demonstrate that, no matter the diagram of a mediated visibility regime, two types of visibility vectors always emerge. One, rather familiar, refers to how an individual or group *views* whatever appears on a media product; the other refers to how an individual or group is *read* by, through, and with communication technologies. We call the former *viewing vector* and the latter *reading vector*. As we will point out, differences in mediated visibility regimes are mainly due to the different ways in which these vectors intersect and influence each other, i.e. *setting the terms* differently. Furthermore, all mediated visibility regimes have two basic kinds of positions: media producers (those who either produce professional content such as journalists and influencers, construct media spaces like coders, or manage and own media companies and spaces such as executives or moderators), and media consumers (those who read, watch, and/or listen to the content produced by media controllers, or inhabit the spaces they built and administer). But in highlighting the importance of these two positions, it is important to clarify that this distinction is analytic: we do not mean to revive the old dichotomic conception of media producer/consumer. Instead, we have found that the basal practices of making and consuming media (the roots of those two positions) go a long way in explaining who can act and how as *recognisers* and *recognisees* in different media.

Two important caveats about the taxonomy below are in order. First, in saying that there are three different visibility regimes, we do not mean that these regimes exist in isolation or can be arranged along an evolutionary trajectory. While their appearance follows a linear chronology (from mass media, to the Internet, to social media platforms), they currently exist concomitantly. Unpicking their co-constitutive relations is not a task this chapter tackles. Second, we do not claim that our conceptualisations explain every single form of media there

exists. It is very likely that, say, some platforms operate under a different visibility regime. If they do, though, they were likely designed *in relation to* the three regimes we describe.

In the following sections, we first define each form of mediated visibility regime according to its *diagram* (which entails explaining the relationship between viewing and reading vectors, and identifying where the focus of visibility regulation lies), and how this diagram (which we illustrate through visual metaphors) relates to some kinds of *interactions* and *visibility norms*. This paves the way to discussing how these mediated visibility regimes prefigure certain *recognition regimes* (see Table 1).

	Visual metaphor	**Typical media form**	**Viewing vector**	**Reading vector**	**Relation between vectors**	**Recognition regime**
Broadcast visibility regime	Two-way cone	Mass media	Many-view-few	Few-read-few	Mediated by media producers	Representational
Networked visibility regime	Web	Websites	Many-view-many	Few-may-read-many	Automated but limited to advertisements	Enabling
Algorithmic visibility regime	Loop	Datafied platforms	Many-view-relevant	Few-will-read-many	Automated to most (if not all) sorts of content	Paradoxical

Table 1: Three mediated visibility regimes and their corresponding recognition regimes. Source: authors.

Broadcast Visibility, Representational Recognition Regime

While the popularity and relevance of the mass media (in both electronic [TV] and print [newspapers, magazines, books] formats) may have seemed to decrease following the emergence of the Internet and digital media, they remain crucial to understanding mediated

forms of visibility. Digital media do not obliterate but 'remediate' these mass media in a renewed fashion (Bolter and Grusin 2000). Hence, even in a highly-online country like the USA, almost 60% of the population still declare mainly using the mass media to be informed about politics (Pew 2020).

John B. Thompson (1995, 2005) has argued that the defining visibility diagram of the mass media is the *broadcast*, whose prototypical visual metaphor is a 'cone' with a very wide base, whereby the many (the media consumers) view the few (media producers, and the content they make), engendering a sort of many-view-few viewing vector. In Thompson's view, such diagram gives rise to a 'mediated quasi-interaction', in which one side (audiences) can view the other (media professionals, and their messages), but without involving direct interactions; hence, the 'quasi'. The emergence of this form of interaction represents a historical shift, and a crucial vehicle for the rise and establishment of modernity, he points out. As opposed to the face-to-face and one-to-one interactions which dominated much of human communication, this form of 'quasi-interaction' does not require the agents of interaction to coexist in the same space to 'quasi-interact' instantaneously, enabling what he calls 'de-spatialized simultaneity' (Thompson 2005: 37; see also Tarde 1901 for an antecedent). In this view, the media occupy, happen in, and link to various physical spaces: the newsroom, the studio, the private living room, the semi-public bar etc. But the mass media outputs (the newspaper, the TV programme) do not constitute a space themselves. Apart from stretching out space, these can also stretch out time, by desynchronising the production and the reception of the messages, Thompson argues.

Yet, contra Thompson (2005: 39), this broadcast is not composed of only a viewing vector, whereby many consumers *view* the content produced by some few media producers. While media professionals may not physically see the entirety of their audiences, they have incessantly tried to *read* their consumers in the UK and the USA since the 1930s (Scannell and Cardiff 1991: 375-380; Turow 1997). Historically, TV ratings have been based on quantitative scientific techniques, whereby the behaviours of a small segment of consented consumers were recorded and studied, and then extrapolated as some forms of findings – what Fisher and Mehozay (2019) call the 'scientific episteme'. Ang (1991) conceptualised these 'readings' of consumers as a sort of control technique. Its goal, she pointed out, has been to construct simplified, classifiable and thus controllable 'audiences' so as to enhance broadcasters' ability to lead consumers into watching TV and sell adverts in a more efficient and profitable manner.

Yet, whether and how exactly the data collected about media consumers could influence decisions on what content to produce and prioritise has remained indeterminate. Given that these data have been interpreted and debated over by a multitude of professionals, they have become a discursive construct – despite its apparent objectivity (Ang 1991: 16). Ethnographic work about prime-time TV programming in the USA, for instance, concluded that media producers held a deep 'uncertainty about what might actually succeed', with theories on how consumers would react to shows 'as farfetched as any' (Gitlin 1993: 17).

