



Online but still not taking part?

**A multi-method investigation of the online participation
divides in Germany**

Christoph Lutz

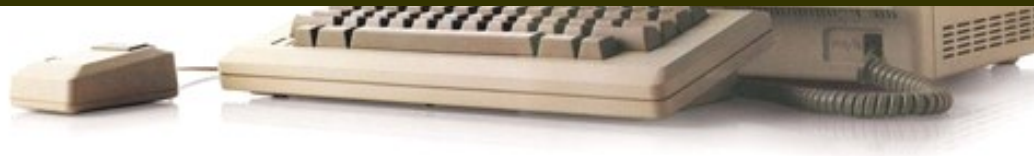
@lutzid

Oxford Internet Institute Summer Doctoral Programme (OIISDP)

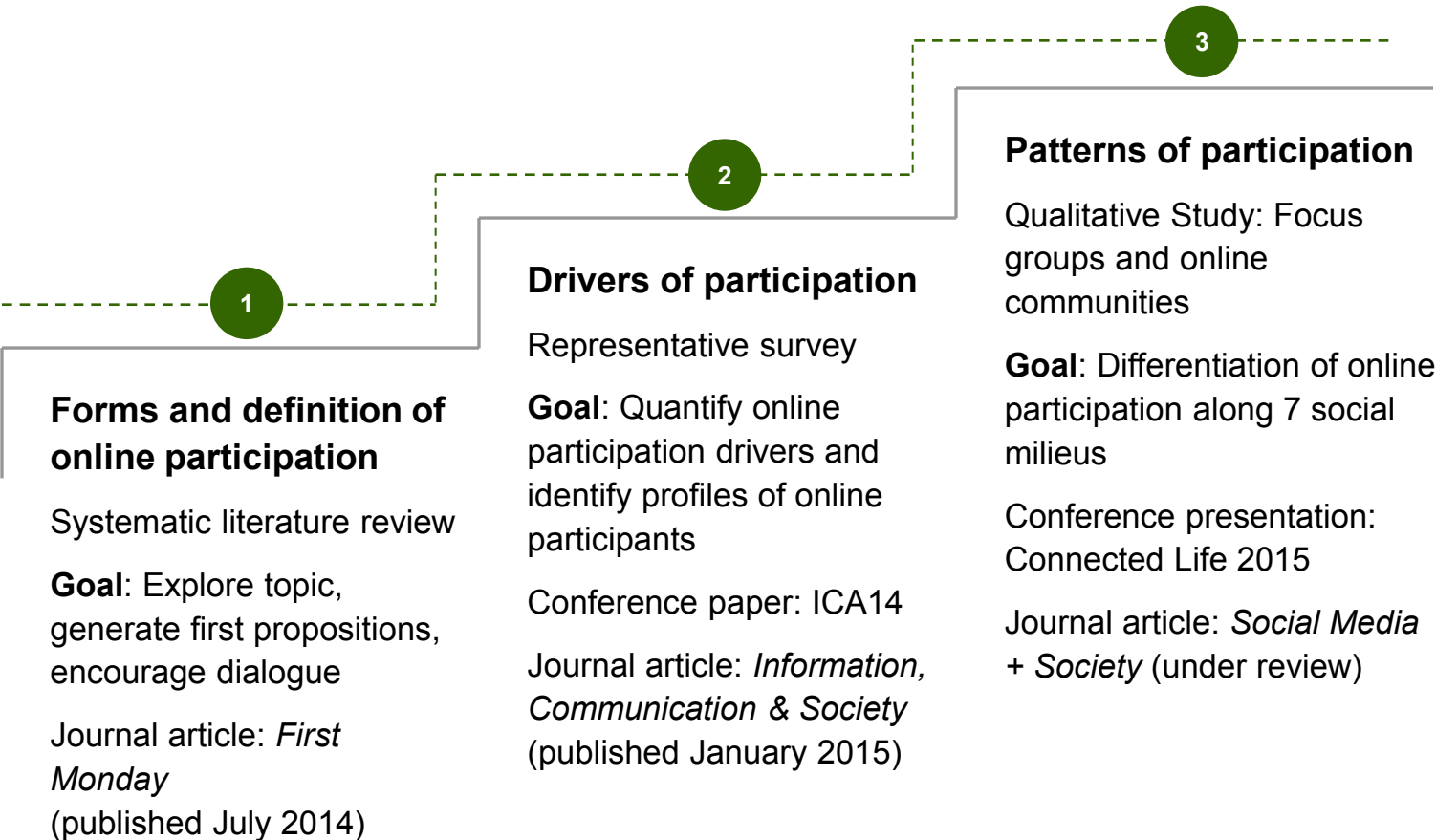
10 July 2015



The Dissertation Project



Approach



The Dissertation Committee

Miriam Meckel

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



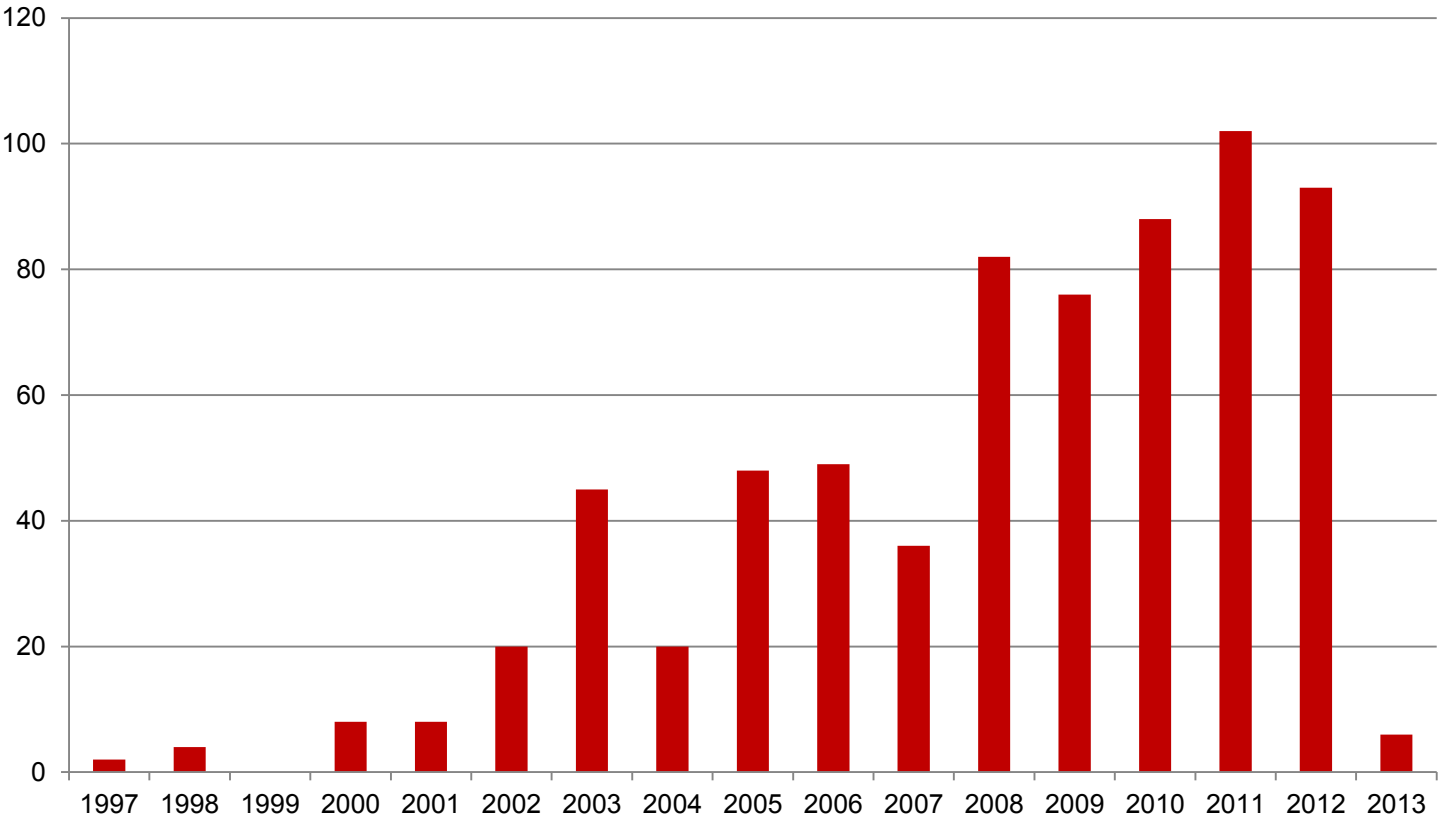
