

DIGITAL BUT STILL UNEQUAL

The Challenges of Digitalisation for Emerging Powers - Mexico

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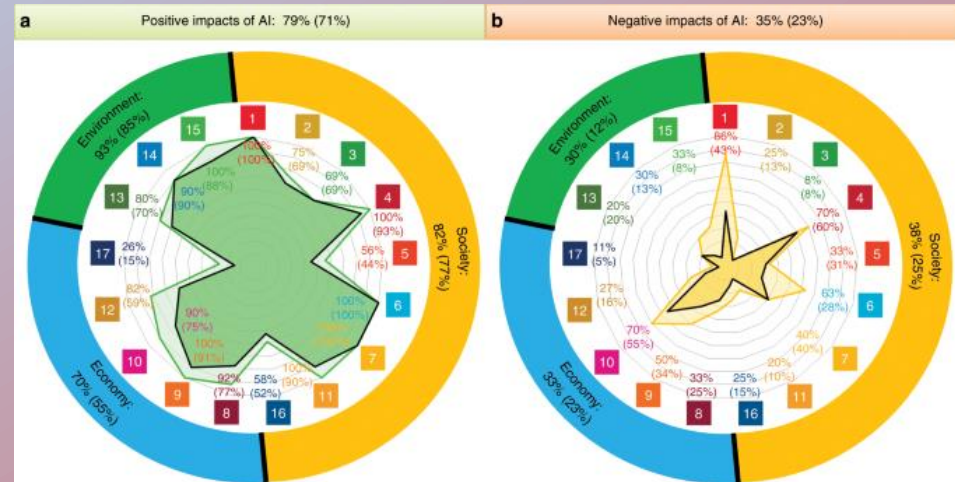
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Deutsches Institut für
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FIRST PART



The Digital Revolution and the International Development Agenda

From the MDGs to the SDGs



- Security?
- Human rights?
- Gender? One specific goal, across different goals, or both?
- Climate change and natural disasters, etc?
- A general and inspirational agenda, or rather specific and comprehensive, albeit...difficult to be owned?

The Post-2015 process...

The post-2015 process, which began in 2010: multi-layered, involved international agencies, traditional and emerging donors, civil society, academia, as well as individual countries and country coalitions

...a broad collection of stakeholders and working groups, such as thematic task forces or the UN Secretary-General's High-Level Panel of eminent persons, among others.

AND YET...

**Digitalisation, digital and smart technologies,
technological change, exponential technological
change...?**



The International Development Agenda: Have 's and Have not 's

ACCESS AND AVAILABILITY OF TECHNOLOGY:

IF YOU HAVE, YOU ARE IN; IF YOU DON'T, YOU ARE OUT



The Digital Revolution...

EARLY 1990s



1995-2002



LATE 1990S-
EARLY 2000s

2005



2016, 2019



Why has the International Development Agenda lagged behind the Digital Revolution?

My Three Hypotheses



Reflect upon these questions...

Do you agree that both the international development agenda and the development community have lagged behind the digital debate and the digital revolution? If not, why?

Or would you say that there is some catching up?

Do you agree that most digital and smart innovations are market-driven rather than development driven? If not, why?

What comes to your mind when you hear the expression “digital divide”?

SECOND PART



The Digital Divide...

Challenges and Opportunities

The Digital Divide

- The original concept refers to the gap between those who have access to the internet and those who don't. THE FOCUS WAS ON “HAVE AND HAVE NOTS”
- One of the first times this concept was mentioned was during the administration of Bill Clinton and Al Gore, in the late 1990s