This reading vector suggests that the broadcast visibility regime is better characterised as a *two-way cone*, in which many-view-few and few-read-few, both based on a stark asymmetry between media producers who decide whom, and how, things should be in/visibilised, and consumers (the 'mass'), whose capacity to influence producers tend to be involuntary, indirect, and uncoordinated. Yet, since the viewing vector is only *informed* (and not determined) by the reading vector, media producers' decisions about what content to show will neither automatically follow ratings nor obey producers' non-commercial volitions, such as ideological leanings. This ambiguity has important consequences for the comprehension of the typical visibility norms of this broadcast visibility regime: while media consumers ought to be *read* through limited scientific work (rather than total surveillance), this reading is not determinant of how they ought to *view*. The norms of this viewing vector will vary considerably, emerging from a constant tension between economic needs, political interests, and professional standards and practices (for instance, as audience studies have illustrated, e.g. Morley 1980; Abercrombie and Longhurst 1998). The consequence is the uneven mix of journalism, propaganda, public service, and entertainment that characterises much of the mass media today, in which the notion of *relevance* is constantly disputed.

The inequality between media producers and consumers is also helpful when considering the sort of recognition regime the mass media prefigures. As controllers of visibility, media producers have the final say on whether and how others are mis/recognised – they are the recognisers. Meanwhile, as those who have their visibility controlled, media consumers ultimately remain the object of producers' mis/recognition – they are the recognisees. Recognisees might, of course, try to direct recognisers' actions through activism and lobbying, show some forms of resistance through differing interpretations, and create their own media. But under this regime, they have *no final say* on these actions.[viii] This amounts to a first sort of prefiguration, i.e. an initial qualification of the general action of mis/recognition:

mis/recognising others on mass media is understood as *impossible* for media consumers and as *possible* for media producers. Yet, in the case of media producers, mis/recognitions, as a type of action, are not only possible – they are also *compulsory*: in/visibilisations have no linear or determinate ethical consequences, but they do necessarily entail *some* form of mis/recognitions.

Since all decisions about in/visibility on mass media are made by humans, these decisions must entail some judgment about the moral status of the in/visibilised social actors – however unintentional or misguided this judgment can be. Do these actors even deserve to be known by others? If so, *how* should they be known? Should their image, thoughts, and actions appear on media as they say they want them to? Or should media producers distort, contradict, and contextualise actors' image, thoughts, and actions? While these are questions of journalistic integrity, it is just as noteworthy that, by continually answering these questions several times in their everyday professional lives, mass media producers of all kinds do not merely confer visibility in a neutral manner as someone who would simply turn on a camera and allow 'reality' to unfold on screen. They inevitably *represent* others. This is far from a novel conclusion, as theories of framing (Gitlin 1980; Scheufele 1999) and gatekeeping (Bourdieu 1998; Shoemaker and Vos 2009) have explained for decades. What has not so often been said is that decisions on representation are also decisions on mis/recognition, regardless of how aware media producers are of this. Hence, the broadcast visibility regime can be said to prefigure a *representational recognition regime*. However, echoing the uncertainty of this regime's visibility norms, it is almost impossible to predict in advance whether representations will be harmful or conducive to the autonomy of individuals and groups, whether they will foster love, respect and esteem, or undermine them (see Hall 1973). By definition, then, struggles over how mass media institutions govern visibility bear upon, importantly, struggles over broader frameworks of recognition.

Networked Visibility, Enabling Mis/Recognition Regime

Although online interactions have become increasingly centralised in some few online spaces (as the next section suggests), the Internet remains importantly structured by what we call the *networked visibility regime*.

As its self-explanatory name indicates, this regime is underpinned by a network diagram, a terminology widely used to explain the original infrastructure of the Internet (Abbate 1999). If the broadcast's most apt visual metaphor is the cone, the network's decentralised architecture has been represented by a web of nodes connected through dialogical lines through which all nodes are, in principle, capable of viewing one another, even if indirectly (Castells 1996; see also Brighenti 2010). Instead of allowing many to view a few as in the broadcast, a networked viewing vector would be best defined by a many-view-many flow of interactions – hence, the emergence of the self-mass mediation practices (Castells 2007). As with the 'mediated quasi-interaction' in the visibility regime of mass media, networked interaction stretches out time and space, but it also reconfigures these dimensions. The network may be said to constitute, by itself, a form of media space, composed of an immense bundle of smaller mediums, such as hardware, devices, codes and interfaces. This resembles, we argue, a form of '*re*-spatialised simultaneity': when networked, interactions between users occur simultaneously and at a physical distance, as on mass media. But they are *also* re-spatialised by the design of the digital spaces where they take place. Moreover, these digital spaces are not designed to remain under the control of some few producers, as in the broadcast regime. Both the Internet and personal computers are *to some extent* 'generative', open to be changed, reinvented and tinkered with (Zittrain 2008).

The visibility norms implicated in this many-view-many viewing vector are even harder to pinpoint than those of the mass media. Freed from the kind of asymmetry that marked the mass media, the definition of what one ought to view can vary enormously, and often obeys whichever dynamics are established by the users of a smaller space within the broader network. This unprecedent normative fragmentation of the viewing vector will often help explain some of the deep political disruptions brought by the emergence of the network (Benkler 2006; Castells 2013). Ultimately, the very meaning of gatekeeping might seem to fade: if everyone can have a say on whether and how a message will become visible while bypassing any form of censorship and control, the metaphor of the 'gate' would cease to be useful, and the social order it helps preserve might crack – or so some imagined (Mansell 2012).

