

#VOTELEAVE OR #STRONGERIN: RHETORIC AND RESONANCE IN THE EU REFERENDUM

YIN YIN LU, OXFORD INTERNET INSTITUTE

CLARIN-PLUS WORKSHOP PRESENTATION

19 MAY 2017



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Digital Economies



Digital Knowledge and Culture



Digital Politics and Government

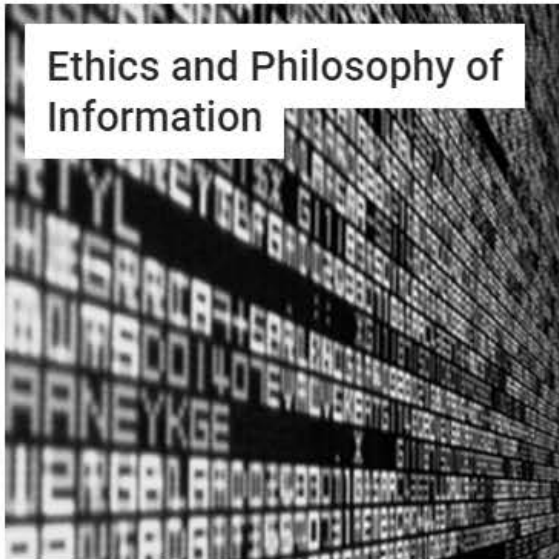


Education, Digital Life and Wellbeing

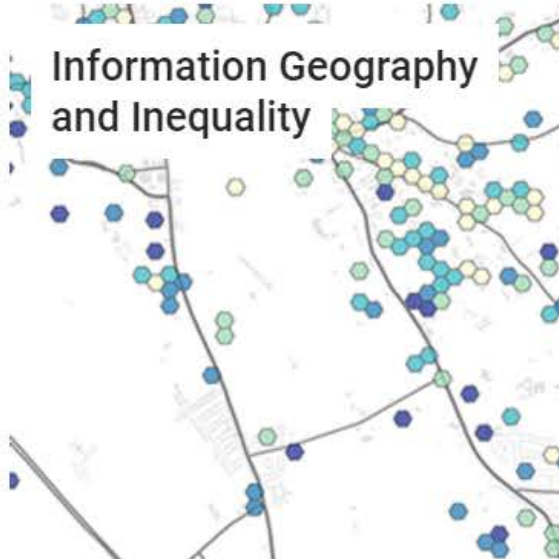


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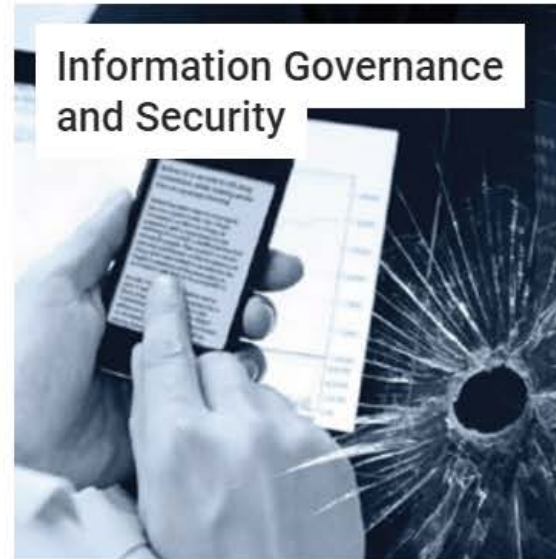
Ethics and Philosophy of Information



Information Geography and Inequality



Information Governance and Security



Social Data Science





RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What makes a political message **resonate** with its audience on social media?
- What **strategies** do individuals and organisations use when they send a political tweet and why?



MY DATASET

- 26.4M tweets from Streaming API
- 10 March-30 September 2016 (but focusing on 15 April-23 June, 12.1M)
- 334 hashtags & 65 usernames (registered campaigns)
- JSON → Python dataframes / CSV



RESEARCH DESIGN

- **Manual content coding** of random sample (2-3K tweets) + **regression** models
- **Interviews** with avid tweeters ('ordinary' users) and campaign organisers
- **'Big data' analysis** of entire dataset (without RTs): topic modelling & sentiment analysis



WHAT IS RESONANCE?

