Damaged Democracy
Fromm Institute, USF
May 6, 2019

Networks, Social Media, Propaganda, Polarization and American Politics

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Different Conceptualizations of What Modern Democracy Needs from a Public Sphere

Rousseau          Federalists          Kant/Habermas

Illustration 1: Competing Accounts of the Prerequisites of Effective Political Cognition and Motivation
Varying Degrees of Openness in Modern Public Spheres

1. Centrally Managed; Governmental Control
2. Corporate Control with Commercial Gatekeepers
3. Representative Expertise Open to Popular Inputs
4. Bottom-up Spontaneous Attention Formation
5. Flooded, Distracted, Cognitive Overload, Unreliable (‘Drinking from the Fire Hose’)

Illustration 2: A Continuum of Degrees of Openness in a Modern, Mediatized Public Sphere
Illustration 3: Variable Relations Between Openness of Public Sphere and Public Opinion and Will Formation