What this description misses, though, is that the nodes of the network remain highly unequal, and their relations are not necessarily democratic (Couldry 2015). Even advocates of this regime have long assumed that some asymmetry would exist, in particular due to how

traditional broadcast actors started to occupy digital spaces (Castells 2007), using economic, technical, and reputational capital to gather attention (Benkler 2006). They insisted, though, that at least *in principle*, many could still view many: the stark inequality between media producers and media consumers all but disappeared, giving rise to a new figure of the 'produser' (Bruns 2007; see also Toffler 1980 for a relevant discussion on 'prosumer'). However, theories on the liberatory capabilities of networked visibility have failed to properly emphasise that this regime is also composed of a different visibility vector that is hardly about social movements getting their message out, or of political dissidents having their voice heard. Instead, it is about *some users reading many other users* through means that are made possible by (and not extraneous to) the computational fabric of the Internet.

Automated, fragmented, and commercial surveillance largely mirrors the development of the Web. Whereas the network entails forms of manual and 'horizontal' surveillance (i.e., between similar nodes, such as two ordinary social media users; see Trottier 2011), the technological and economic characteristics of interconnected computational artefacts, which can cheaply produce, store, circulate, and analyse large amounts of personalised data both at a distance and in real-time, also enable automatised and hierarchical forms of digitalised surveillance (see also Brighenti 2012). One term for it is 'dataveillance' (Clarke 1988), which is 'the disciplinary and control practice of monitoring, aggregating, and sorting data' (Raley 2013: 285). For decades now, companies have used consumers' digital behavioural data to customise adverts' visibility online, trying to lead people to view (and eventually buy) certain products (Turow 2011). Dataveillance also helped to expand the networked visibility regime. Computational tracking artefacts allowed retailers, advertisers, and political consultants to understand the potential of 'the Web' as a space for investment and capitalist expansion. To think of dataveillance as a part of the networked visibility casts light on a different asymmetry between nodes: some users operate online monitoring techniques, while others have their online behaviour constantly monitored.

One last point to consider in regard to the networked visibility regime is the relationship between viewing and reading vectors. As explained in the previous section, in the broadcast visibility regime, data extracted from the limited reading of a sample of consumers had to be interpreted and negotiated by producers before having any influence on what sort of content could be (made to be) viewed. In the network regime, this interpretation and its influence become, for the first time, partially automated and independent of proper consent. These

processes coalesce around the practice of data profiling, through which advertisers infer users' preferences in order to offer them content that they are expected be interested in (Turow 2011). Importantly, however, by 'content' we mean mainly adverts. The posts one reads on, say, 4chan is unlikely to be based on one's data profile, but the myriad *adverts* one sees on 4chan are likely to have been placed there due to a semi-automated decision based on one's data profile. Thus, many users ought to be read by few others, but in a much more expansive and intrusive manner than in the broadcast visibility regime. But this visibility norm only limitedly bears on how users ought to view.

As with the broadcast visibility regime, a key aspect to understanding what sort of recognition regime is prefigured by the network diagram is the way it reconfigures the differences in positions between media producer and consumer. If the ability to produce and distribute content becomes almost universally accessible, the capacity to build media spaces emerges as a novel but central differentiating element. Someone who posts in an online imageboard is inherently different from the one who designed the board. This new kind of media producer is rarely the one who represents, and thus mis/recognises, others – as in the broadcast regime. Instead, the producers of the network *enable* the possibility of mis/recognitions to happen in and through the spaces they have constructed. We do not argue that this enabling of mis/recognition is neutral or incidental – doing so would mean returning to Honneth's suggestion of physical visibility as a mere condition for mis/recognition. The network is a regime, and its 'enabling' is itself the outcome of design decisions that are inescapably political. Our point is that only *rarely* are these decisions, themselves, actions of mis/recognitions.[ix] Usually, they provide a considerable array of technical means for users to visibilise themselves and others through representations of their own creation (texts, videos, images), and these representations may or may not promote love, respect, and esteem: they become both potential recognisers and recognisees. The network diagram thus prefigures all users' actions of mis/recognitions as *possible*, but also *exciting*, *revolutionary*, etc. Another way in which the diagram prefigures mis/recognitions is through the enabling of non-representational behaviours by some tech-savvy users – such as dataveillance, which depends on the denial of the basic right of privacy. This form of misrecognition is qualified (i.e. prefigured) in this regime as *enticing* and highly *profitable*, one of the core practices of what might be a new phase of capitalism (Zuboff 2019). Nonetheless, such systemic disrespect is not prefigured as *necessary*. It remains technically possible to invisibilise oneself on the web, however difficult this self-invisibilisation might be (Brunton and Nissenbaum 2015). Mutual recognition remains conceivable. As we will see,

however, this is not much of a case with the algorithmic visibility regime.

Algorithmic Visibility, Paradoxical Recognition Regime

In principle, the Internet still is a decentralised network of networks whose distribution stretches across multiple jurisdictions and whose execution is governed by multiple separate actors and institutions through a number of standards. But a handful of privately-owned smaller networks, *platforms*, have grown so much that they have come to be understood *as* the Internet, rising to positions of market and cultural dominance (Moore and Tambini 2018). As defined here, these platforms are fully *datafied*, a neologism indicating that they are underpinned by *datafication* – the 'transformation of social action into online quantified data' enacted by 'real-time tracking' that allows for 'predictive analysis' executed by machine-learning algorithmic systems (van Dijck 2014: 198, critiquing Mayer-Schönberger and Cukier 2013). Datafied platforms are the typical spaces of what we call *algorithmic visibility regime*.

Further unpacking the notion of datafied platforms provides us with an entry point into our definition of algorithmic visibility. By 'platforms', we mean what some would call social media platforms: 'sites and services that host public expression, store it on and serve it up from the cloud' (Gillespie 2018b: 254) which afford the creation of personal profiles, and through which users can produce/circulate various forms of digital content and interact with various forms of digital content produced/circulated by their connections within the platform (Ellison and boyd 2013). These platforms become 'datafied' when the possibilities of viewing and interacting with the content produced/circulated by others are mediated, but not determined, by 'algorithmic systems' (Seaver 2013). This approach understands these systems not as agential elements, but as institutionally situated, mostly opaque, semi-autonomous, malleable, and networked sets of computational algorithms, designed, tweaked, and tuned by programmers, managers, and executives, according to socially grounded interests, norms and material possibilities, to produce and analyse digital data (Gillespie 2014; Ananny 2015).