Anabel Quan-Haase

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



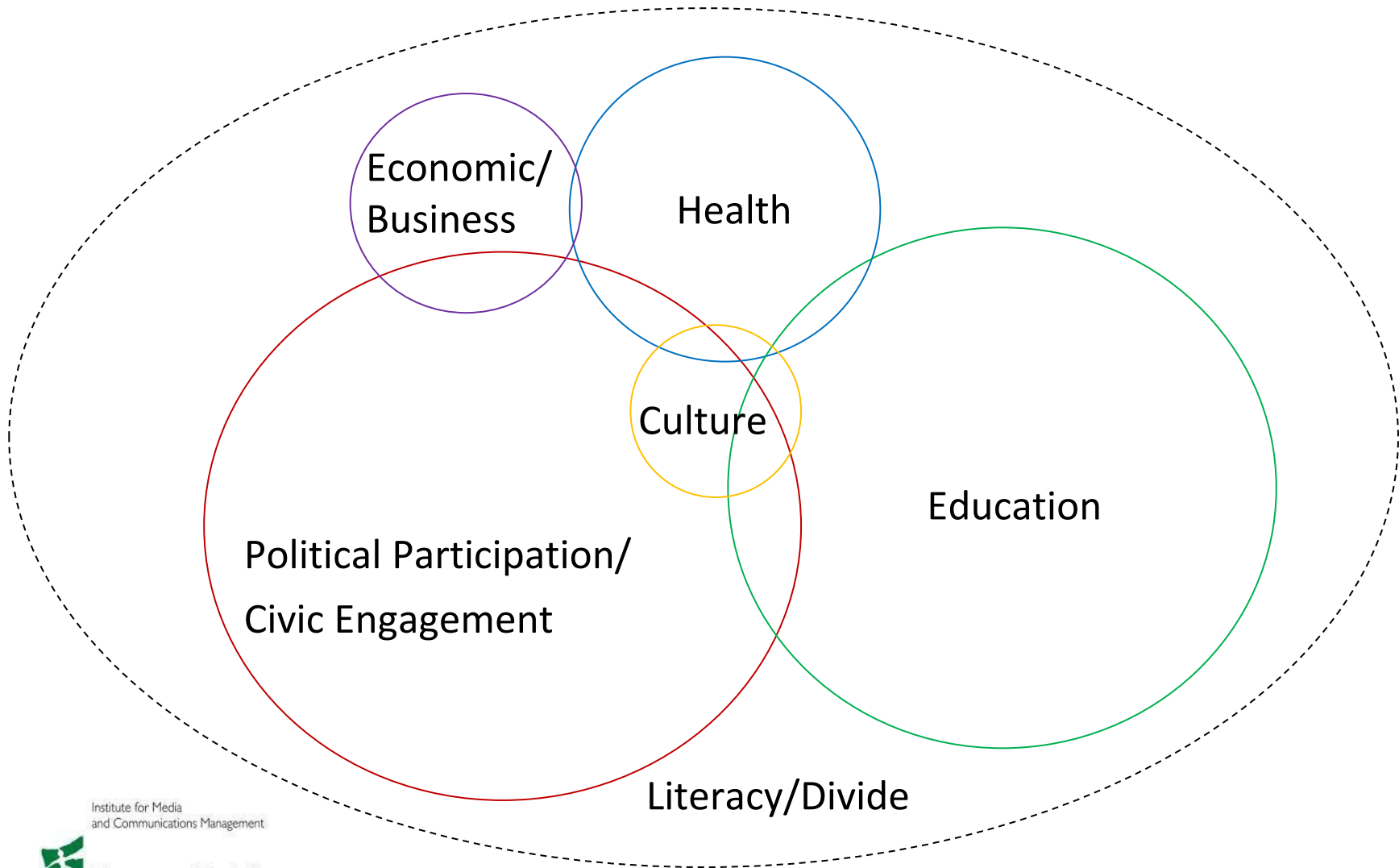
Article 1: Forms of Participation

Increasing Relevance



ProQuest results from 1990

Topical Areas



