WHO ACTUALLY BENEFITS FROM THE USE OF THE INTERNET?

Realities of empowerment in France in the digital era

M@rsouin Network at the WIP Forum
Moscow, 5-7 of July 2017
The Context of French national survey
Do all French people benefit at the same level from the potentialities of empowerment brought by Internet uses?

- A research question
  - French national survey as part of a bigger research project funded by the National Research Agency

- A public policy issue
  - A grant from the national Digital Agency
Several dimensions considered in the questionnaire among which:

- **Empowerment through knowledge**
  - Informal and formal ways of broadening one’s knowledge and know-how

- **Civic and political engagement**
  - From ways of enlightening oneself on political matters to political engagement online

- **Sociability**
  - Do social uses of the Internet enhance and widen social ties?

- **Purchasing power**
  - Buying, selling, renting and sharing online: opportunities for higher purchasing power?
### HOW DATA HAS BEEN COLLECTED?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Completion of questionnaire</th>
<th>Face-to-face at home</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duration of the questionnaire</td>
<td>35 minutes in average to complete the questionnaire</td>
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<td>Sample</td>
<td>2000 people over 18 years of age in metropolitan France (no overseas territories)</td>
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<td>Which quotas for a representative sample?</td>
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</table>
- Quota on sex crossed by age  
- Socio-professional category (7 categories)  
- Geographical regions (5 big regions)  
- Type of territory (5 categories according to the size of the agglomeration: from rural territories to Paris) |
84% of French people over 18 years of age use the Internet
The computer remains the main device used to connect to the Internet
But 70% connect daily to the Internet through a smartphone

16% do not use the Internet
The population of non-user shows higher representation of:
- Elderly persons
- People with low level of education
- People having low income
WHO ACTUALLY BENEFIT FROM INTERNET USES?

A glimpse into realities of empowerment
DID INTERNET GIVE YOU OPPORTUNITIES TO OPEN UP TO OTHER SOCIAL SPHERE THAN YOURS?

A positive correlation between the fact of open up to other social backgrounds and the weakness of income.

Would Internet act as a reducer of inequalities in social capital distribution?

Internet plays a significant but limited role in enhancing social capital.

On the condition that Internet-users have:

- A certain digital skills base
- Personal dispositions for patterns of sociability suitable for online interactions
2 kinds of learning process considered in the questionnaire:

► Formal learning: within the framework of an institution and recognized by a formal acknowledgment (certificate, diploma, label, etc.)
  - Example: MOOC or any kind of online course
  - Participate in distance learning for an academic degree or job training

► Informal learning: any other kind of online learning
  - Example: browsing wikipedia, watching youtube tutorials, engagement in online community of practice (knitting, cooking, mechanics, cartography) to enhance knowledge or know-how
ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH ONLINE LEARNING?

Formal learning

- 15% participate in distance learning for an academic degree or job training
- They are younger, and have higher degrees and higher income than average Internet users

Internet reinforces inequalities in cultural capital?

- 45% of those who did not participate in distance learning estimate that the Internet gave them opportunities to broaden their knowledge
- This underlines the importance of informal online learning
ENHANCING KNOWLEDGE THROUGH ONLINE LEARNING?

The vast majority of Internet users do learn online.

But people with higher degrees answer more often than less educated people that they do.

A gap related to inequalities in digital skills?

Informal learning

- Find or check a fact: 89%
- Go in depth into a topic that interests you (history, news, etc.): 86%
- Look up a definition of a word: 84%
- Learn how to do something through video tutorials, blogs, forums: 63%
INTERNET USES AND PURCHASING POWER (1/2)

How the Internet transforms consumer habits?

- Online information on goods and services
- E-commerce challenging traditional commerce
- Growth of peer-to-peer transaction

- Consumers in a strength situation: better information, higher competition
- Individuals can position as occasional sellers

Potential increase of purchasing power
People with higher income declare more often than their counterparts that the Internet gave them opportunities to increase their purchasing power.
What about Internet non-users?
MAJOR REASON NOT TO USE THE INTERNET

- Not interested: 63%
- Don't know how to use it: 21%
- Too expensive: 4%
- Don't have time: 3%
- No connection available at home: 2%
- Fear of losing privacy: 2%
- Fear of breaking materials: 1%

14% of currently non-Internet users have used it in the past and dropped out.
IN WHICH ACTIVITIES INTERNET WOULD MAKE THINGS EASIER FOR YOU?

- Administrative procedures: 62%
- Keeping contact with people you've met: 22%
- Daily purchasing: 16%
- Planning gathering with friends and family: 15%
- Planning holydays: 15%
- Finding (or changing) housing: 14%
- Planning your journeys: 13%
- Managing career path: 11%
HAPPY WITHOUT THE INTERNET?

2 third of non-Internet users believe they are happier without the Internet than if they were online

One third sometime feels pride for doing without the Internet

1 on 10 declares that he/she sometime happens to feel shame for not using the Internet

A feeling that experience more often:
- More educated non-Internet users
- Internet non-users under 50 years of age
TO CONCLUDE

First results suggest that:

► People with lower income declare more often the Internet gave them opportunities on a social level.

► In contrast: regarding knowledge enhancement, civic participation and increase of purchasing power, those who benefit the most of their Internet uses are the one with higher cultural and economic capital.

Digital skills seem a major determinant of the ability to benefit from Internet uses.

► A major public policy issue in terms of challenging social inequalities.
Thank you for your attention!