Despite its concrete technical meaning, our use of the term 'algorithmic' here is also metaphorical – a way of representing, in a concededly simplified form, this regime's *loop* diagram. What makes the algorithmic visibility regime unique is that the two vectors of

visibility in this regime are entangled by default: how users are made readable (input) necessarily informs the definition by the regime of what they can view (output).[x] This, in turn, delimits what users can act upon, hence defining how they can be made readable, and so on, in an iterative way.[xi] Platforms' *reading vector* comprises advanced forms of dataveillance, supported by sprawling infrastructural resources. In addition to datafying all the actions and contents related to users within the platform, this infrastructure also produces or receives different kinds of data from devices, Internet browsers, and plugins. The *viewing vector* uses machine-learning algorithms to define what users are exposed to on their feeds and interfaces.

This loop is not unidirectional or fully automated. Users constantly make their own decisions about what to view on platforms, and platforms pay for thousands of human moderators to remove 'improper' posts by users (Roberts 2019). These practices point to other facets of the same entanglement between viewing and reading vectors. Users' action of manually looking for content on platforms will most likely be transformed into data to update their 'data selves'; non-automated content moderation relies to some extent on users' flagging, another action that not only might enrich what the platform knows about them, but that must be first datafied to generate any decision by human moderators (Gillespie 2018a). This is not to mention the strong turn towards algorithmic content moderation, a more obvious instantiation of algorithmic visibility that has been deepened by the COVID-19 pandemic (Magalhães and Katzenbach 2020). While the default entanglement of visibility vectors should not be taken as determining the *entirety* of the visibility phenomenon on datafied platforms,[xii] it *does* comprise the most important, distinctive, and novel trait of the algorithmic visibility regime.

This entanglement is not erratic but built and governed in the name of *personalised relevance* (Gillespie 2014). Although some have found this concept to be guided by a mix of six factors (popularity, similarity between users, ties between users, paid sponsorship of content, subscription to content, and newness [Ochigame and Holston 2016]), how precisely these factors are coded and balanced against each other is ultimately unknown and will likely remain concealed, or at least kept out of the public's view (Pasquale 2015). However, for our purposes, solving this puzzle (if a solution is possible) is a marginal issue. What matters more is that, to employ Mackenzie's (2015) language, machine-learning algorithms are constantly inventing relational 'shapes' on the datasets produced by *users' previous datafied actions*, so as continuously to update what counts as 'relevant' to a specific user.

The general principle of this sort of personalised relevance might be termed *data-driven homophilic pre-emption*. 'Data-driven' points to the fact that these processes are underpinned by the production and probabilistic analysis of users' behavioural digital data – including explicit choices on visibility, such as who to 'follow', befriend, view, and by whom to be viewed (via 'privacy' settings' and 'favourite' buttons). Also, such analysis is guided by a 'homophilic' criterion: it seeks to order the relevance of a given content by comparing it with other content previously classified (intentionally or not) as relevant. Here, it is important to briefly note that 'filter bubbles' are not the necessary consequence of this conception. In fact, 'relevance' can be defined in such a non-normative manner that it might even encompass content that would be deemed, initially, statistically *ir*relevant, as functionalities that promise to increase the 'diversity' of content on feeds suggest (TikTok 2020). This sort of offering is very unlikely to stem from ethical concerns, though; almost certainly, it is based on less obvious data patterns, e.g. the discovery that certain kinds of 'diverse' content generate enough engagement – i.e. represent what the user understands as relevant, or so is the assumption. Finally, 'pre-emption' is used here to indicate that, based on this ranking of content homophily, a platform does not merely predict an action from a user: it acts pre-emptively on behalf of the user, assigning greater or lesser visibility to what is deemed more or less 'relevant' – to a point that most of the content is effectively excluded from the possibility of being viewed.

Organised around the principle of data-driven homophilic pre-emption, personalised relevance plays a steering role on interaction conditions that, at first glance, seem fairly similar to those of the networked visibility regime. As before, users can certainly dialogically interact, using a vast and growing array of digital cues, with many other users. Also, such simultaneous interaction occurs within digital spaces and across distinct physical locales. Nevertheless, this regime shapes the *possibilities* of interactions between nodes. Spatially, but also crucially temporally (Bucher 2020), algorithmic systems are designed to steer users toward viewing (and interacting) with what is defined as the 'right' and 'more important' (i.e. relevant) for them.

Therefore, in the algorithmic visibility regime, 'relevance' is hardly comparable to other instantiations of the same concept in the mass media.[xiii] Instead of a normative criterion to define what publics should know to grow into a citizen, relevance becomes a behavioural quantitative measure to enhance the organisation of users for economic gains. Decisions on visibility (and recognition, as we will explain) become linked with platforms' business model in unprecedented fashion. In principle, the more 'relevant' a user's experience on a platform,

the more likely will this user stay and keep acting within that platform (Seaver 2019). As a result of this better 'sticking' of a user to a site (Hindman 2018), platforms (and advertisers) may be able to not only exploit users' gaze for a longer time, but also to construct more accurate data profiles. These benefits, in turn, entail the promise of a more efficient exploitation of users' attention and enhancing the platform's probabilistic models.