Online participation

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

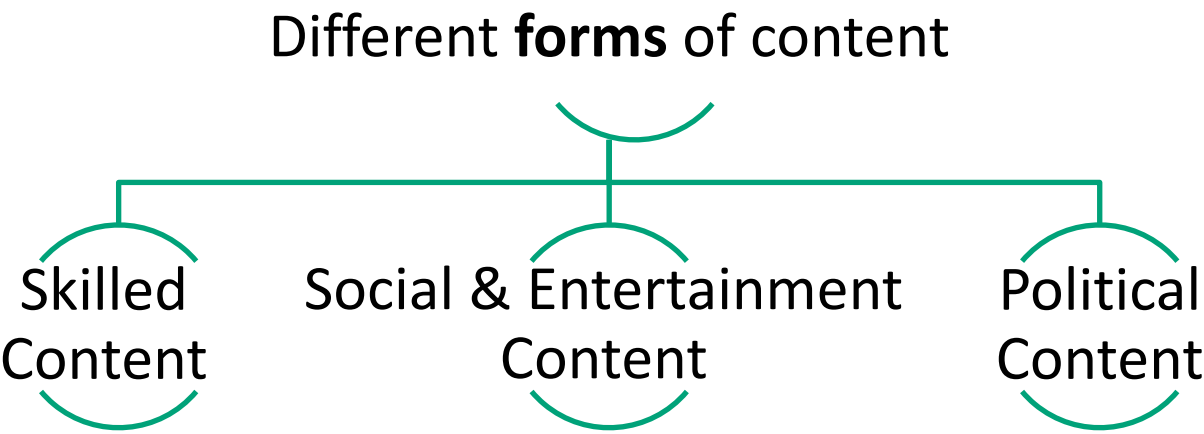


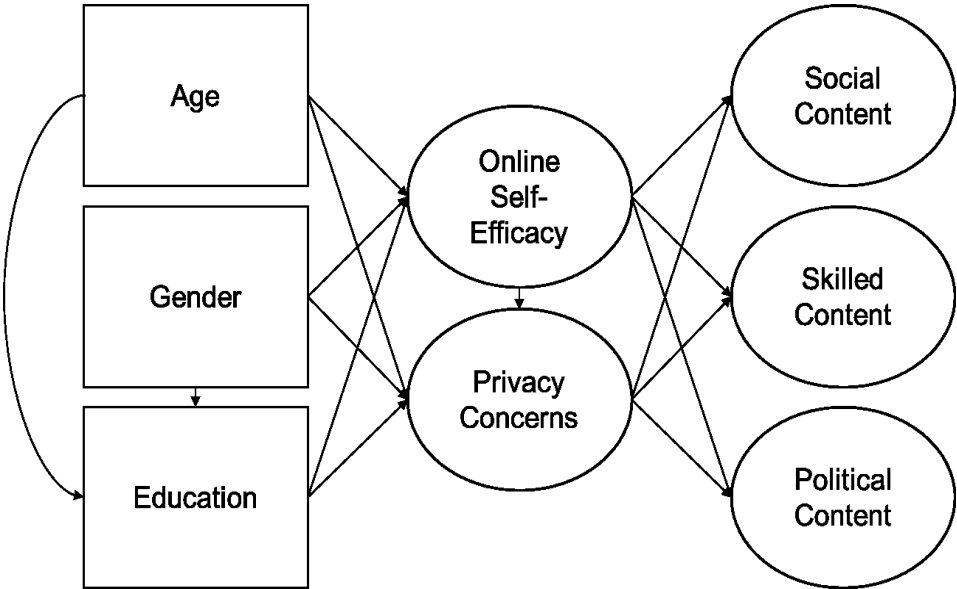
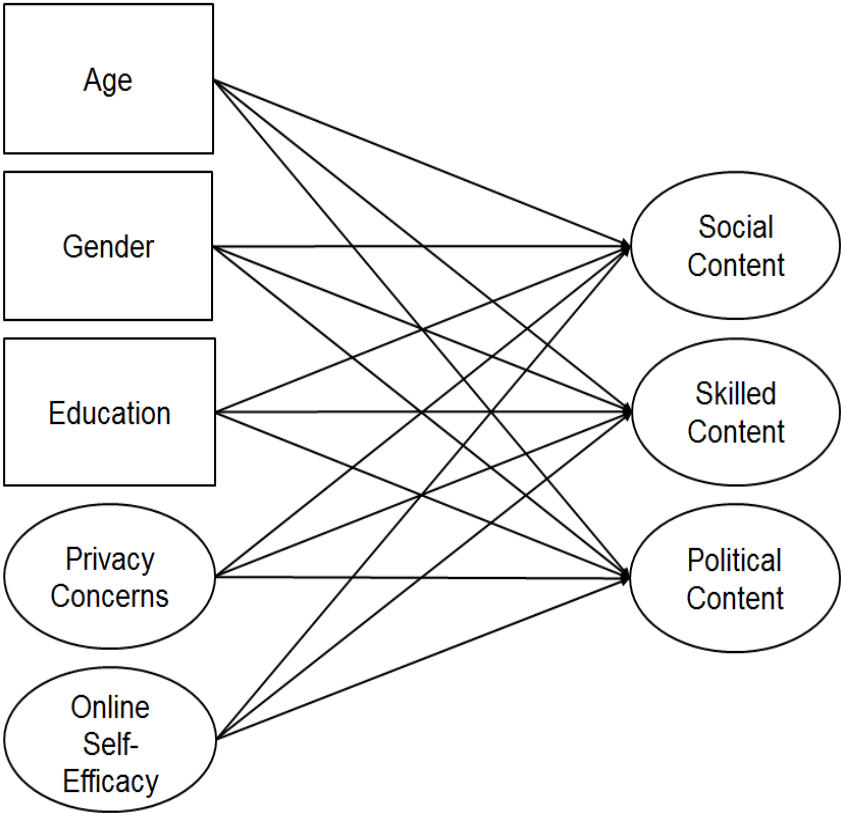
Article 2: Participation Divide(s)

