

Lecture Steinhardt: Communication and Media Theories

Portfolio – Submission 4

Beware online „filter bubbles“ and the „Echo Chamber“

Resources:

Cass R. Sunstein: Republic.com 2.0, S. 1-45, Princeton 2007

Eli Pariser: Video-documentry, TED-Talk Beware online „filter bubbles“, http://www.ted.com/talks/eli_pariser_beware_online_filter_bubbles

Reference:

Document: Republic.com_2_0_Kapitel_1-2 in TUWEL

Video-documentry: In TUWEL or by the link mentioned above

Assignment:

Read the text by Cass Sunstein (in particular the pages 1-7, 19-28 and 32-37) and watch the video with Eli Pariser „Beware online ‘filter bubbles‘“. Carry out the following questions and tasks.

TASK 4/1: What does Pariser understand by the term „filter-bubble“ and what is the cause of the phenomenon described by this term?

In particular, explain additionally in which way the filter-bubble - following Pariser - has to be seen as a risk for our access to the world.

TASK 4/2:

a) What does Sunstein understand by the term „Echo Chamber“?

b) Compare the terms „Echo Chamber“ by Sunstein and „filter-bubble“ by Pariser. Elucidate the similarities/commonalities and - if existing - also the differences.

TASK 4/3: Explain how Sunstein defines and differentiates the republic as a form of government from the monarchy as well as from the direct democracy. In particular: How does he justify that the American Constitution established a republic and not a direct democracy? Furthermore explain, why the „deliberation“ is a precondition for informed and carefully thought out decisions in a democracy and why the access to and the confrontation with heterogeneous information is a requirement for all that.

TASK 4/4: In which way do the statements by Pariser and Sunstein regarding the Internet apply to Amazon’s personalised recommendations: What are the consequences in this case? Can there risks be identified too (elucidate)?

TASK 4/5: Explain Pariser’s statement that the control of information, that people receive, shifts from “human gatekeepers” towards “algorithmic gatekeepers”. How does Pariser judge this shift of information control? Which arguments does he use to explain his assessment?

TASK 4/6: Explain and argue your own approach to solve or minimise the aforementioned problems (TASK 4/5).

Portfolio – Submission 3:

- At least 1000 Worte (without the task description) and written in whole sentences.
- Detailed argumentation requested (argumentation links to statements and justifies them)
- Max. 9 Punkte