Underpinning this pre-emptive action is a visibility norm, according to which a user ought to view what her datafied past behaviour suggests she would probably decide to view, if she had the chance to decide by herself – an event that is inherently dependent on another visibility norm: that users' behaviour ought to be read continually. What counts as 'relevant' to a specific user is in eternal flux, and so it can be revealed only through constant machine leaning analysis that bears the hope of making visible what would have otherwise been unknowable (Jasanoff 2017), especially in the *pre*-datafication era. This is quite different from the data-poorer (and thus less sophisticated) profiling techniques often used by advertisers in the networked visibility regime, often built on much less data.

Defined in this way, algorithmic visibility regime prefigures a unique form of recognition regime. On the surface, the possibilities enabled by datafied platforms may not seem much different from those assigned to older kinds of online networks: in these spaces, users can represent themselves and others, acting as both recognisers and recognisees. Yet, in contrast to the builders of the networked visibility regime, the decisions made by the designers and controllers of platforms *do* depend on the mass misrecognition of their users.

There are, in fact, two forms of misrecognition actions that are prefigured (i.e. qualified) as *necessary* in the algorithmic visibility regime. The first one is fairly known – the heightened denial of privacy. Unlike in the networked visibility regime, there is simply no tool users can employ to prevent platforms from thoroughly reading their actions; this includes attending to one's 'privacy' settings, which will not have an impact on data privacy. Users have no direct control over this architecture (Andrejevic 2013), as their autonomy of choice is transmuted into the farcical 'consent' they allegedly give to the terms of service they barely read (Cohen 2019). Second, and much less discussed explicitly, the algorithmic visibility regime can be said to hinge on the dehumanisation of users – arguably, the sort of antecedent misrecognition identified by Honneth (2008). Platforms' controllers are aware that most users are real persons, and in theory quantification might be conducive to human flourishing. But their decisions

rarely are about people, and have little to do with their proper development. They focus on how to design and manage the datafication techniques through which the very social life of these people can be 'colonised' (Couldry and Mejias 2019), captured (and potentially shaped) through the processes of data collection and processing. To paraphrase Honneth (2008: 57-58), these techniques seem to allow for a sort of 'amnesia', through which those controllers 'lose the ability to understand immediately the behavioural expressions' of users 'as making claims' on them, as demanding that they 'react in an appropriate way'. Nowhere is this forgetting of user's humanity clearer than in the ruthless instrumentalisation of the very process of intersubjective mis/recognition, where actions are manifested on data platforms in terms of 'liking', 'disliking', 'hating', 'sharing', 'commenting' (see for example Brighenti 2012). One way of reading the statement of a former Facebook executive, according to which the company was 'ripping society apart' by making users addicted to 'dopamine-driven feedback loops' of emotional validations (Wong 2017: n.pag.), is acknowledging that datafied platforms' business models are inherently dependent on the transformation of recognition into a means through which they can 'nudge' users towards profitable behaviours.

It is a grave mistake to judge these misrecognitions as mere theoretical abstractions. Rather, they are at the root of very concrete injustices, such as the perpetuation of poverty and psychological suffering (Eubanks 2018), new forms of social conformity, stigma, and exclusion (Kobie 2019), and engineered addiction (Fourcade and Johns 2020); not to mention the monstrosities committed by the neo-authoritarian figures who have relentlessly explored the algorithmic visibility regime to gain support and power, such as Donald Trump in the USA and Jair Bolsonaro in Brazil.

Again, there remains the possibility that users' expressions can be recognised on datafied platforms. However, this possibility of recognition is necessarily preceded by these two forms of misrecognition, hence the need to understand this recognition regime as paradoxical. This recognition regime seems important if we are to understand the contradictory ways whereby datafied platforms have transformed various spheres of social life. The question of which, and how, social actors, facts and events are made visible, and how this process structures the construction of the public domain and sets a deep foundation for recognising social categories, has long been one of the key arenas to discuss media ethics and journalistic responsibilities (see for instance, Schudson 1978; Tambini 2008; Couldry et al. 2013; Curran and Seaton 2018). However, the regime of algorithmic visibility extends this question of ethics *beyond* a media

ethic, calling for a concrete understanding of social life as contextualised by this regime, and how this shift may work in a detrimental way for the development of the individual.

Conclusion

What we see with the eyes of our body are neither a guaranteed truth nor a reality, and neither of them would necessarily appear as it is, as Hannah Arendt reminds us in the epigraph of this chapter. Visibility will always be *more than* a physical phenomenon, and it can only be understood fully in relation to various structures – both human and non-human. From this vantage point, we have offered a novel conceptualisation of how three types of regimes of *mediated* visibility (broadcast, networked, and algorithmic) differ from one another and in terms of their ways of prefiguring recognition processes (whereby autonomous subjects might be constituted). Much of these differences, we argued, concern how different visibility regimes structure the relationship between two visibility vectors: one that defines who *views* what on media (the viewing vector, as we named it); and another, that defines how media institutions render their consumers *legible* (the reading vector). If the links between these two vectors are uncertain or limited in the broadcast and networked visibility regimes, viewing and reading become inevitably entangled in the algorithmic visibility regime: how one is read will almost always build into, if not define, how one views on a platform. We propose that this entanglement is the defining and most innovative characteristic of datafied platforms as a new kind of media, one which we have only begun to understand. However, we have tried to elucidate that the entanglement already engenders a novel and concerning recognition regime, according to which the possibility of becoming an autonomous subject via the media is structurally conditioned by the determination of accepting serious moral injuries – the inherent denial of privacy and de-humanisation through datafication.

Mediated visibility and intersubjective recognition have a historically ambiguous relationship, as we explained, but it has never been paradoxical. One of the consequences of this arrangement is that the struggle for visibility becomes disconnected from the struggle for recognition. In the broadcast and networked regimes, it is possible to be recognised as a respected and worthy individual through the attempts to be visibilised. By contrast, simply trying to be *viewed* on a platform will amplify the unfreedoms produced by datafication.