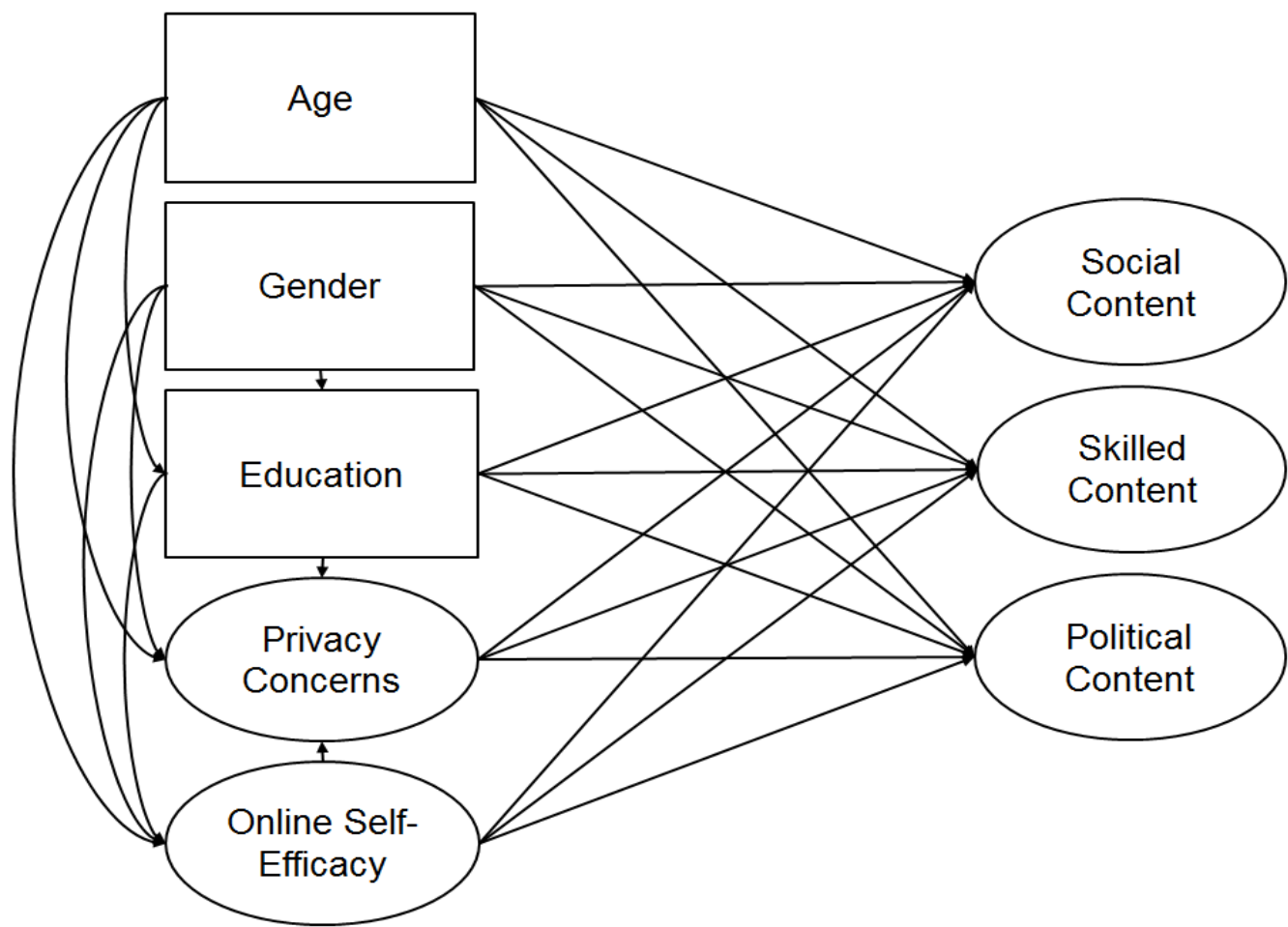


Current OII Study