- Number of RTs and likes
- Queried Twitter Search API for Tweet IDs
 - Downside: ~ 20% of tweets lost
 - Upside: tweets are on a level playing field



FACTORS FOR SUCCESS

- Tweets as digital cultural objects
(see Griswold, Manovich, Murthy)
- Have to consider:
 - Context
 - Content
 - User

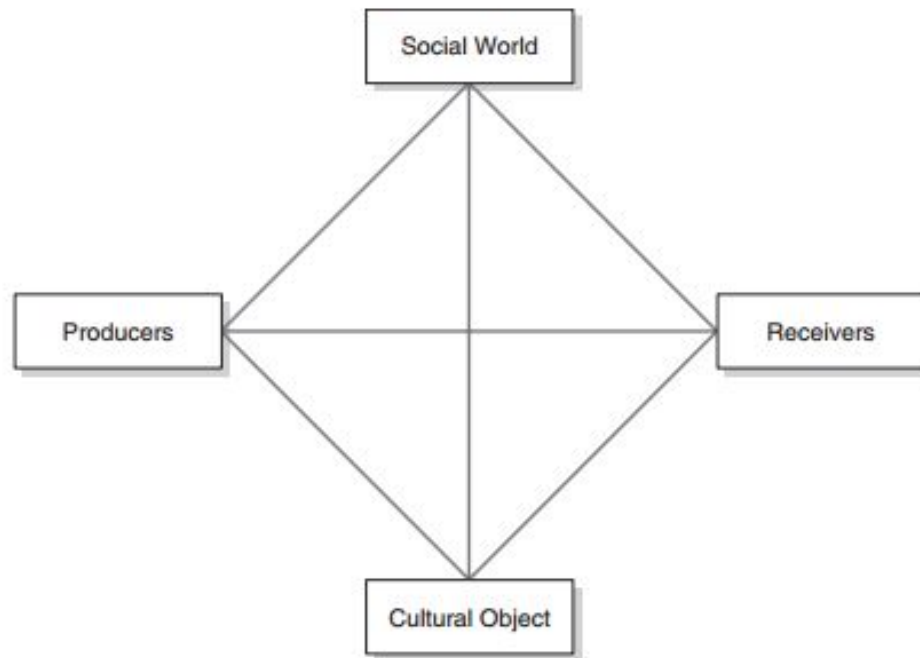
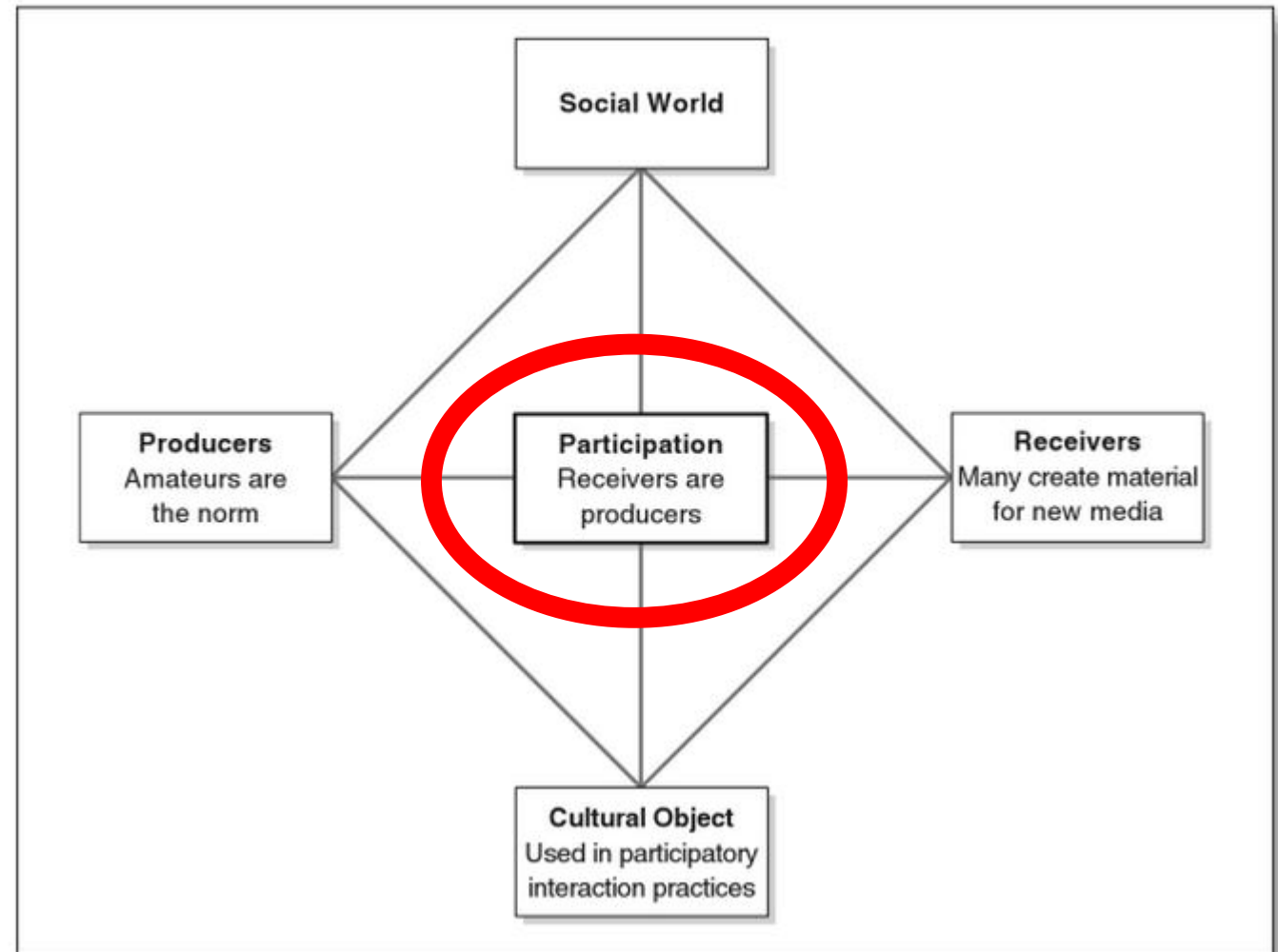