Meanwhile, those who attempt to control how they are *read* will likely find out that this is an enormously difficult task, which may lead them to resign from the possibility of dealing with this regime (see Draper and Turow 2019 on 'digital resignation'). In this way, our conclusions support the argument (e.g. Vaidhyanathan 2018; van Dijck et al. 2018) that datafied platforms are inherently harmful to freedom – and to democratic culture as a whole.

There are various questions regarding mediated visibility regimes that we have not been able to cover in this chapter. For example, we have not touched upon certain spaces of mediation whose visibility regimes are potentially different from the models discussed here, such as open groups on WhatsApp or the so-called 'dark net'. There are also areas of confluence across these three regimes which deserve greater attention, such as the use of datafication to calculate TV ratings, a key element of the current broadcast visibility regime (Webster 2014). Furthermore, we have not fully addressed how these three visibility regimes are themselves subjected to visibility conditions, nor how their distinct kinds and levels of opacity bear upon individuals' abilities to interpret, exploit, and resist them. Nonetheless, in elucidating how the varying regimes of mediated visibility bring together media architecture and social interaction in ways that give rise to an unprecedented degree of incorporation of corporate power into social life, we hope that this chapter provides a useful conceptual vocabulary for investigating the intersection of media power and ethics.

References

Abbate, Janet (1999), *Inventing the Internet*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Abercrombie, Nicholas and Longhurst, Brian (1998), Audiences: A sociological theory of performance and imagination, London: Sage.

Andrejevic, Mark (2013), 'Estranged free labor', in T. Schulz (ed.), *Digital labor: the internet as playground and factory*, New York, NY: Routledge, pp. 149–164.

Ang, Ien (1991), *Desperately Seeking the Audience*, London: Routledge.

Ananny, Mike (2015) '*Toward an Ethics of Algorithms: Convening, Observation, Probability, and Timeliness*', *Science, Technology and Human Values*, 41:1, pp. 93–117.

Arendt, Hannah (1958), *The Human Condition*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Barnhurst, Kevin G. (ed.) (2007), *Media/queered: Visibility and its discontents*, London: Peter Lang.

Benkler, Yochai (2006), *The Wealth of Networks: How social production transforms markets and freedom*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Bolter, Jay David and Grusin, Richard (2000), *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bourdieu, Pierre (1998), *On Television and Journalism,* London: Pluto Press.

Brandom, Robert B. (2007), 'The Structure of Desire and Recognition: Self-consciousness and self-constitution', *Philosophy and Social Criticism*, 33:1, pp. 127–150.

Brighenti, Andrea Mubi (2007), 'Visibility: A category for the social sciences', *Current Sociology*, 55:3, pp. 323–342.

Brighenti, Andrea Mubi (2010), *Visibility in Social Theory and Social Research*, London: Palgrave MacMillan.

Brighenti, Andrea Mubi (2012), 'The Visible: Element of the Social', *Frontiers in Sociology,* online, https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fsoc.2017.00017/full/. Accessed 25 September 2020.

Bruns, Axel (2007), 'Produsage: Towards a Broader Framework for User-Led Content Creation', in B. Shneiderman (ed.), Proceedings of 6th ACM SIGCHI Conference on Creativity and Cognition, Washington DC, USA, 13–15 June, New York, NY: Association for Computing Machinery, pp. 99–105.

Brunton, Finn and Nissenbaum, Helen (2015), *Obfuscation: A user's guide for privacy and protest*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

Bucher, Taina (2012), 'Want to be on the top? Algorithmic power and the threat of invisibility on Facebook', *New Media and Society*, 14:7, pp. 1164–1180.

Bucher, Taina (2020), 'Nothing to disconnect from? Being singular plural in an age of machine learning', *Media, Culture and Society*, 42:4, pp. 610–617.

Castells, Manuel (2007), 'Communication, Power and Counter-power in the Network Society', *International Journal of Communication*, 1:1, pp. 238–266.

Castells, Manuel (2013), *Communication Power*, 2nd ed., Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chouliaraki, Lilie (2013), *The Ironic Spectator: Solidarity in the age of post-humanitarianism*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell.

Clarke, Roger A. (1988), 'Information Technology and Dataveillance', *Communications of the ACM*, 31:5, pp. 498–512.

Cohen, Julie (2019), *Between Truth and Power: The legal constructions of informational capitalism*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Couldry, Nick (2003), *Media Ritual: a critical approach,* London: Routledge.

Couldry, Nick (2010), *Why Voice Matters: Culture and politics after neoliberalism*, London: Sage.

Couldry, Nick (2015), 'The myth of 'us': digital networks, political change and the production of collectivity', *Information, Communication and Society*, 18:6, pp. 608–626.

Couldry, Nick, Madianou, Mirca and Pinchevski, Amit (eds) (2013), *Ethics of Media,* London: Palgrave MacMillan.

Couldry, Nick and Mejias, Ulises (2019), *The Costs of Connection: How data is colonizing human life and appropriating it for capitalism*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Curran, James and Seaton, Jean (2018), *Power Without Responsibility: Press, Broadcasting and the Internet in Britain,* 8th ed*.,* London: Routledge.

Dahlberg, Lincoln (2018), 'Visibility and the public sphere: A normative conceptualisation', *Javnost*, 25:1–2, pp. 35–42.

Dayan, Daniel (2013), 'Conquering visibility, conferring visibility: Visibility seekers and media performance', *International Journal of Communication*, 7:1, pp. 137–153.

Deranty, Jean-Philippe (2006), 'Repressed Materiality: Retrieving the materialism in Axel Honneth's theory of recognition', *Critical Horizons*, 7:1, pp. 113–140.