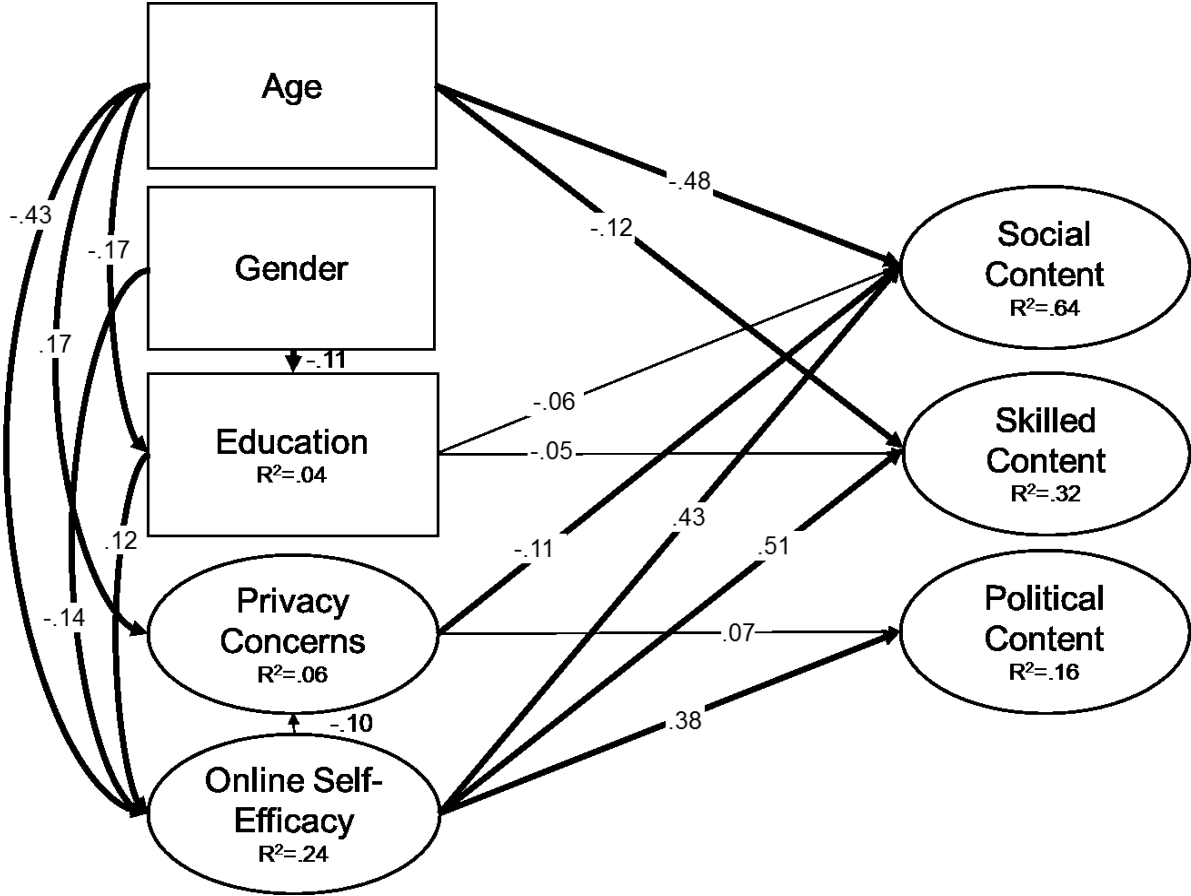
Who produces content online?







