DATAPUBLICS
The Construction of Publics in Datafied Democracies

Edited by
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The book has been born in difficult circumstances, which have impacted both the empirical field-sites and our analytical approaches. We were in the midst of a pandemic as the first thoughts on the book materialized. Around the same time US experienced the biggest crisis of its democracy with the storming of Capitol Hill. Later, as we were finishing up, a war in Europe loomed. The EU launched an AI-act, Elon Musk bought Twitter and OpenAI launched ChatGPT, all significant events when analysing media, publics and civic practices.

As significant these events were, they also forced us to re-evaluate and revisit some of our basic assumptions about publics, the role of the media and tech platforms, and the events naturally made the empirical reality more messy. Thus the empirical realities constantly entered our ongoing discussions on how we could capture and understand both processes of datafication and datafication of public formation.

While each of the chapters are the authors’ own, the book is also co-authored. We have been deeply involved in each other’s chapters, constantly forcing each other to re-evaluate how the empirical analysis or conceptual development in one chapter would contradict or support the conclusions in other chapters. Many of these overall discussions have been enriched by the multiple disciplines involved in the group, ranging from rhetoric, techno-anthropology, sociology, media and communication, journalism and data science.

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