Deuze, Mark (2011), 'Media Life', *Media, Culture and Society*, 33:1, pp. 137–148.

Drapers, Nora A. and Turow, Joseph (2019), 'The corporate cultivation of digital resignation', *New Media and Society*, 21:8, pp. 1824–1839.

Ellison, Nicole B. and boyd, danah M. (2013), 'Sociality through social network sites', in W. H. Dutton (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Internet Studies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 158–180.

Eubanks, Virginia (2018), Automating Inequality: how high-tech tools profile, police and punish the poor, New York, NY: St. Martin's Press.

Faubion, James D. (2011), *An Anthropology of Ethics,* New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.

Fisher, Eran and Mehozay, Yoav (2019), 'How algorithms see their audience: media epistemes and the changing conception of the individual', *Media, Culture and Society*, 41:8, pp. 1176–1191.

Foucault, Michel (1977), *Discipline and Punish: The birth of the prison* (trans. A. Sheridan), New York, NY: Vintage Books.

Foucault, Michel (1984), *The Use of Pleasure: The history of sexuality* (trans. R. Hurley), New York, NY: Random House.

Foucault, Michel (2002), *Power: Essential works of Foucault 1954–1984, Volume 3*, London: Penguin.

Flyverbom, Mikkel (2019), *The Digital Prism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Fourcade, Marion and Johns, Fleur (2020), 'Loops, ladders and links: the recursivity of social and machine learning', *Theory and Society*, online, https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/32863532/. Accessed 25 September 2020.

Fraser, Nancy (2003), 'Contributions to redistribution or recognition: A political-philosophical exchange', in N. Fraser and A. Honneth (eds), *Redistribution or Recognition?,* London: Verso, pp. 7–110.

Gillespie, Tarleton (2014), 'The relevance of algorithms', in T. Gillespie, J. B. Pablo and K. A. Foot (eds), *Media Technologies: Essays on communication, materiality, and society*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. 167–193.

Gillespie, Tarleton (2018a), *Custodians of the Internet: Platforms, content moderation, and the hidden decisions that shape social media*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Gillespie, Tarleton (2018b), 'Governance of and by platforms', in J. Burgess, A. E. Marwick and T. Poell (eds), *The SAGE Handbook of Social Media*, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, pp. 254–278.

Gitlin, Todd (1980), *The Whole World is Watching: Mass media in the making and unmaking of the New Left*, Berkeley, CA: University of California Press.

Gitlin, Todd (1993), *Inside Prime Time*, London: Routledge.

Habermas, Jürgen (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, pp. 411–426.

Hindman, Matthew (2018), *The Internet Trap: How the digital economy builds monopolies and undermines democracy*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Hjarvard, Stig (2013), *The Mediatization of Culture and Society*, London: Routledge.

Honneth, Axel (1995), *The Struggle for Recognition: The moral grammar of social conflicts* (trans. J. Anderson), Cambridge: Polity.

Honneth, Axel (2001), 'Invisibility: On the epistemology of recognition', *The Aristotelian Society Supplementary Volume,* 75:1, pp. 111–126.

Honneth, Axel (2007), 'Recognition as ideology', in B. van den Brink and D. Owen (eds), *Recognition and Power: Axel Honneth and the tradition of critical social theory*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, pp. 323–347.

Honneth, Axel (2008), *Reification: A new look at an old idea*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Honneth, Axel (2014), *Freedom's Right: The social foundations of democratic life*, New York, NY: Columbia University Press.

Hutmacher, Fabian (2019), 'Why is there so much more research on vision than on any other sensory modality?', *Frontiers in Psychology*, online, https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2019.02246/full/. Accessed 25 September 2020.

Jasanoff, Sheila, 'Virtual, visible, and actionable: data assemblages and the sightlines of justice', *Big Data and Society*, 4:2, online, https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/2053951717724477. Accessed 25 September 2020.

Kobie, Nicole (2019), 'The complicated truth about China's social credit system', *The Wired*, 7 June, https://www.wired.co.uk/article/china-social-credit-system-explained/. Accessed 24 September 2020.

Mackenzie, Adrian (2015), 'The Production of Prediction: What does machine learning want?', *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, 18:4–5, pp. 429–445.

Magalhães, João Carlos and Katzenbach, Christian (2020), 'Coronavirus and the frailness of platform governance', *Internet Policy Review*, 29 March, https://policyreview.info/articles/news/coronavirus-and-frailness-platform-governance/1458.

Maia, Rousiley C. M. (2014), *Recognition and the Media*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Mansell, Robin (2012), *Imagining the Internet: Communication, innovation, and governance*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Mayer-Schönberger, Viktor and Cukier, Kenneth (2013), *Big Data: A revolution that will transform how we live, work, and think*, New York, NY: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

McNay, Lois (2008), 'The trouble with recognition: Subjectivity, suffering, and agency', *Sociological Theory*, 26:3, pp. 271–296.

Moore, Martin and Tambini, Damian (eds) (2018), *Digital Dominance: The power of Google, Amazon, Facebook, and Apple*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Morley, David (1980), *The Nationwide Audience: Structure and decoding*, London: British Film Institute.

Neville, Stephen J. (2020), 'Eavesmining: A critical audit of the Amazon Echo and Alexa conditions of use', *Surveillance and Society*, 18 (3), pp. 343–56.

Ochigame, Rodrigo and Holston, James (2016), 'Filtering dissent: Social media and land struggles in Brazil', *New Left Review*, 99, pp. 85–108.

