



Center for Global Culture
and Communication

An Interdisciplinary Initiative of Northwestern University
School of Communication

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BUFFETT INSTITUTE
FOR GLOBAL AFFAIRS



NICK COULDRY

MEDIA AND COMMUNICATIONS, LONDON SCHOOL OF ECONOMICS

THE EMERGING SOCIAL ORDER OF DATA COLONIALISM: WHY CRITICAL SOCIAL THEORY STILL MATTERS!

MONDAY, MAY 13, 2019

12-1.30PM

FRANCES SEARLE BUILDING, ROOM 1-483
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY
(LUNCH SERVED)

This lecture will discuss the question of social order, and in particular the social order of our lives with data. He will explain, drawing on the work of Norbert Elias, how the concept of social order is the most useful way of approaching the current transformations of the social world, but that in thinking about order, social theory must also hold onto a human and ethical perspective, in considering the consequences of changes in social order for everyday life. From this starting point, he will move on to outline an analysis of what is going on with Big Data today, and the thesis, developed in *The Costs of Connection*, that we are entering a new phase of data colonialism, which will enable a completely different social and economic order based on the extraction of human life by capital through the processing of data for economic value. In this main part of the talk, links will be made to the social theory of Marx, as well as to postcolonial and decolonial theory. Who stands to gain from the new social order of data colonialism? In what ways does it compare with the opening of historic colonialism?

NICK COULDRY is a sociologist of media and culture. He is Professor of Media Communications and Social Theory at the London School of Economics and Political Science, and in 2018-2019 also a Faculty Associate at Harvard's Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society and a Visiting Professor at MIT. He is the author or editor of fourteen books including *The Mediated Construction of Reality* (with Andreas Hepp, 2016), *Media, Society, World: Social Theory and Digital Media Practice* (2012) and *Why Voice Matters* (2010). His latest books are *The Costs of Connection: How Data is Colonizing Human Life and Appropriating Life for Capitalism* (with Ulises Mejias, forthcoming August 2019) and *Media: Why It Matters* (forthcoming October 2019).

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