...And the winner is



Champagne
Celebration Template

~~Your name~~
Model 3!

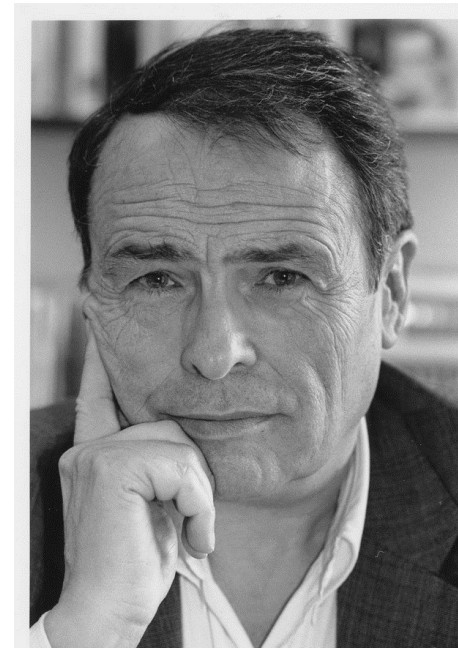




Article 3: Participation in Different Milieus

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

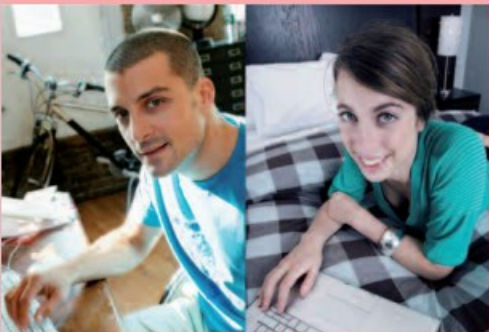


Zielorientierte Internet-Anwender mit kritischer Einstellung zu kommerziellen Strukturen und „blinder“ Technik-Faszination.