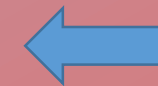
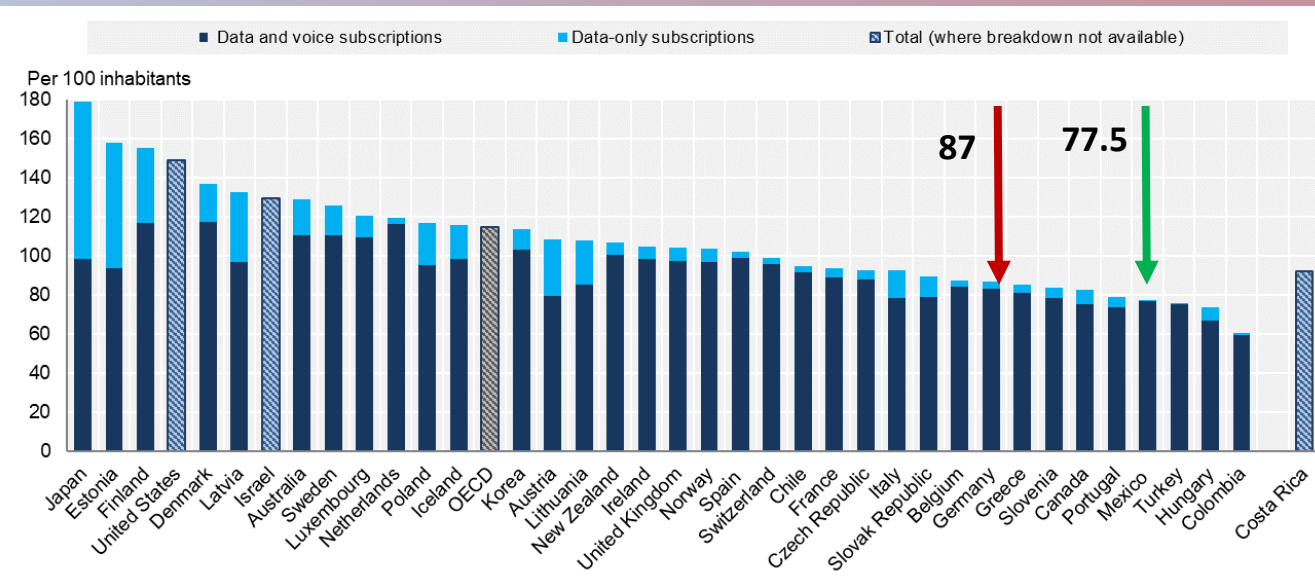
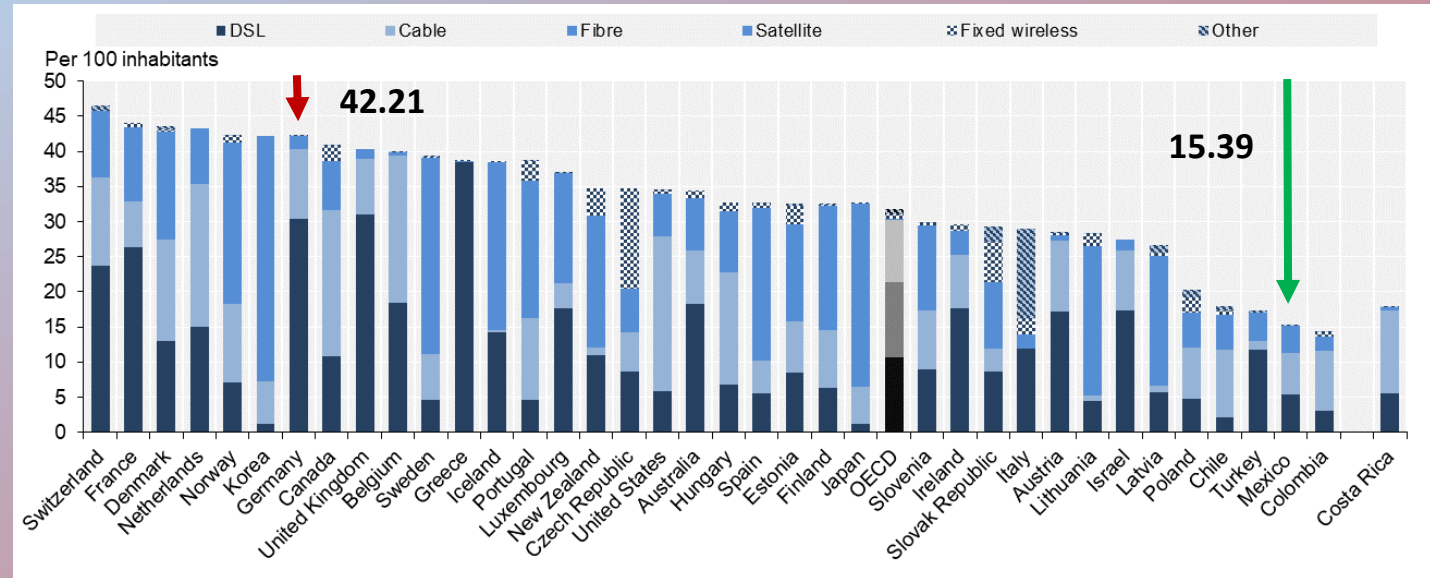