Figure 1.1 The Cultural Diamond

Figure 7.1 Cultural Diamond for New Media





DIMENSIONS OF POTENCY

- Retrievability
 - Institutional Retention
 - Resolution
 - Resonance
 - Rhetoric
- 

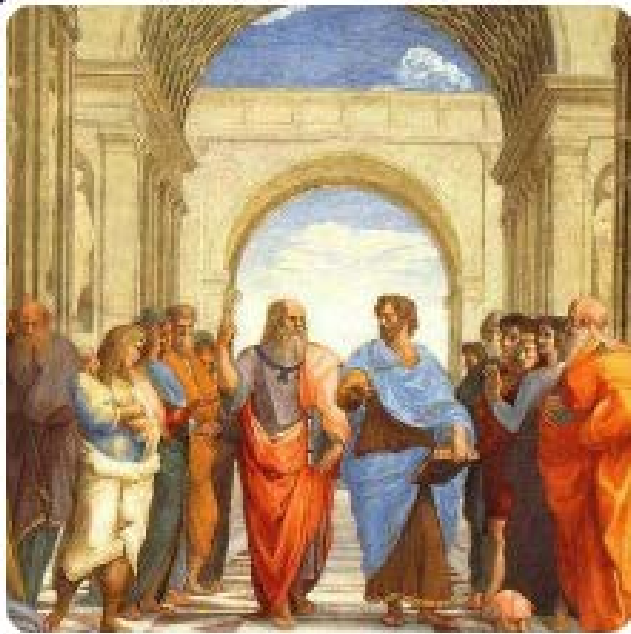


350 BC

Man is by nature a
social animal.

—Aristotle, *Politics* (Book I)

2017 AD




Aristotle

@Aristotle

Greek philosopher, a student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great! Revealing the untold.

📅 Joined December 2010

 Tweet to Aristotle

TWEETS
252

FOLLOWING
10

FOLLOWERS
4,194

LIKES
49

Tweets

Tweets & replies

Media



Pinned Tweet



Aristotle @Aristotle · Feb 25

Man is by nature a
[#socialanimal](#).



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RHETORIC

- Kenneth Burke: *identification* as the ‘key rhetorical act’
- Max Atkinson: us vs. them (type); lists and antithesis (format)
- Emotion: activation vs. valence



Ben Phillips

@benphillips76



Follow

Peak **#Brexit**: UK protestor tries to burn the EU flag, but can't, because of EU regulation on flammable materials



RETWEETS

14,915

LIKES

14,776



6:55 PM - 31 May 2016



15K



15K





Pavilion Opinions

@pavilionopinion



Follow

History of Europe:
War
War
War
War
War
War
War
Arguments about bananas.

To be honest, I'll probably go with banana arguments. **#remain**

RETWEETS

4,664

LIKES

4,162



11:14 PM - 29 Apr 2016



4.7K



4.2K



Malcolm Chalmers

@UrsaMal



Follow

My parent's neighbours have put up a large 'Vote Leave' sign. It seems my dad's response is to get creative. **#Remain**



RETWEETS

4,090

LIKES

4,742



2:52 PM - 23 May 2016



4.1K



4.7K





Emily Strong

@EmyBemy2



Follow

Sometimes the pen is mightier than the keyboard.

#brexit



RETWEETS

4,000

LIKES

5,446



8:23 AM - 3 Jun 2016



4K



5.4K



Jon Bond

@JonBond6



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insular

/ˈɪnsjʊlə/ ⓘ

adjective

1. ignorant of or uninterested in cultures, ideas, or peoples outside one's own experience.

