



Divided they participate?

Social Inequalities in Online Participation

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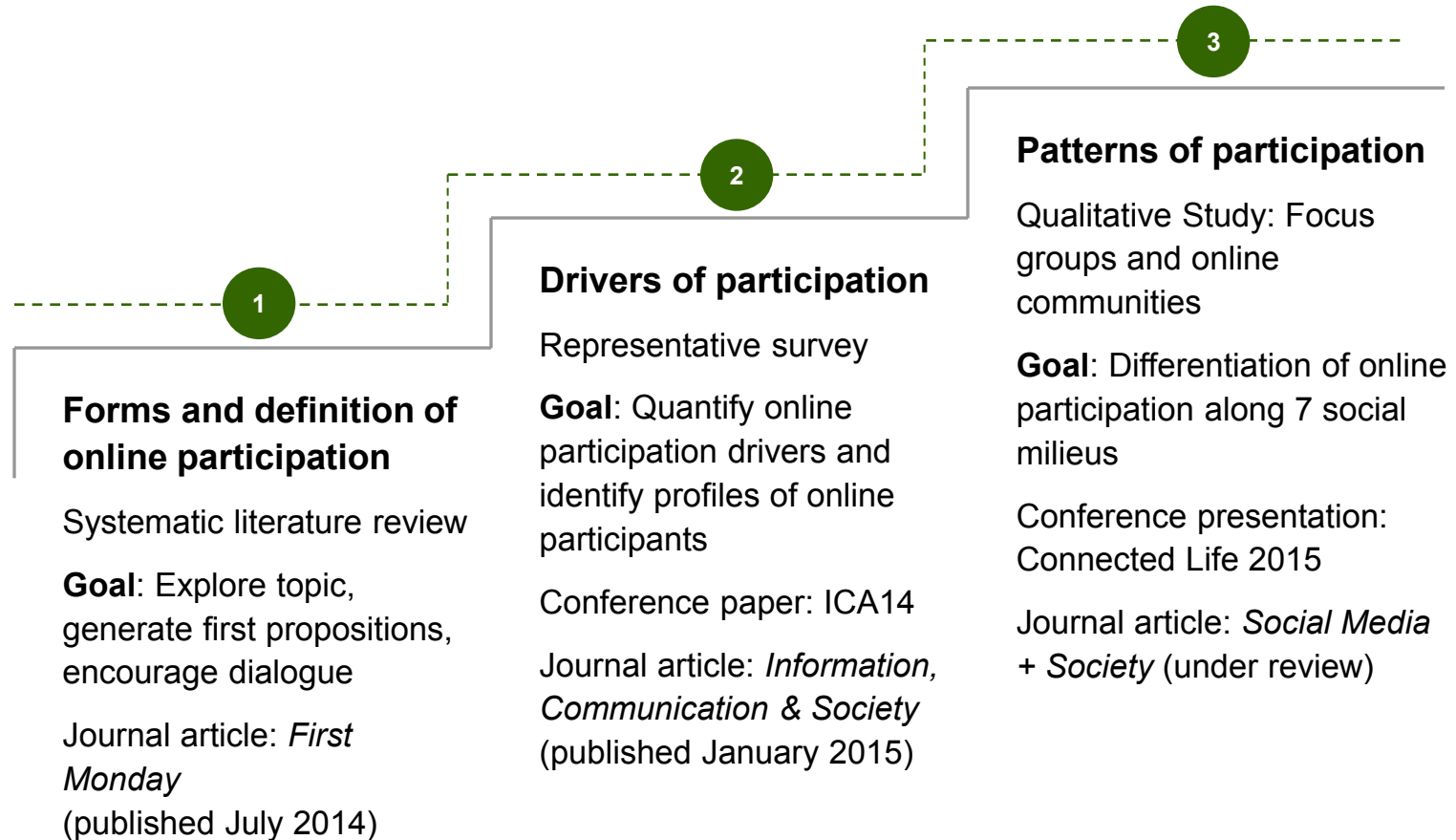
Brown Bag Lunch, BI Norwegian Business School
2 September 2015



The Dissertation Project



Approach



The Dissertation Committee

Miriam Meckel

corporate communication, social media,
(digital) journalism, CMC, philosophical
understanding of the Internet



Anabel Quan-Haase

social networks, social media, social capital,
digital humanities, scholarly digital
communication, Internet studies, CMC,
serendipity

