

# Futures

Team Green  
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# Recap

- The internet in theory
- Media systems, digital systems
- Rise of right-wing populism
- Daily life - sociability and seeking information
- Big data



# Media, globalization, technology

- Media
  - Need of theory of media
  - Limited effects related to social orders and powers
- Micro v.s. Macro
  - Global cultural thickening of connection?
  - Limited/fragmented by linguistic and geographical lines



Daily Mail

Hong Kong students flee through the sewers to escape 'Tiananmen 2.0'

Up to 200 students are surrounded by police at Kong Kong Polytechnic University amid fears of a bloody raid; Desperate to avoid being shot or ...

1 day ago

**Rioters occupying PolyU launch indiscriminate attacks with lethal weapons: Hong Kong police**



Xinhua

© 21:26 UTC+8, 2019-11-18

# Media, globalization, technology

- Global?
  - Some patterns are global : tetheredness to information and each other
  - Nations and media systems have some common patterns
- Does technology lead to globalization?
  - Modernizing or globalizing
    - Without evaluation on the processes
    - Lags



# The Uses and Limits of Theory

- Role of theory
  - Identify major social problems and tensions (for policymakers and researchers)
  - Shift the debate about the role of media in society
    - Social support
    - Information needs
    - Visibility for new groups
    - Targeting: new ways to shape attention
  - Enable new social forces
  - Guide research
- Limitations
  - Applicability
  - Non-users by choice/lacks access
  - Keeping up with the latest technology



# Technological Determinism Revisited

- Technological shaping
  - Main factor leading to social change
  - Caging structures of technology across countries
  - Micro and macro
  - Fear of technological shaping - human agency



# Mediated Politics

- One view:  
Media set the public sphere, and cements capitalist domination. (Habermas)
- Author:  
Do not provide necessary cohesion for capitalism(Luhmann)
  - Is an arena of conflict and consensus.
  - There are regressive as well as progressive changes brought about.



# Mediated Politics

- Political science captures the contention or struggle for shaping society via media, but it exaggerates the openness.
- Public arena, not a 'marketplace of ideas' (Neuman 2016; Åsard and Bennett 1997)
  - There is not a large and divisible range of goods. Attention space is limited, and dominating it gives an advantage.
  - Political 'goods' have a time horizon and their function shifts slowly.





# Mediated Politics

- The internet could lead to greater or more direct political engagement and enable more visibility or attention.
- Skewed power towards populists and against the autonomy of media.
- Overall, people's engagement has not become more democratic.



# Open Culture of Information

- Cultural domain is not zero sum.
- It must be reliable, open, accessible – and diverse.



# Big Data

- Mechanisms
  - Targeting from above, using big data techniques to maximize attention or audience
  - Tetheredness in everyday life below. A push from people (or audiences) to share more with others.



# Big Data

- Targeting and tailoring content to what audiences want (what they click on or share) entails a weakening of media autonomy or of editorial or journalistic control.
- Google, Facebook, Twitter and others are not neutral, are now seen as news media or gatekeepers, provide a new infrastructure for content.



# Big Data

- Media subsystem is only marginally reshaped (expanded or circumvented);
- Elite content still dominates. And new political impulses from below (here, populism) also have causes other than media.



# Digital v.s Traditional Media

- Digital Media:
  - Enable new political forces.
  - Provide new sources of information.
  - Target content more closely to people.
- Influence:
  - More powerful media
  - Populists with power
  - etc.



# Changes and Limited Impact

- People devote only limited time and energy on following politics.
- Time and effort spent on internet to receive advertisement influence creep up marginally.
- At least three macro changes have little to do with internet:
  - Financialization
  - Climate change
  - Limits to social citizenship
- Some macro-changes have been attributed to internet actually have been influenced by more factors.



# Changes and Limited Impact

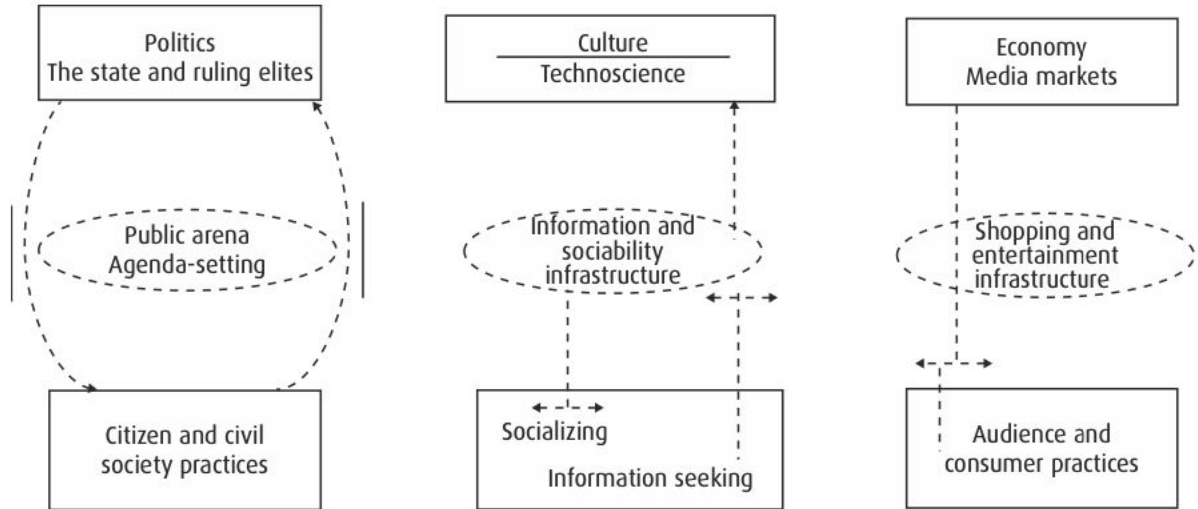
- Effect of more mediatized world make influence:
  - Consumer is more targeted
  - Publics are engaged more directly
  - People's life are more tethered
- The reach and depth of digital media limit those influence:
  - Small personal cycles
  - New gatekeepers like search engines
  - Attention space limitation





# Changes and Limited Impact

- Influence brought in by digital media is limited.
- More Social theory is needed



# Next Steps

- More discussion on fact checking, tolerance, free trade and open borders
- Mobilize against populism
- Discussions on serious information needs, access to information, the diversity and openness of cultural content, and the cases of groups that lack online social support.
- Conflict between transparency data use and privacy protection.
- etc.