We must also promote global access to the internet. We need to bridge the digital not only within our country, but among countries. Only by giving people access to this technology can they tap into the potential of the information age.

April 28th, 1998

OECD Countries – Broadband subscriptions per 100 inhabitants (2019)

FIXED



MOBILE

SOURCE: OECD,
<http://www.oecd.org/sti/broadband/broadband-statistics/>

Research: Different Levels of the Digital Divide

1st LEVEL

“HAVE vs HAVE NOTs”



LATE 1990s

2nd LEVEL

SKILLS



2000-2010 APROX

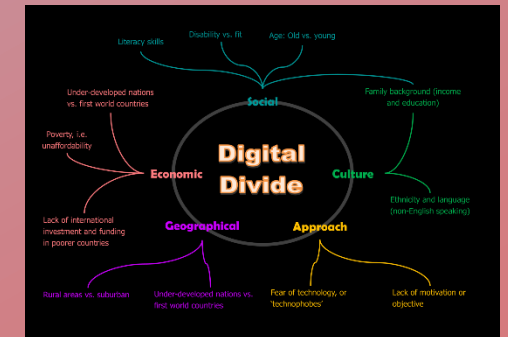
3rd LEVEL

IMPACTS “OFF-LINE”



2010-2020

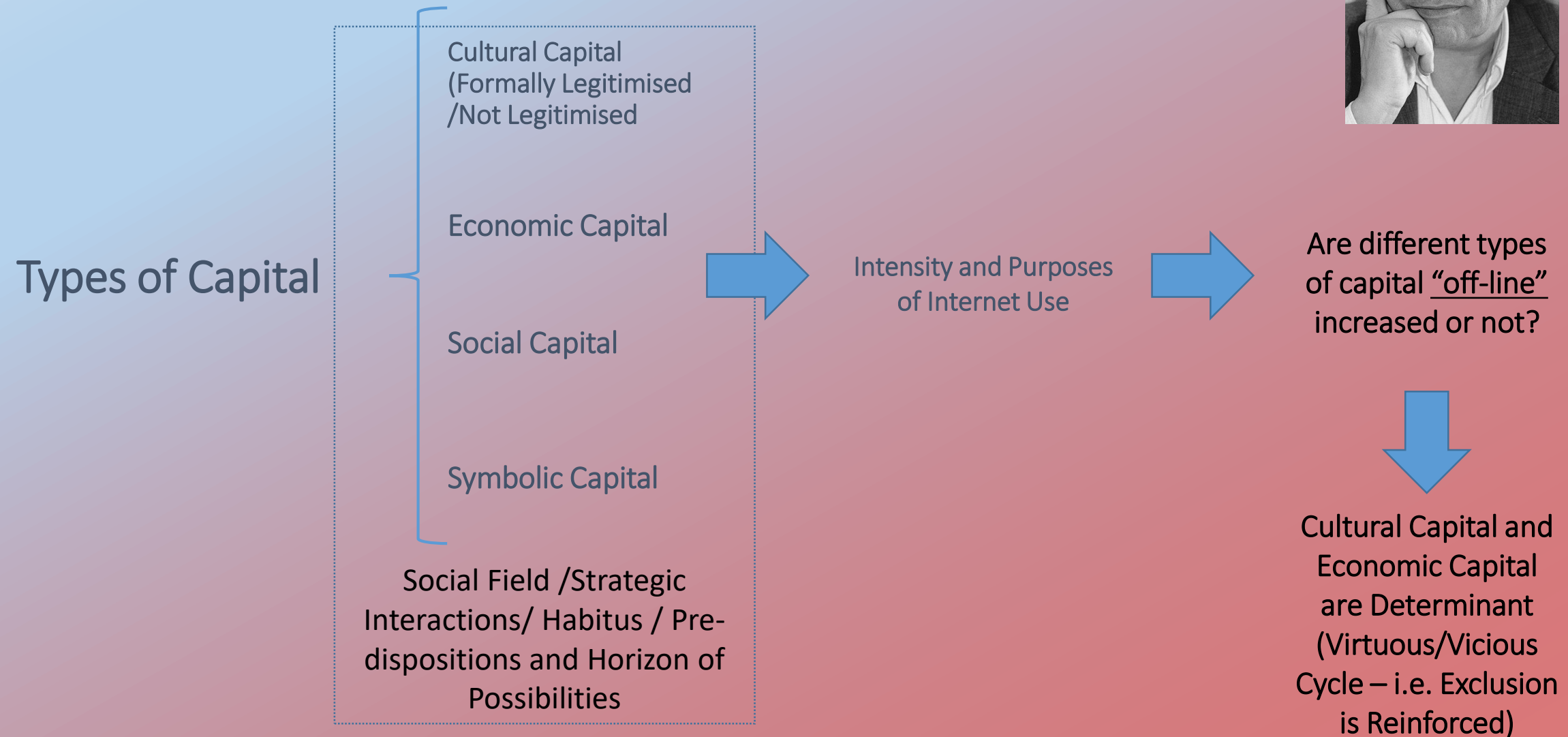
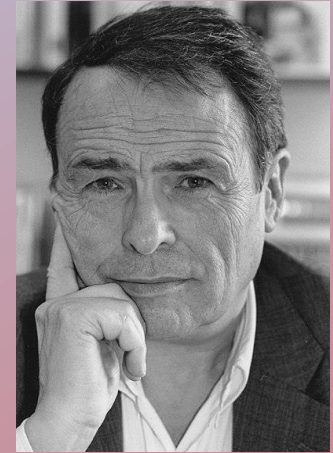
COMPREHENSIVE EXPLANATIONS



2015-2020

Using Pierre Bourdieu 's Social Theory...

(Calderón Gómez, 2020; Ragnedda and Ruiu, 2018; Zillien and Hargittai, 2009 + many, many others before...)



Digital but Still Unequal?

“...people of lower socioeconomic levels might use internet more, but for different purposes; for example, gaming or social-interaction and not for work-purposes”

(Van Deursen and Van Dijk, 2015; Case study: The Netherlands)

“...unequal treatment is the primary legal dimension of digital exclusion and inequality...(even if digital technologies do not attempt this)...”

(Ranchordas, 2021; Case study: The Netherlands)

“...inequalities might increase if higher-status individuals digest information faster and better...”

(Zillien and Hargittai, 2021; Case study: Germany)

“...the issue is not just about access but inequalities in use...”

(Yates et al., 2013; Case study: UK)

“...economic capital is the most basic form of digital divide...”

(Calderón-Gómez, 2020; Case study: Spain)

Some Preliminary Lessons – Regarding the Digital Divide

- Most authors and research conclude that existing off-line inequalities are mirrored and sometimes worsened by different aspects of the digital divide
- The “digital divide” will never disappear completely
- Digital technologies are not neutral; they are socially embedded and they must be analysed in those terms
- KEY: Do not analyse the digital divide on its own, but together with the impact of other technological changes and areas of societal change

Reflect upon these questions...