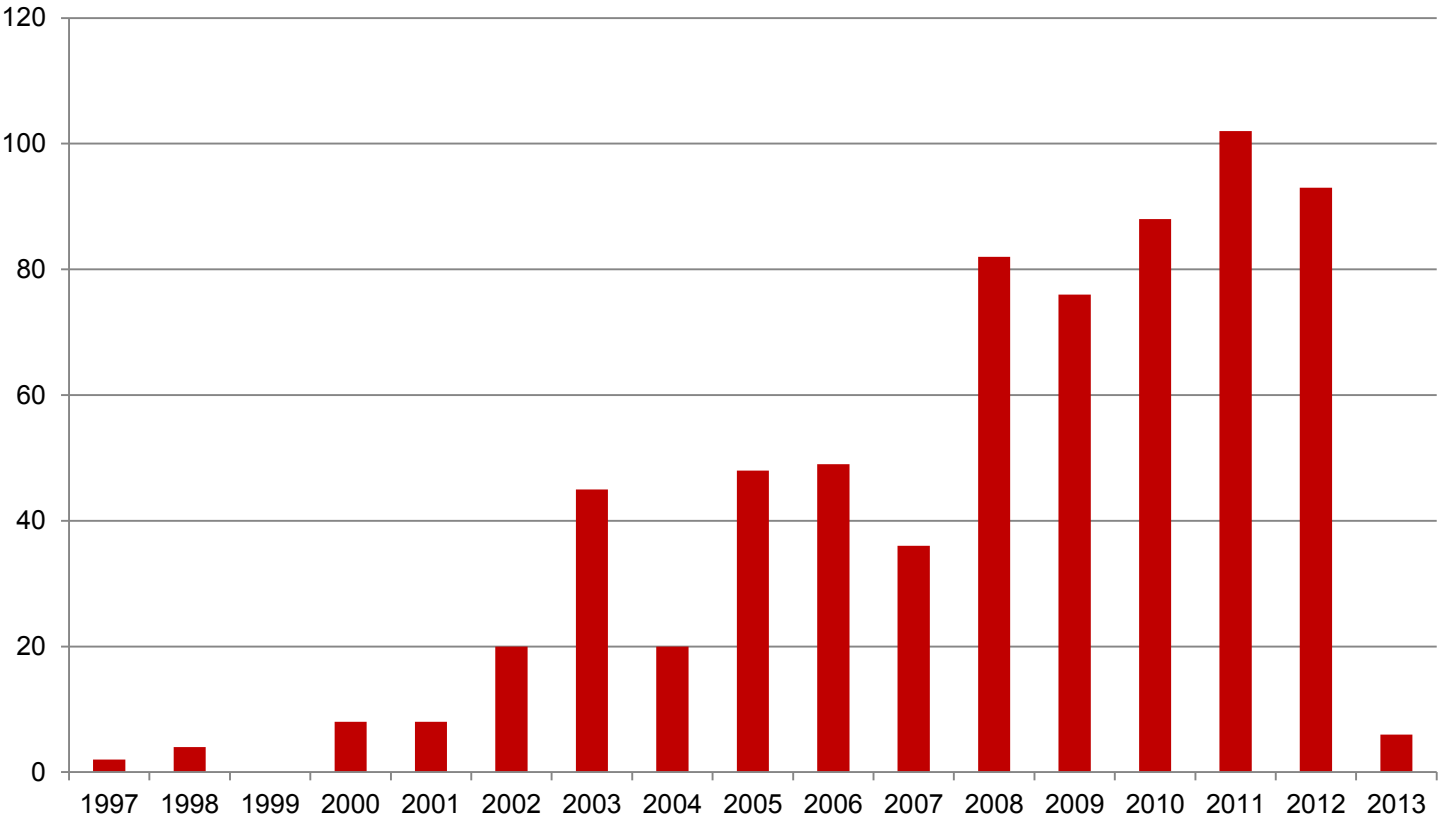


Article 1: Forms of Participation

Systematic Literature Review

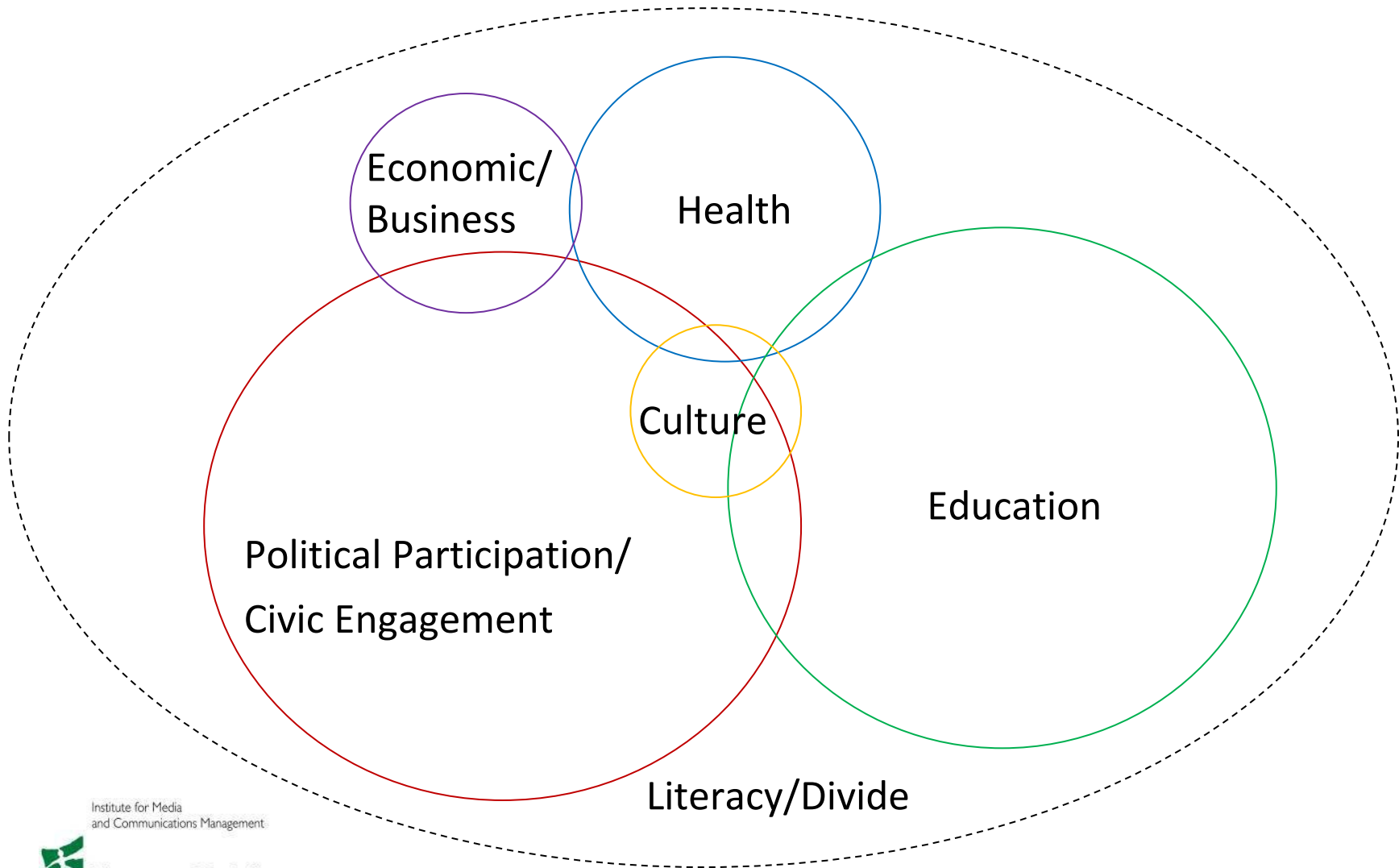
- Title: **(Online OR Internet OR Digital OR Social Media) AND (Participation OR Engagement)**
 - English language, peer-reviewed publications (journals & conference proceedings)
 - Databases: ISI Web of Science (503), ProQuest (463), EBSCO (587), Mendeley (253)
1. Total of 1'806 hits,
 2. 840 multiple entries removed,
 3. Scan of titles and abstracts, 295 clearly irrelevant papers removed,
 4. Categorization according to overall field of inquiry, resulting in five research areas,
 5. Filtering out too narrow and too broad papers.

