



## A Barnaby Discussion Topic

### Privacy: how much do we get?

*Discussions at The Park*

**Wednesday** ~~22 June~~ **6 July** 2016 - 7:00pm to 9:30pm  
at *The Park Tavern, Macclesfield*

#### **An Introduction:**

The concept of privacy is somewhat vague with philosophical, sociological and anthropological roots.

Privacy, described as the sphere where individuals can be free of the presence or view of others and/or interferences from others, is usually viewed positively: something to be valued and preserved. However when this sphere becomes a hiding place behind which some may undertake harmful activities, from physical attacks to tax evasion, it is viewed negatively.

Debates about what privacy is, about how far it extends and how to protect it have taken place for centuries, varying with times and cultures and often heavily influenced by technological changes.

#### **Questions:**

1. Is privacy an "interest"? a "moral right"? or a "legal right"? If so, should society protect it? Some argue that there is no need for specific privacy laws as privacy is already adequately protected through other laws (property, security etc).

2. *Privacy and personal access*

"Privacy can be gained through secrecy (no one has information about me), through anonymity, (no one pays attention to me) and through solitude (no one has physical access to me)" (R Gavison, *Privacy and the Limits of Law*, 1980).

How much anonymity and solitude are we ready to trade off for privacy?

3. *Privacy and personal information*

"Privacy [is] the ability to determine for ourselves when, how, and to what extent information about us is communicated to others". (A Westin, *Privacy and freedom*, 1967). What is private personal information? And how important is it to control personal information, even when documented and public?

4. *Privacy and technology*

How can we balance respect for privacy with justifiable uses of technology - especially in the context of public safety and security (for instance, use of vehicle black boxes, CCTV, face scanning etc in the context of road safety and fear of terrorist threats)?

#### **Further Reading:**

UK Human Rights Act 1998, Article 8; see

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1998/42/schedule/1/part/I/chapter/7>

<https://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk/human-rights/what-are-human-rights/human-rights-act/article-8-right-private-and-family-life>

Schoeman, F, (ed.), 1984, *Philosophical Dimensions of Privacy: An Anthology*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge

Solove, Daniel J, Rotenberg, Mark & Schwartz, Paul M, 2006, *Privacy, Information, and Technology*, Aspen Publishers, New York