

The developmental role of ICT

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developmental benefits

- **Economic performance**
 - Productivity
 - Competitiveness
 - Participation in the industrial networks of the global economy
- **State performance**
 - Effective delivery of public services
 - Strengthening of democratic processes
- **Transformation of social institutions**
 - Leveraging social relations

But...



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beware naïve technology determinism

Potential benefits do not materialise by just
putting technologies in place

They are achieved through organizational and
socio-economic change

- Productivity gains require restructuring of organizational practices
- Competitiveness requires new business models and products/services innovation
- Participation in global industrial networks requires competence and trust
- Effective public services require public administration reform
- Democratic processes require democratic institutions
- Institutional transformation requires sustained social mobilization

An appropriate research agenda



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- How does ICT-enabled organizational change happen?
- How does ICT-enabled change of state institutions happen?
- How does ICT-enabled social collaboration create value?

I take 'ICT-enabled' to mean the intertwining of effort for technology innovation and processes of social, economic, and political change

- Studying a phenomenon in relation to its socio-economic context
 - May focus narrowly at a micro-level, or consider processes that cut across micro/macro distinctions
- Venturing beyond technical/rational explanations and universalist prescriptions
- Placing emphasis on understanding:
 - socially embedded meaning making and local rationalities,
 - sustained by historically formed institutions

➤ Structural theories of practice

focusing on the formation of ICTs and the organizational structures they enable through every day practice

➤ Socio-technical theories

e.g. Actor Network Theory (ANT)

studying the processes of translation of a particular conception of desirable change into a socio-technical arrangement

tracing the relations of multiple actors with diverse interests

➤ Institutional analyses

identifying the way social, cultural, cognitive, and political aspects of an organizational setting shapes ICT-enabled change

The knowledge built



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Complements to technical/rational accounts of innovation as an engineering, economic and managerial endeavour

with

explanations and diagnoses of social embeddedness of ICT-enabled innovation

thus

contributing to the development of professional critical judgement and critical theory on contemporary society

Case 1: The electronic voting systems of Brazil

Why do Brazilians trust electronic voting while
almost all other countries distrust it?









- Electronic elections were developed at a period of democratization and continue to be supervised by highly trusted electoral authorities (a body of high status judges). This affects citizens' attitude to e-voting
- Continuous technology and electoral process improvements part of the political process
- Supported by a long term effort to develop industrial ICT capabilities in the country
- Middle classes' positive attitude to ICT
- Government efforts to promote ICT for the poor
- Indifference of the poor for parliamentary democracy(?)

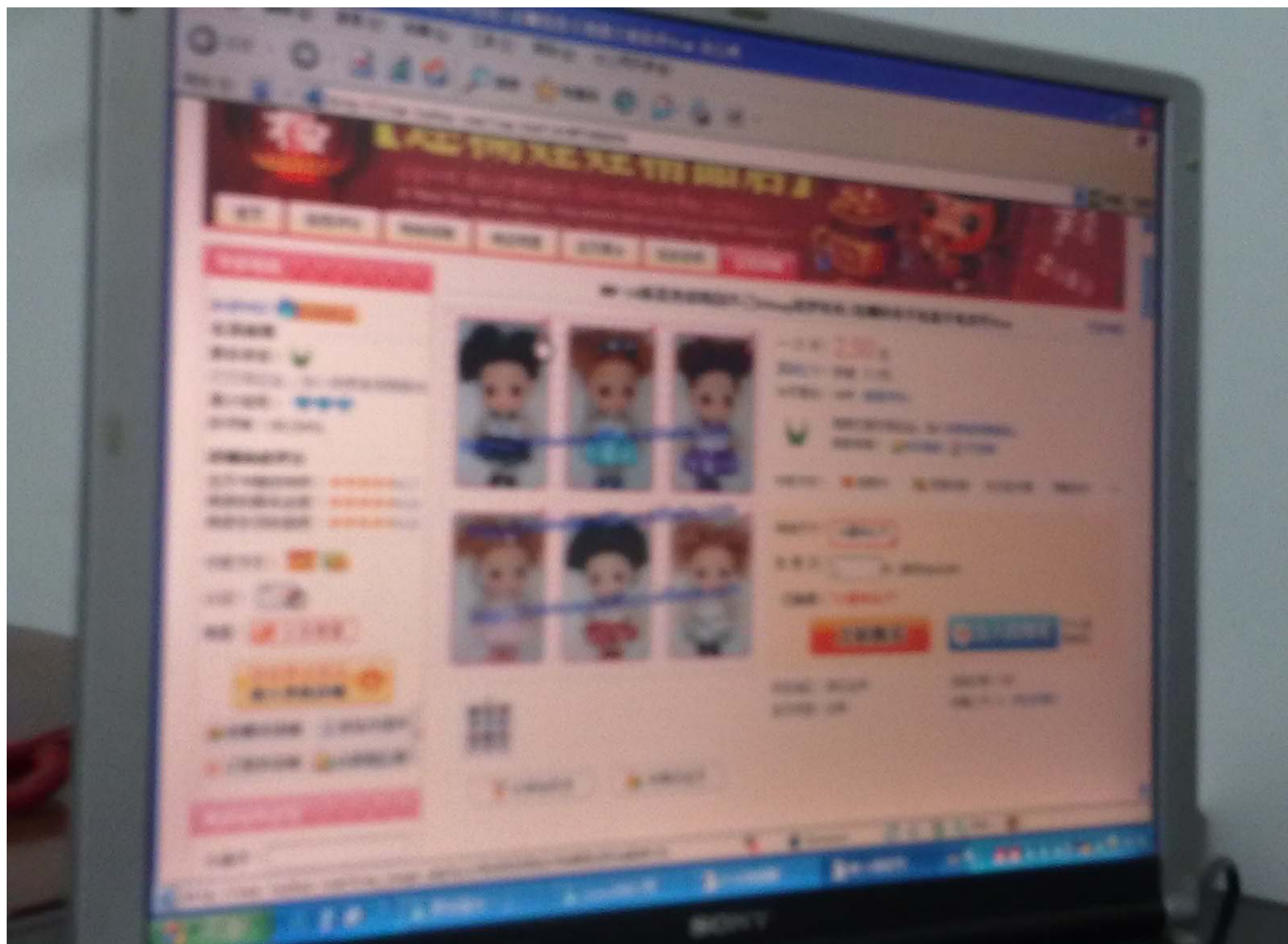
Case 2: How does the internet leverage entrepreneurial activity among the poor in China?

Netpreneurs in Yiwu









淘宝网

Taobao.com







The context of Yiwu netpreneurs



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- Multi-faceted support from a large internet service provider (taobao)
 - A platform for communication customers and suppliers
 - Certificates of credit-worthiness
 - Training
- An industrial cluster with a history as a trading hub
 - Commodities market
 - E-commerce school
 - Government support
 - Suppliers and logistics companies
 - Intensive social networking
- The 'Wall Street' of counterfeit trading

- Aiming to understand the political economy emerging with ICT innovation in the conditions of socio-economic reform in China
- How does web2.0, which is heralded as enabler of a libertarian socio-economic regime, come to play a developmental role in the unfolding of state-led capitalism in China?