Increasing Relevance

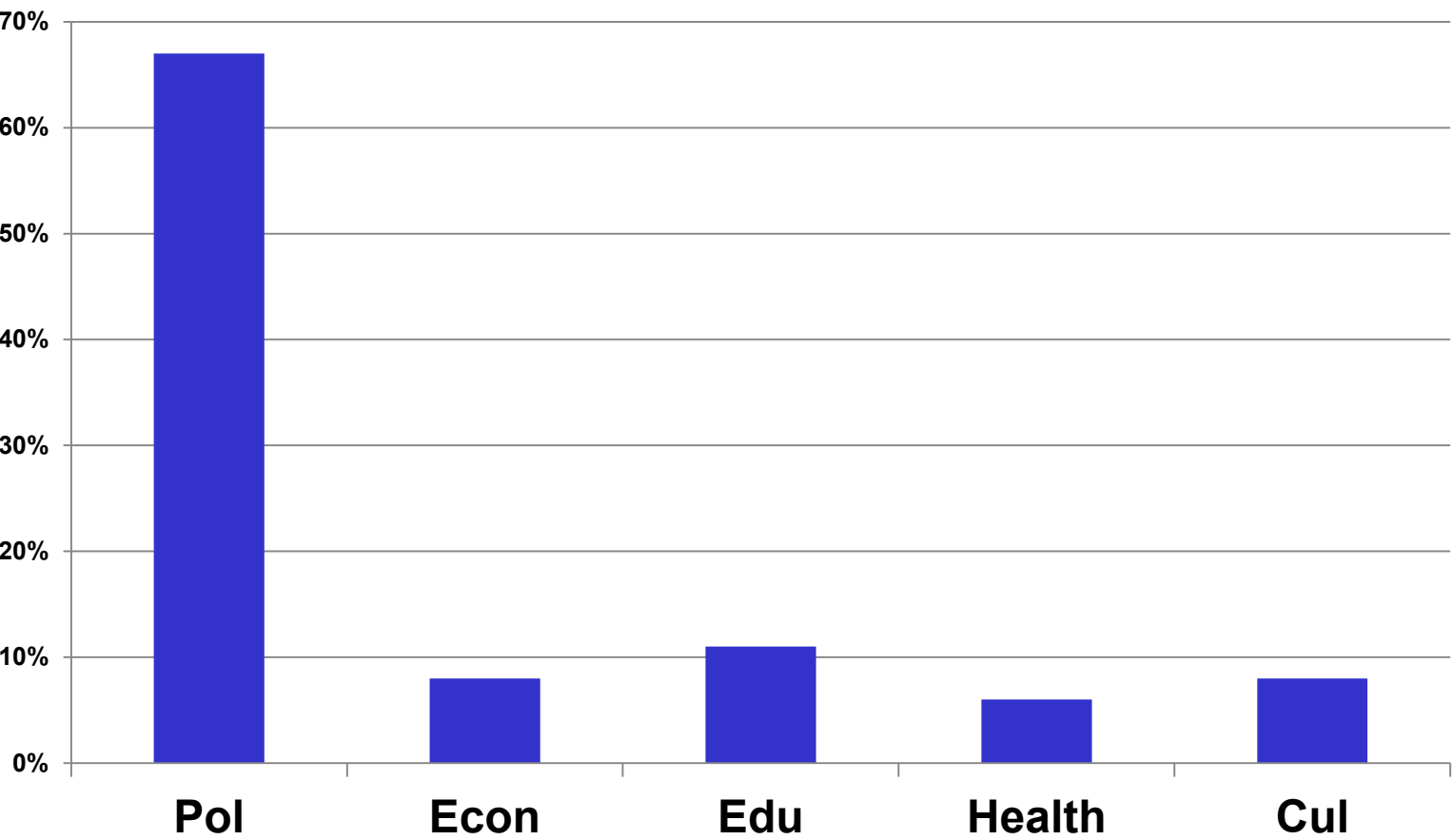


ProQuest results from 1990

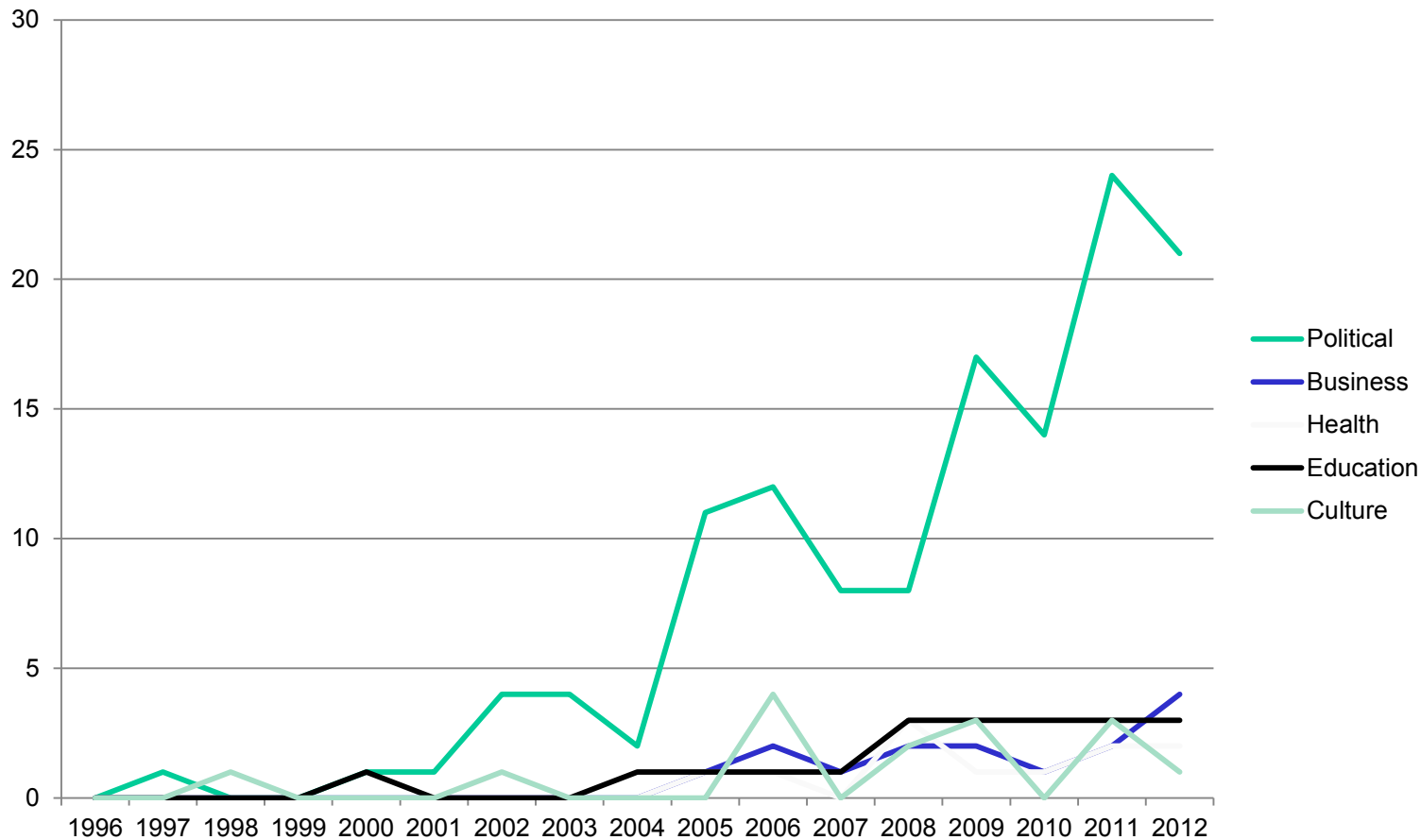
Topical Areas



Participation Areas



Research Trends



Online participation

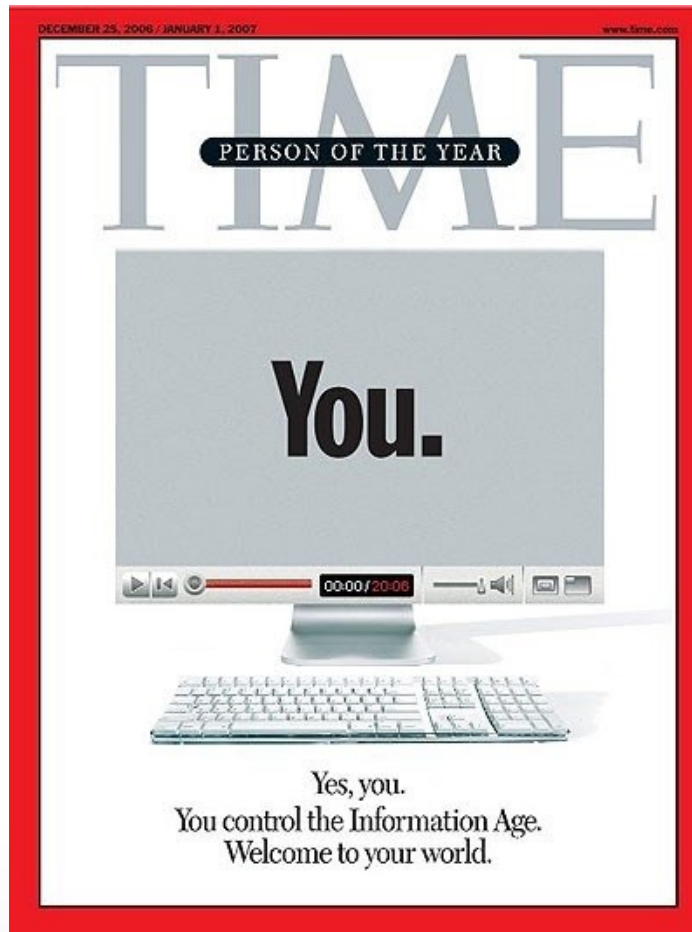
The creation and sharing of content on the Internet addressed to a specific audience and driven by a social purpose.