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

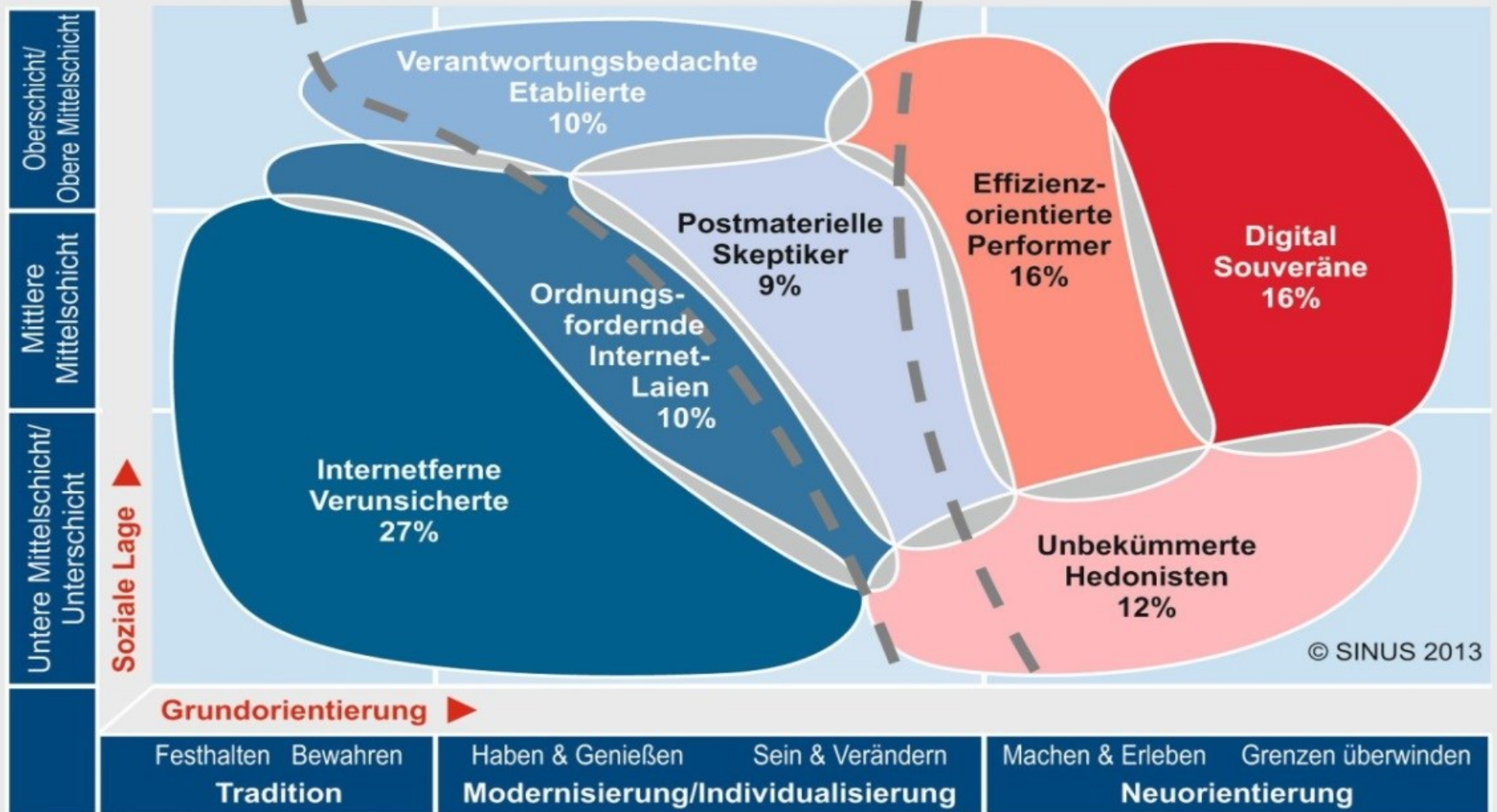


Digitale Avantgarde mit ausgeprägter individualistischer Grundhaltung. Suche nach Unabhängigkeit in Denken und Handeln.

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





Discussion: Writing a Cumulative Dissertation



Pros and Cons



- Dependence on **review process**: quality control vs. uncertainty
- **Coherence** of work: giving structure vs. over-structuring the thesis
- **Disciplinary cultures**: having tangible output at time of dissertation vs. lacking a grand oeuvre in the form of a book
- **Authorship**: substantial parts might be co-authored vs. it's all mine

=> Very context-specific decision



Thanks for your **Attention**

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References

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- Hoffmann, C. P., Lutz, C., & Meckel, M. (2015). Content creation on the Internet: A social cognitive perspective on the participation divide. *Information, Communication & Society*, 18(6), 696-716.
- Lutz, C., Hoffman, C. P., & Meckel, M. (2014). Beyond just politics: A systematic literature review of online participation. *First Monday*, 19(7). Online: <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/5260/4094>