Pasquale, Frank (2015), *The Black Box Society: The secret algorithms that control money and information*, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Pew (2020), *Americans Who Mainly Get Their News on Social Media Are Less Engaged, Less Knowledgeable,* viewed 10 August 2020, https://www.journalism.org/2020/07/30/americans-who-mainly-get-their-news-on-social-media-are-less-engaged-less-knowledgeable/

Raley, Rita (2013), 'Dataveillance and countervailance', in L. Gitelman (ed.), *'Raw data' is an Oxymoron*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, pp. pp. 121–145.

Roberts, Sarah T. (2019), *Behind the screen*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Scannell, Paddy and Cardiff, David (1991), *A Social History of British Broadcasting, Volume 1 1922–1939, Serving the nation,* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

Schatzki, Theodore R. (2002), *The Site of the Social: A philosophical account of the constitution of social life and change*, University Park, PA: Penn State University Press.

Scheufele, Dietram A. (1999), 'Framing as a theory of media effects', *Journal of Communication*, 49:1, pp. 103–122.

Schudson, Michael (1978), *Discovering the News: A social history of American newspapers*, New York, NY: Basic Books.

Seaver, Nick (2013), 'Knowing algorithms', *Media in Transition 8 International Conference*, MIT, Cambridge, MA, 3–5 May.

Seaver, Nick (2019), 'Captivating algorithms: Recommender systems as traps', *Journal of Material Culture*, 24:4, pp. 421–436.

Sewell, William H. (1992), 'A Theory of Structure: Duality, agency, and transformation', *American Journal of Sociology*, 98:1, pp. 1–29.

Shoemaker, Pamela J. and Vos, Timothy (2009), *Gatekeeping Theory*, New York, NY: Routledge.

Tambini, Damian (2008), What is financial journalism for? Ethics and responsibility in a time of crisis and change. POLIS, London: London School of Economics and Political Science.

Tarde, Gabriel (1901), *L'opinion et la foule*, Paris: Alcan.

Taylor, Charles (1992), 'The Politics of Recognition', in A. Gutmann (ed.), *Multiculturalism*, Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, pp. 25–74.

Thompson, John B. (1995), *The Media and Modernity: A social theory of the media*, Cambridge: Polity.

Thompson, John B. (2005), 'The New Visibility', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 22:6, pp. 31–51.

Thompson, John B. (2011), 'Shifting Boundaries of Public and Private Life', *Theory, Culture and Society*, 28:4, pp. 49–70.

Tiktok (2020), 'How TikTok recommends videos #ForYou', https://newsroom.tiktok.com/en-us/how-tiktok-recommends-videos-for-you/. Accessed 25 September 2020.

Toffler, Alvin (1980), *The Third Wave*, New York, NY: William Morrow.

Trottier, Daniel (2011), 'A research agenda for social media surveillance', *Fast Capitalism*, 8: 1, pp. 1–13.

Turow, Joseph (1997), *Breaking up America: Advertisers and the new media world*, Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.

Turow, Joseph (2011), *The Daily You: How the new advertising industry is defining your identity and your worth*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Vaidhyanathan, Siva (2018), *Antisocial Media: How Facebook disconnects us and undermines democracy*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Van Dijck, José (2014), 'Datafication, dataism and dataveillance: Big data between scientific paradigm and ideology', *Surveillance and Society*, 12:2, pp. 197–208.

Van Dijck, José, Poell, Thomas and de Wall, Martijn (2018), *The Platform Society: Public values in a connective world*, New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

Webster, James G. (2014), *The Marketplace of Attention: How audiences take shape in a digital age*, Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press.

Wong, Julia Carrie (2017), 'Former Facebook executive: social media is ripping society apart', *The Guardian*, 12 December,

https://www.theguardian.com/technology/2017/dec/11/facebook-former-executive-ripping-society-apart

Zittrain, Jonathan (2008), *The Future of the Internet: And how to stop it*, New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.

Zuboff, Shoshana (2019), *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism: The fight for a human future at the new frontier of power*, New York, NY: Public Affairs.

[i] Consider, for instance, medical imaging of brain activity.
[ii] A different ethical dimension of visibility regards governmental transparency and accountability, which we do not look into here (see Flyverbom 2019).
[iii] See McNay (2008) for an extensive criticism of Honneth's view.
[iv] Fraser (2003) argues that Honneth's calls for recognition on a socio-cultural (and racial) level have neglected socioeconomic injustice, and she thus separates recognition from socioeconomic distribution, positing that justice requires both recognition and redistribution of capitals to be achieved. Honneth has responded that recognition and redistribution are inseparable, with misrecognition being the foundation on which misdistribution arises. But the underlying idea behind their (and many other recognition theories) are more or less the same: that by being *mis*recognised, one is denied of *rights* to equal participation (in social, political and public life).
[v] In this chapter we focus on the types of recognition that are enabling and ethically valuable for human agency and rights. But see Brighenti (2010: 53-55), for a different conceptualisation.
[vi] It might be argued that, inversely, recognition regimes also influence the construction of visibility regimes. But we have no space to develop this further here.
[vii] From books to TV programmes to social media platforms, most of media products can only be *fully* experienced visually. One important exception would be the radio and other audible media, albeit their producers and outputs often exist on visual forms of media as well.
[viii] Exceptions include attempts to pirate and exploit live broadcasts.
[ix] There can be various exceptions. A networked space might be designed to ban users from certain countries, for instance.
[x] Compare our view with Bucher (2012), who posits her definition of algorithmic visibility regime in contrast to Foucault's theory on surveillance.
[xi] Some datafied platforms also allow external developers to 'read' users, while maintaining control over this form of readability.
[xii] Consider for instance how companies use data that are not produced by users' actions on platforms to enhance these users' profiles, or the eventual one-sided platform action to increase/decrease the visibility of certain messages.
[xiii] Content moderation can be said to be editorial in nature. But removing content aims to determine what *everyone cannot view,* merely clearing the terrain for the largely automated and probabilistic decision on what *one will view.*