Article 2: Participation Divide(s)



The Internet's Participatory Potential



From the Digital Divide...



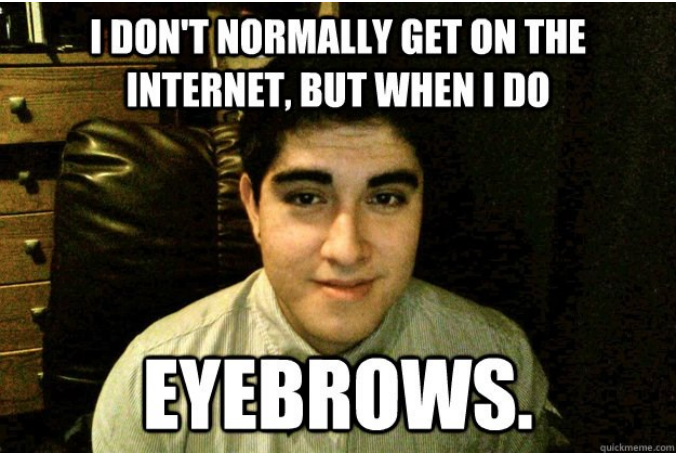
Offliner



Onliner

*Most people have access to the Internet
and go online regularly.*

...To The Participation Divide



Non-Participant

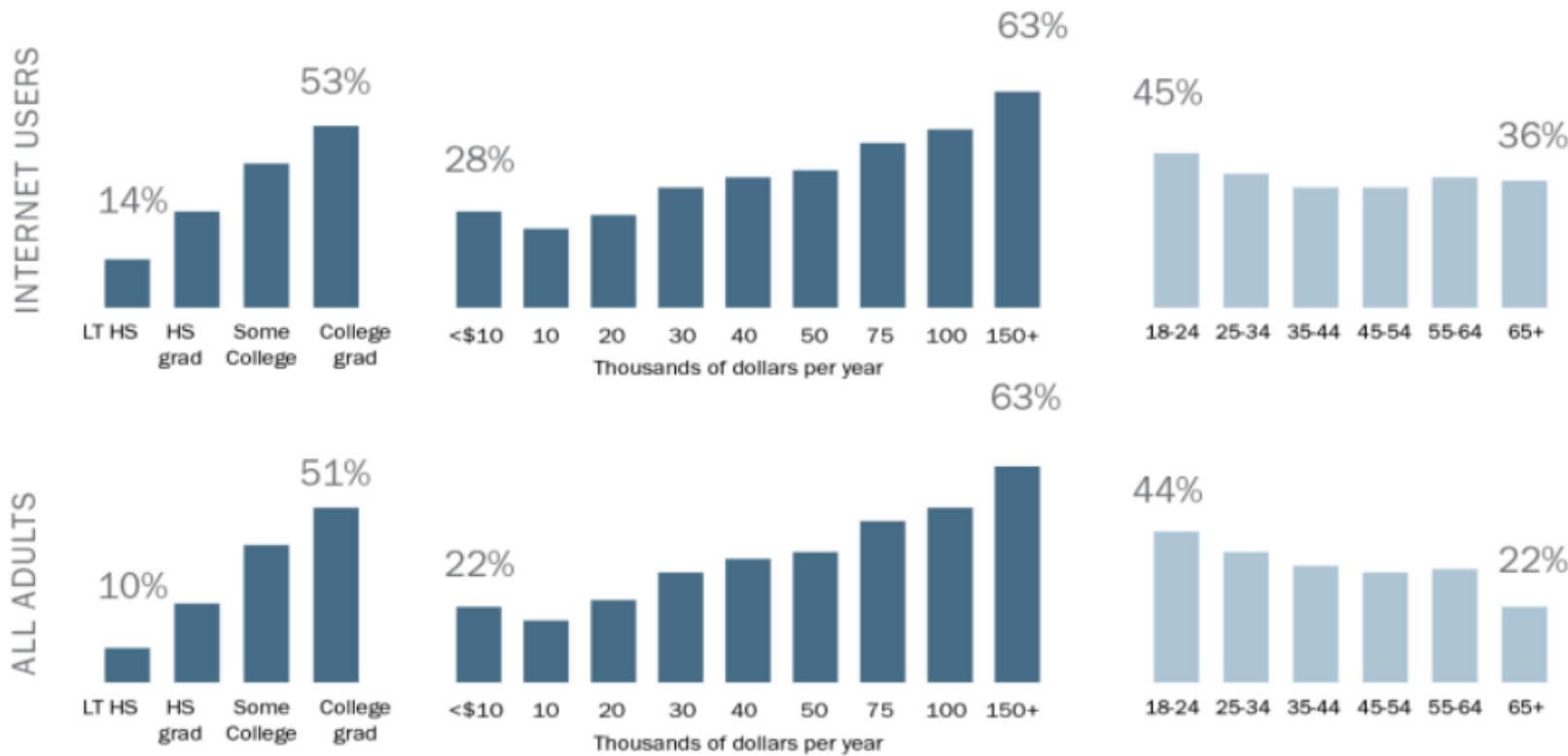


Participant

Few(er) make use of the web's participatory potential.

