The respect to privacy in different cultural contexts

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Privacy: what are we talking about?

Right to be left alone
Physical privacy
Informational Privacy
Right to have a family life
Privacy of communication
Locational privacy
Privacy as a fundamental human right

a good to be achieved

an instrument for other rights to be achieved
Conflicting values

- Privacy vs. public good and national security
- Privacy vs. transparency
- Privacy vs. freedom of speech
There is no single accepted understanding of privacy but a set of intertwined notions.

Definitions of privacy, and levels of protection of the private sphere, are in constant flux across nations and cultures and historical periods.
Privacy as a panhuman trait

The desire for some level of privacy appears to be a panhuman trait: will to be autonomous. Humans need also to be dependent.

Schopenhauer’s Hedgehog’s dilemma

Setting the bounderies between the private and public realms is not an easy task.
The Foundation of Privacy

Why do we consider privacy as something worthy to protect?

BIOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS

- Overcrowding may affect individual behaviour and health
- Extreme isolation can generate severe psychological and physiological consequences
- Need to disobey social obligations without being socially sanctioned (in Barrington Moore’s analysis of pre-literate societies)
The Foundation of Privacy – 2

PSYCHOLOGICAL ARGUMENTS
Freud: need to escape from the pressure of civilization
Man is the only animal that blushes: feeling of modesty and shame

RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE
Private realm is sacred, consacrated to the God

MODERN LIBERAL POLITICAL NOTION
Privacy as a liberty right: freedom from the state
Privacy in Healthcare Ethics

- INFORMATIONAL PRIVACY
  Confidentiality of Medical Records

- PHYSICAL PRIVACY
  Exceptions of the “integrity of the body/mind” principle

Medical context is a particular case in which a patient is giving up important parts of his/her privacy for his/her wellbeing
Cultural differences

In our globalised world, we are increasingly obliged to manage cultural diversities
INFORMATIONAL PRIVACY
Sensitivity of personal data changes across cultures

PHYSICAL PRIVACY
Concept of physical and mental integrity changes across different cultures: what is the legitimate distance?
Proposed key: ethics of delicacy
PRESCIENT

Privacy and Emerging fields of science and technology: towards a common framework for privacy and ethical assessment

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Partners

- ISI FRAUNHOFER (Germany)
- TRILATERAL (UK)
- VUB (Belgium)
- CSSC (Italy)

Website

- [http://www.prescient-project.eu](http://www.prescient-project.eu)
Objective

development of a framework for Privacy and Ethical Impact assessment of emerging technologies

3 steps

ANALYSIS of the state of the art on privacy
CASE STUDIES from 5 different emerging technologies
CITIZENS’ perceptions on privacy
1° step: Analysis

4 reports on privacy from the
- Social
- Legal
- Ethical
- Economical

perspectives, to be evaluated by an expert panel

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Thanks for your attention!

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