Can you think of other definitions or ways of thinking about the digital divide?

Can you think of significant differences on how digital divides are expressed in highly industrialized countries (like Germany or France) vis-a-vis developing countries or so called emerging powers (like Brazil and Mexico)?

Can you think of other ways in which off-line exclusion and inequality have an impact on the the kind of outcomes from on-line activity?

THIRD PART



Ways forward...

- Do we need to stop promoting digital technologies and innovations? No
- Do these conclusions mean that the digital revolution does not work to tackle international development challenges? No
- HOWEVER, IT DOES MEAN THAT WE NEED TO TAKE A MORE COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

5 Digital Impact Arenas (DIA) to Keep in Mind*

<u>Civil Society</u>	<u>Political Society</u>	<u>Economic Society</u>	<u>State Institutions</u>	<u>Rule of Law</u>
-Public Sphere	-Political participation (parties,	-Efficiency /Productivity	-E-government	-Data Protection
-Social Networking	campaigning, social media, etc.)	-Economic Capital	-Taxes	-Labour Regulations
-Social Capital	-Public policy debates	-Jobs (flexibility vs uncertainty)	-Access to Public Serv.	(Health and Social Protection)
-Cultural Capital (Including Education)		-Training	-Transparency /Accountability	-Market Regulations (Antitrust)
		-Markets	-Digital Citizenship	
		-New Consumer Patterns	-Rights and Due Process	

Adapted from Linz and Stepan (1996) model to analyse democratisation processes

Back to the Agenda-2030 and Development Debate (Some Questions to Keep in Mind)

- Can STs help reducing poverty and eradicating hunger while remaining oblivious to structural inequalities?
- Can STs help achieving healthy lives while tackling the challenges of surveillance and social control?
- Can STs help building sustainable cities and communities without falling into the trap of technological fixations?
- Can STs contribute to climate action and to achieve more environmentally sustainable ways of living without falling into the trap of the Promethean Myth?
- Can STs contribute to gender equality without reproducing structural patterns of violence and exclusion?

FOURTH AND FINAL PART



My Current Research (PRODIGEES...

Inequality and Digitalisation through the Lenses of Art and Culture. A Comparative Study between Mexico and Germany

Inspired by the work of Jen Schradie (2011): who, based on a survey with American Adults, find evidence to challenges that claim the Internet creates a more democratic public sphere (i.e. that anyone can produce content for the world to read, hear or watch...and not only for social networking)

Some Issues to Consider:

- Are artists and cultural producers ready and willing to participate in the digital world?
- The whole issue is not about finding new distribution channels...
- We should also consider that digital media has been dominated by a few platforms, such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram...
- What happens when a global pandemic hits?

Some Guiding Questions:

- Does digitalisation (often mediated by large digital media platforms) helps creating more plural and diverse worlds of art and fields of cultural production, or does it favour a narrow number of artists, voices, and platforms?
- Does digitalisation marginalises analogue artists that are willing to participate in the digital world but lack the access or knowledge to do it?
- Does digitalisation applied to the worlds of art reproduces social inequalities, leaving behind (yet again) minorities and low-income sectors of society?
- Does digitalisation improves socioeconomic prospects of artists and cultural producers, regardless of whether they produce digital art or not, or does it limit their ability to make a living?
- Does digitalisation (often mediated by large digital media platforms) helps creating more plural and diverse worlds of art and fields of cultural production, or does it favour a narrow number of artists, voices, and platforms?

Some Preliminary Findings...

- Access is not necessarily the main issue... (it is rather a matter of poetics, including the poetics of these technologies)
- As any technological revolution in the past, digitalisation in art and cultural production will most likely render a HYBRID SCENARIO... (so, it is not about migrating completely to the digital/virtual world but to use digitalisation as an additional tool...)
- Do not think about individuals but about ECOSYSTEMS... (this has strong implications for public policy)

THANKS!!!