3

Communicate/speak
out publicly about
political issues
online



Previous Research

Hargittai & Walejko (2008)

Age, skills and SES predict OCC; 4 types of content

Correa (2010)

Psychological factors and demographics predict OCC, SES does not; aggregates 10 different types of content into one measure

Previous Research

Schradie (2011)

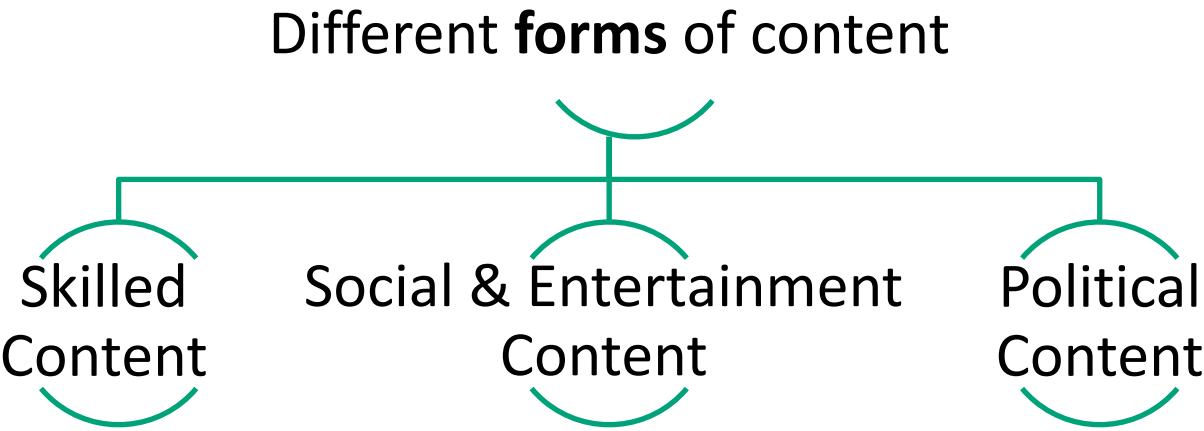
SES affects user propensity to create and share content, effects differ by online activity; focus on activities rather than content type

Blank (2013)

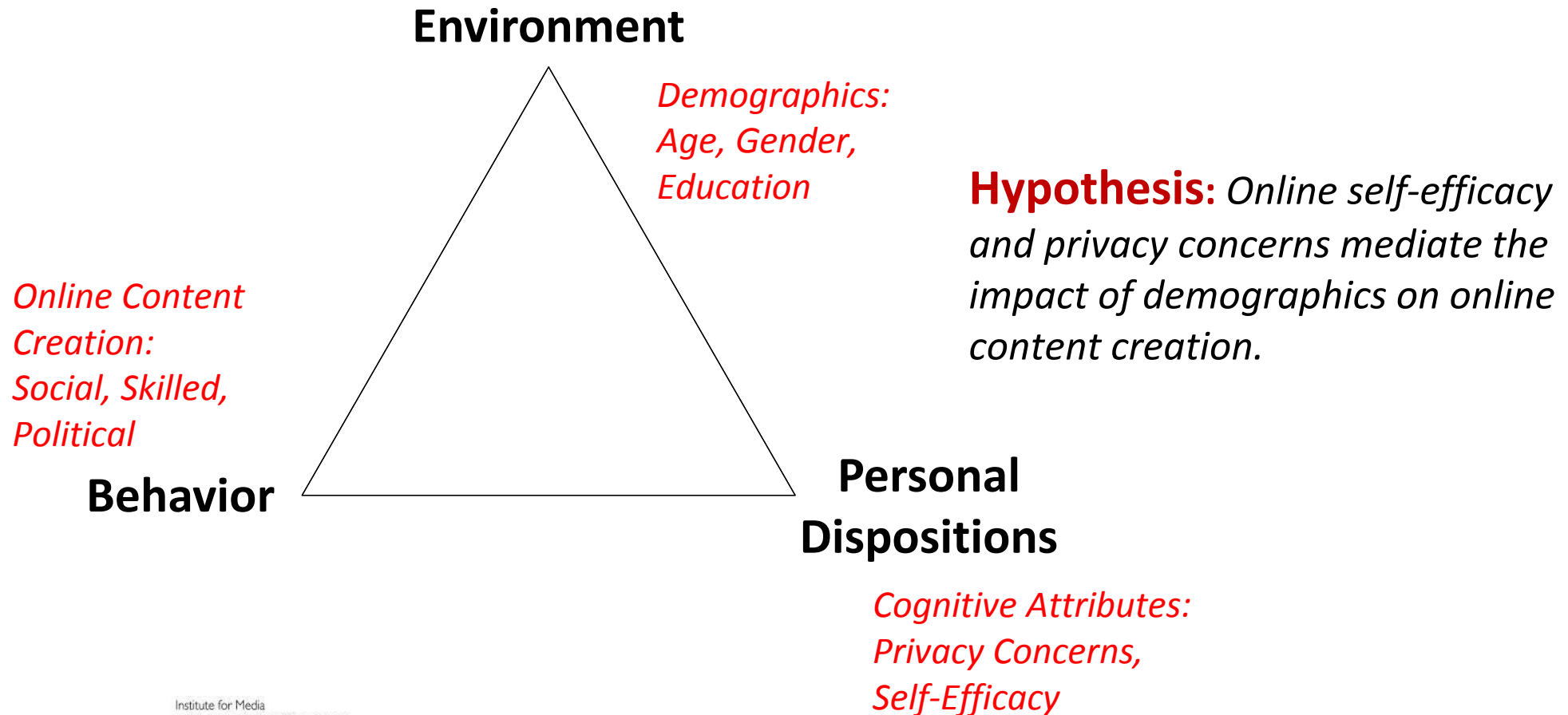
SES affects user propensity to create and share content, effects differ by online activity; 3 types of content: skilled, social & entertainment, political