"a stubbornly insular farming people"

synonyms: narrow-minded, limited, blinkered, restricted, inward-looking, conventional, parochial, provincial, small-town, localist, small-minded, petty-minded, petty, close-minded, short-sighted, myopic, hidebound, dyed-in-the-wool, diehard, set, set in one's ways, inflexible, dogmatic, rigid, entrenched, illiberal, intolerant, prejudiced, bigoted, biased, partisan, sectarian, xenophobic, discriminatory, More

2. relating to or from an island.
"goods of insular origin"

Feedback

RETWEETS

10,014

LIKES

16



10:53 AM - 17 May 2016



10K

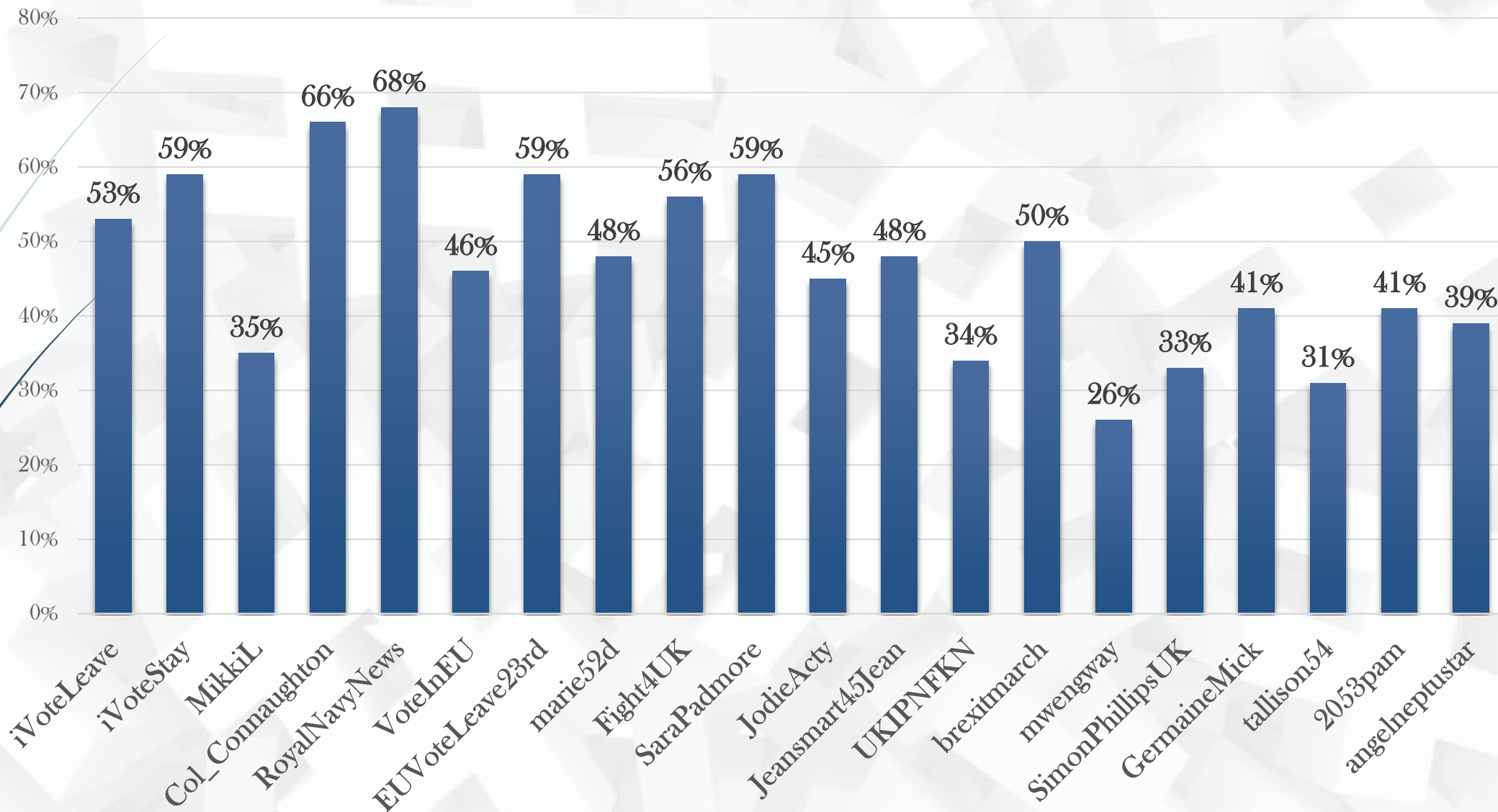


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BOT LIKELIHOOD OF TOP 20 USERS





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CONCLUSORY REMARKS

- Tweets are new media cultural objects that have **rhetorical force**. Esp. in political contexts.
- To address the million-dollar question ‘How do tweets work?’, a triangulation of approaches is needed.
- Humour and multimedia seem to be essential for resonance.



THANK YOU

@yinneth

yin.lu@oii.ox.ac.uk

torch.ox.ac.uk/socialhumanities