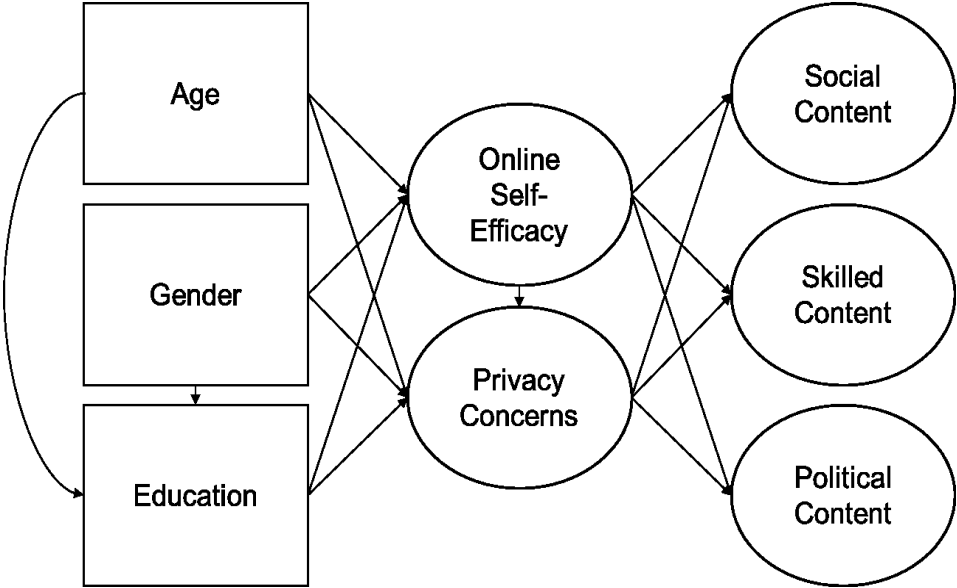
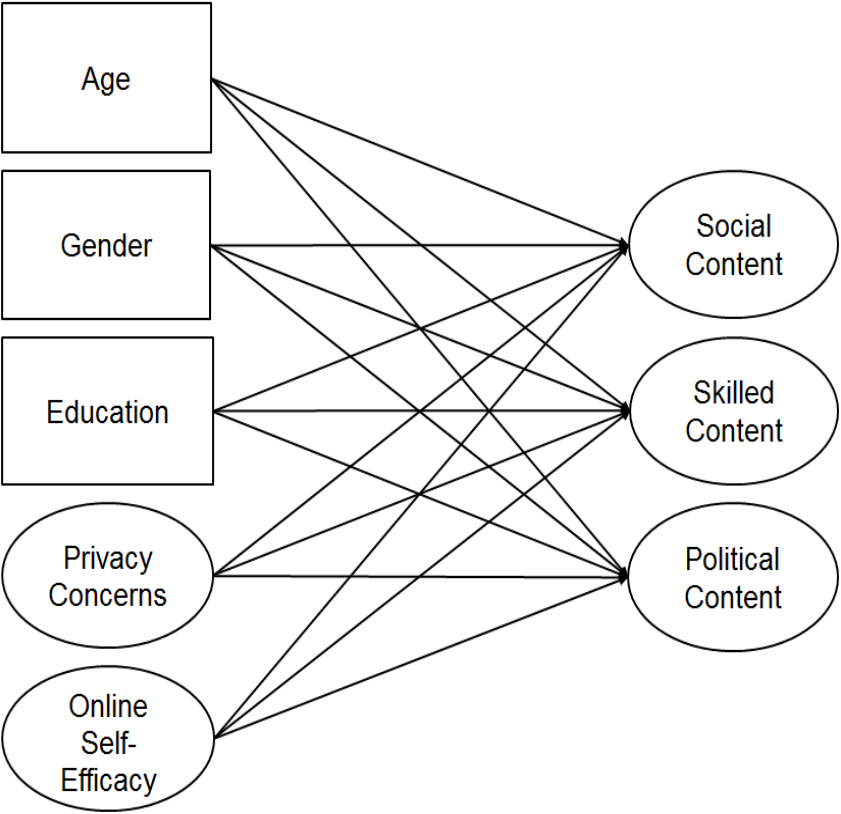
Current Oil Study

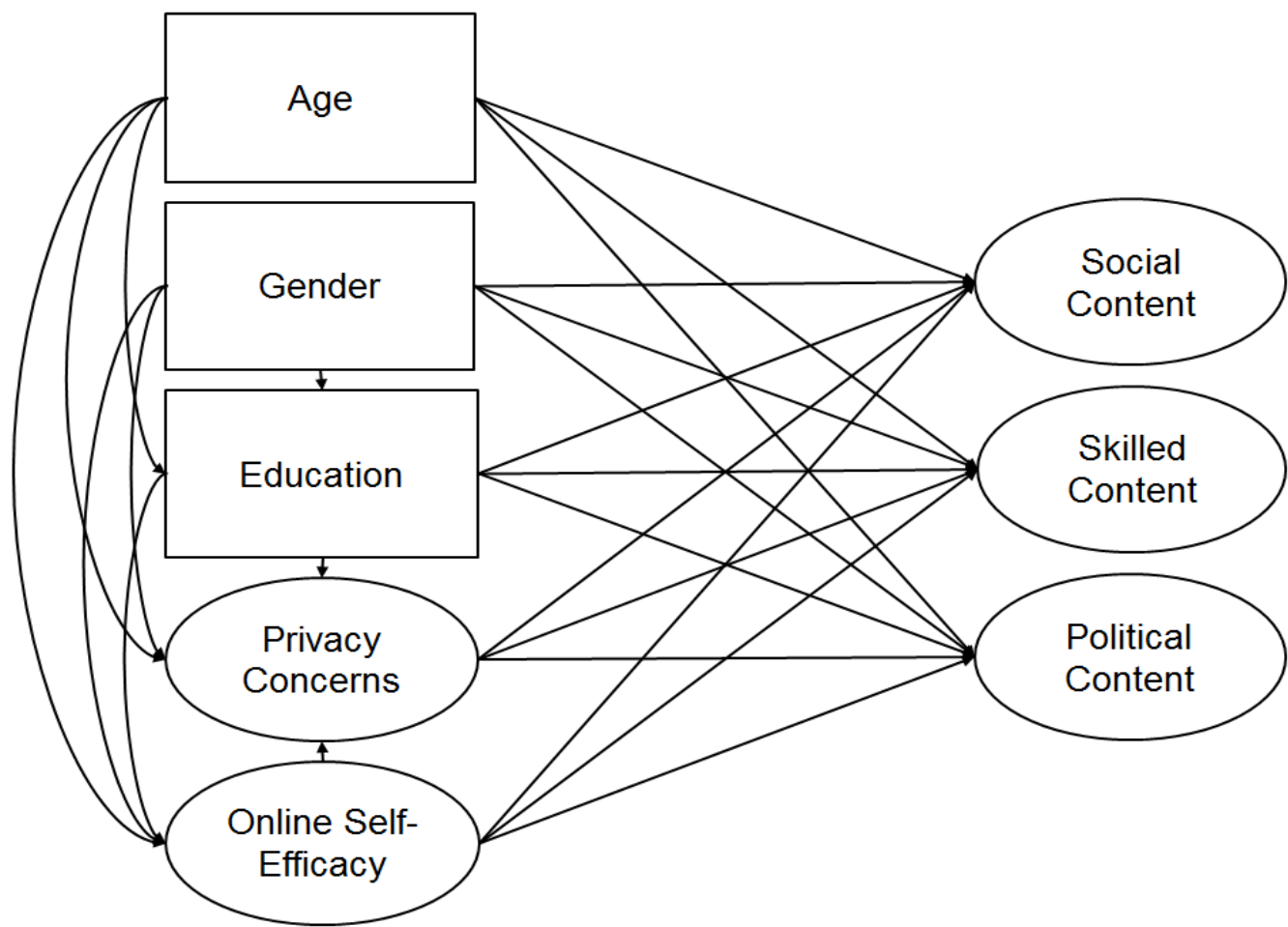
Who produces content online?



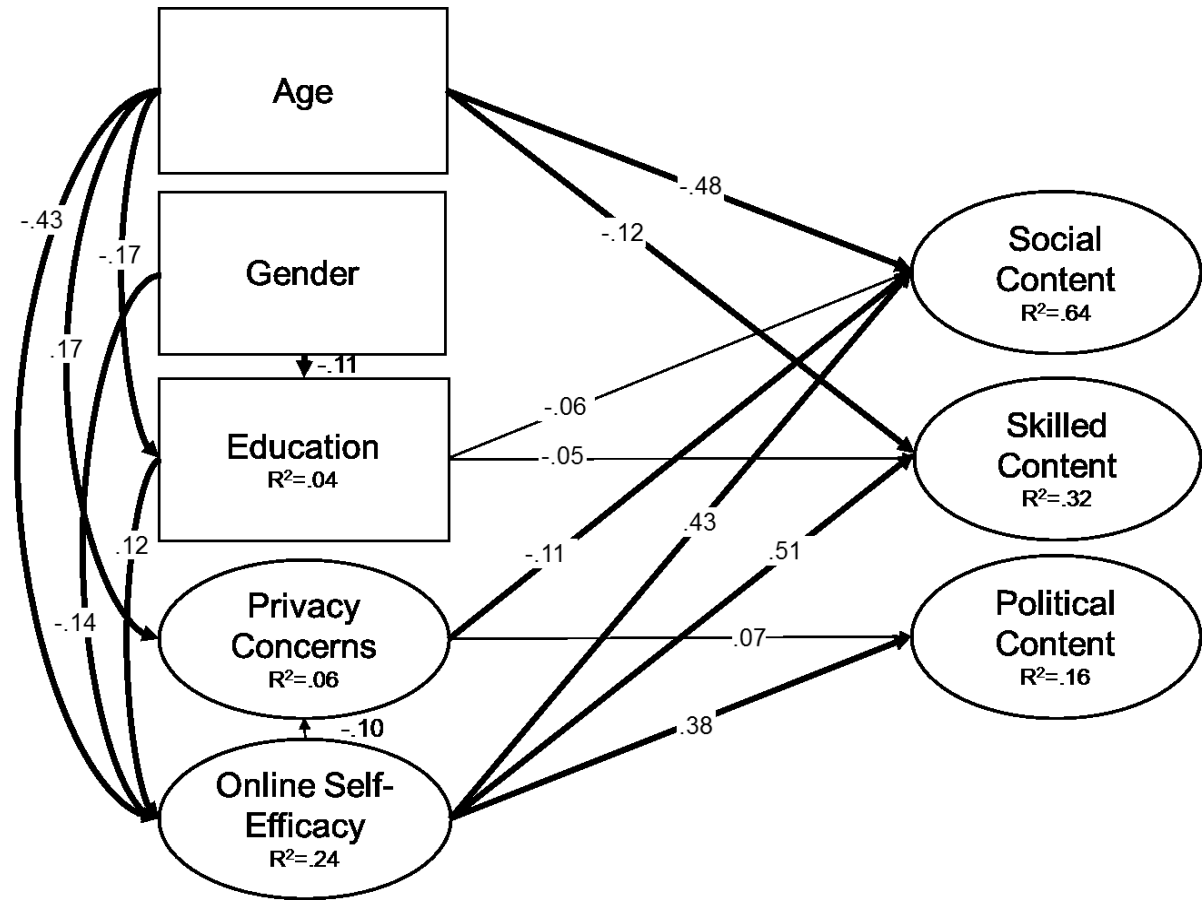
Social Cognitive Theory







...And the winner is



Champagne
Celebration Template

~~Your name~~
Model 3!

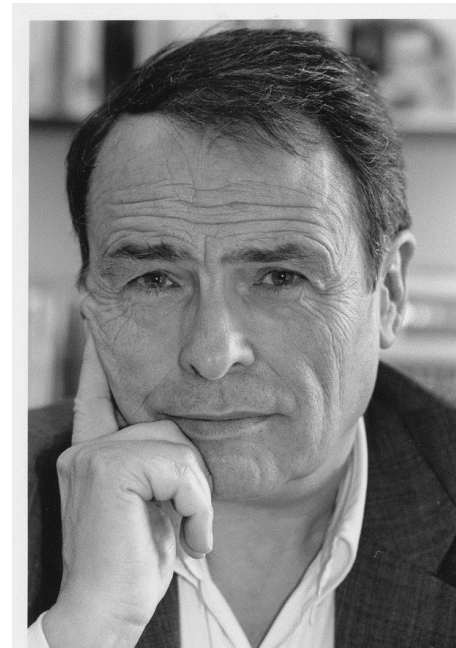




Article 3: Participation in Different Milieus

Intro and Overview

- Research in the tradition of **digital divides** research
- **Milieu perspective** absent in digital inequalities research
- Drawing on **Bourdieu** as theoretical framework



Qualitative Study

- **Focus groups** and **online communities**: 12 groups with 8 participants per groups

*How do citizens from different Internet milieus define and conceptualize online participation and engagement?
Does the everyday understanding match the academic understanding?*



Cooperation with Sinus: Internet milieus

Digital Outsiders

Internetferne Verunsicherte



Überforderte Offliner bzw. Internet-Gelegenheitsnutzer. Selbstgenügsamkeit, Sittlichkeit und Anstand. Bedürfnis nach Schutz und Kontrollmechanismen.

Ordnungsfordernde Internet-Laien



Bürgerlicher Mainstream mit Wunsch nach Ordnung und Verlässlichkeit. Defensiv-vorsichtige Internet-Nutzung.

Digital Immigrants

Verantwortungs- bedachte Etablierte



Aufgeklärtes Establishment mit Führungsbewusstsein. Selektive Internet-Nutzer. Verantwortungsorientierte Grundhaltung gegenüber digitalem Fortschritt.

Postmaterielle Skeptiker



Zielorientierte Internet-Anwender mit kritischer Einstellung zu kommerziellen Strukturen und „blinder“ Technik-Faszination.

Cooperation with Sinus: Internet milieus

Digital Natives

Unbekümmerte Hedonisten



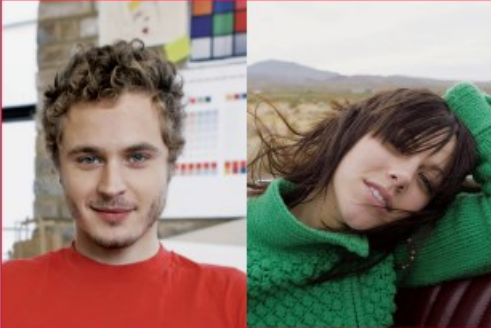
Fun-orientierte Internet-User auf der Suche nach Entertainment und Erlebnis. Unkonventionell – nicht risikosensibilisiert.

Effizienzorientierte Performer



Leistungsorientierte Internet-Profis mit ausgeprägter Convenience- und Nutzen-Orientierung. Professionalisierung als Leitprinzip.

Digital Souveräne

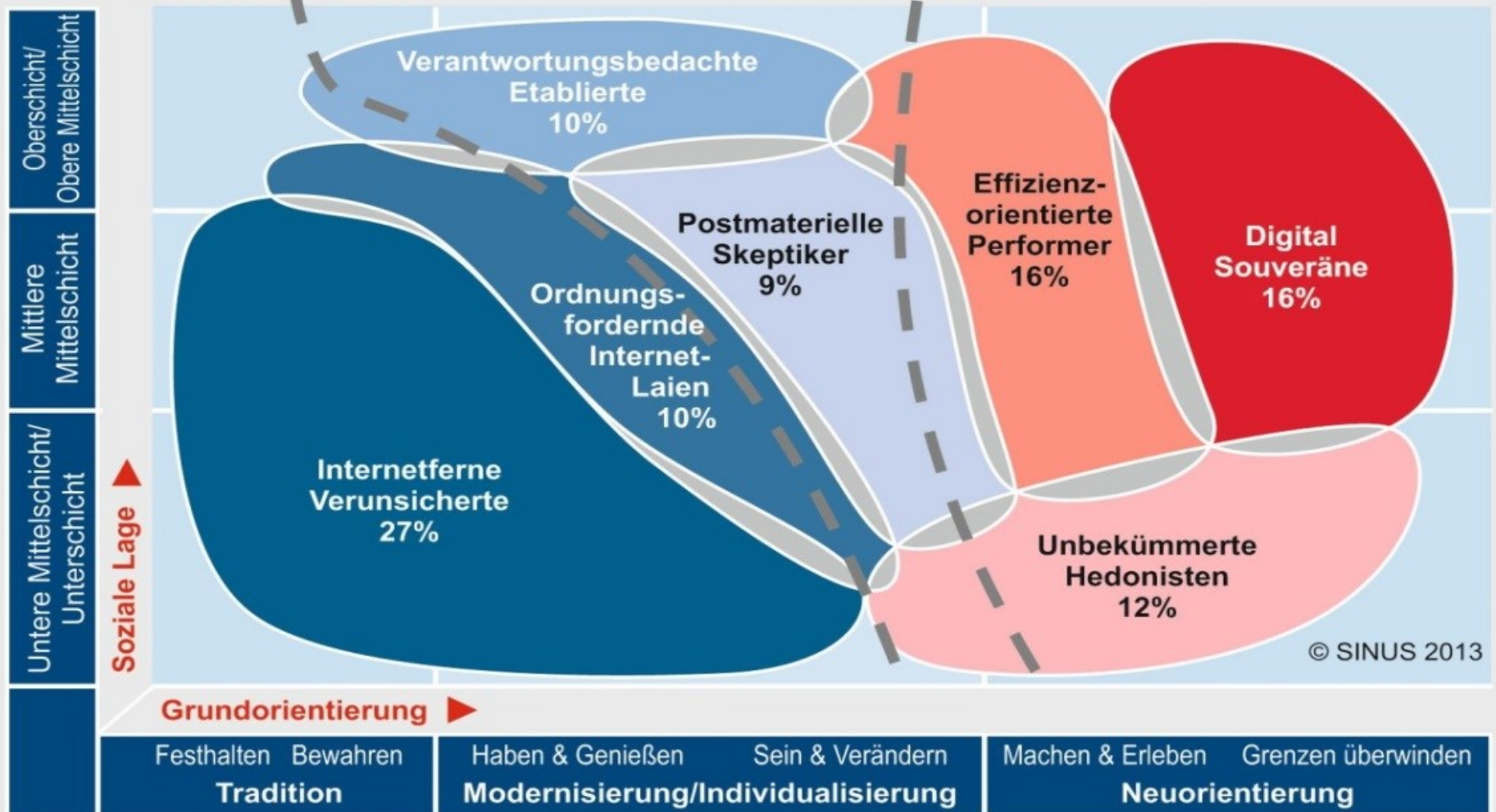


Digitale Avantgarde mit ausgeprägter individualistischer Grundhaltung. Suche nach Unabhängigkeit in Denken und Handeln.

Digital Outsiders (37%)

Digital Immigrants (19%)

Digital Natives (44%)



Group 1: Natives

- **Pragmatic approach** towards online communities
- Online participation more pronounced than in groups 2 and 3
- But there are also some **skeptics**

I am not actively participating on any Internet site or platform, because I try to stay away from the virtual world as much as possible and not miss the real life. I only use the internet when i need information; communicate with friends, or want to buy or sell something (Patrick; careless hedonist)

Group 1: Natives

- Large differences between milieus
- **Facebook task** suitable to carve out the differences, e.g., between careless hedonists and digital sovereigns

Well, I see ads, new photos of family and friends. What I also see are short videos of my favorite series «Berling tag und Nacht». (Vanessa; careless hedonist)

My start profile basically replaces the daily newspaper, because through selected connections I receive updates and news reports. (Denis; digital sovereign)

Group 2: Immigrants

- Somewhat **more interaction** than in group 1
- Large **variance** in participation intensity and scope
- **Age effects** affect the forms/domains of participation

My interests, information and appointments in my function as a youth adviser in the Alps association can be found on the homepage www.alpenverein-hochtaunus.de. [...] I'm actively engaged on this site because I myself and my son (in the youth group) climb and because I can best give my tasks in youth work to interested families via the homepage. (Sibylle; responsible established)

Group 3: Outsiders

- Intense interaction, sometimes on a very personal level
- Largest variance in how the tasks were solved
- Most active users in online communities, but also **most skeptical** ones

I'm very often on Deutschlandradio Kultur. That's enough, i don't need anything else. (Joachim; law-and-order Internet amateur)

I equate registering with active action in the sense of engagement. (Thorsten; law-and-order Internet amateur)

Main Findings and Take Aways

Large milieu **differences** in participation

High status $\neq$ high engagement

Cultural aspects very important

Bourdieu's theory useful in this regard





Thanks for your **Attention**

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Discussion



- How is the situation in Norway?
- What could be done about participation divides?
- Which theories are suitable to describe participation divides?
- Which additional factors should be considered to study social media and online participation?
- What about online representation and big data (divides)?

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Data and Method

Online survey with 1488 participants

Representative distribution of gender, age and region of
German Internet population, slight overrepresentation of
highly educated users

Structural equation modeling



Measurement

Online Content Creation

Replication of Blank's (2013) typology of online content

Self-Efficacy

3 items from previous studies (Compeau et al., 1999; Venkatesh et al., 2003; Venkatesh & Bala, 2008)

Privacy Concerns

3 items from Malhotra et al. (2004)

=> Cronbach's α , CR and AVE all above threshold

