

**THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF PROGRESSIVE, DEMOCRATIC CAPITALISM  
AND THE SUCCESS OF THE INTERNET:**

**Toward a Theory of Dynamic Innovation and Distributive Justice  
in the Digital Mode of Production**

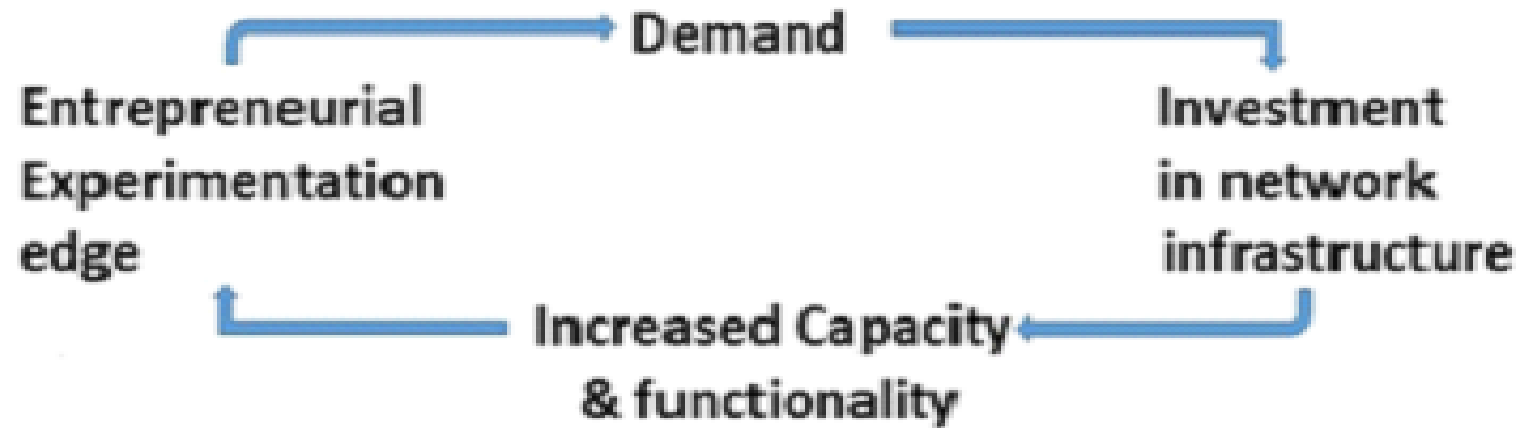
**Mark Cooper**

**Director of Research, Consumer Federation of America**

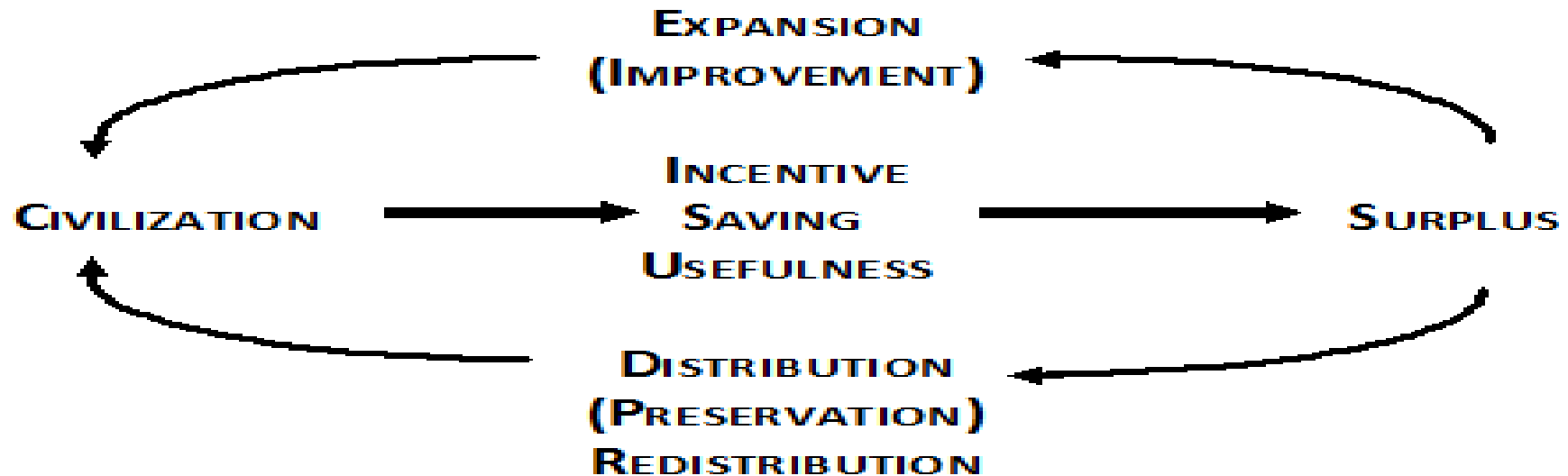
**Adjunct Fellow, Silicon Flatiron**

**February 9, 2015**

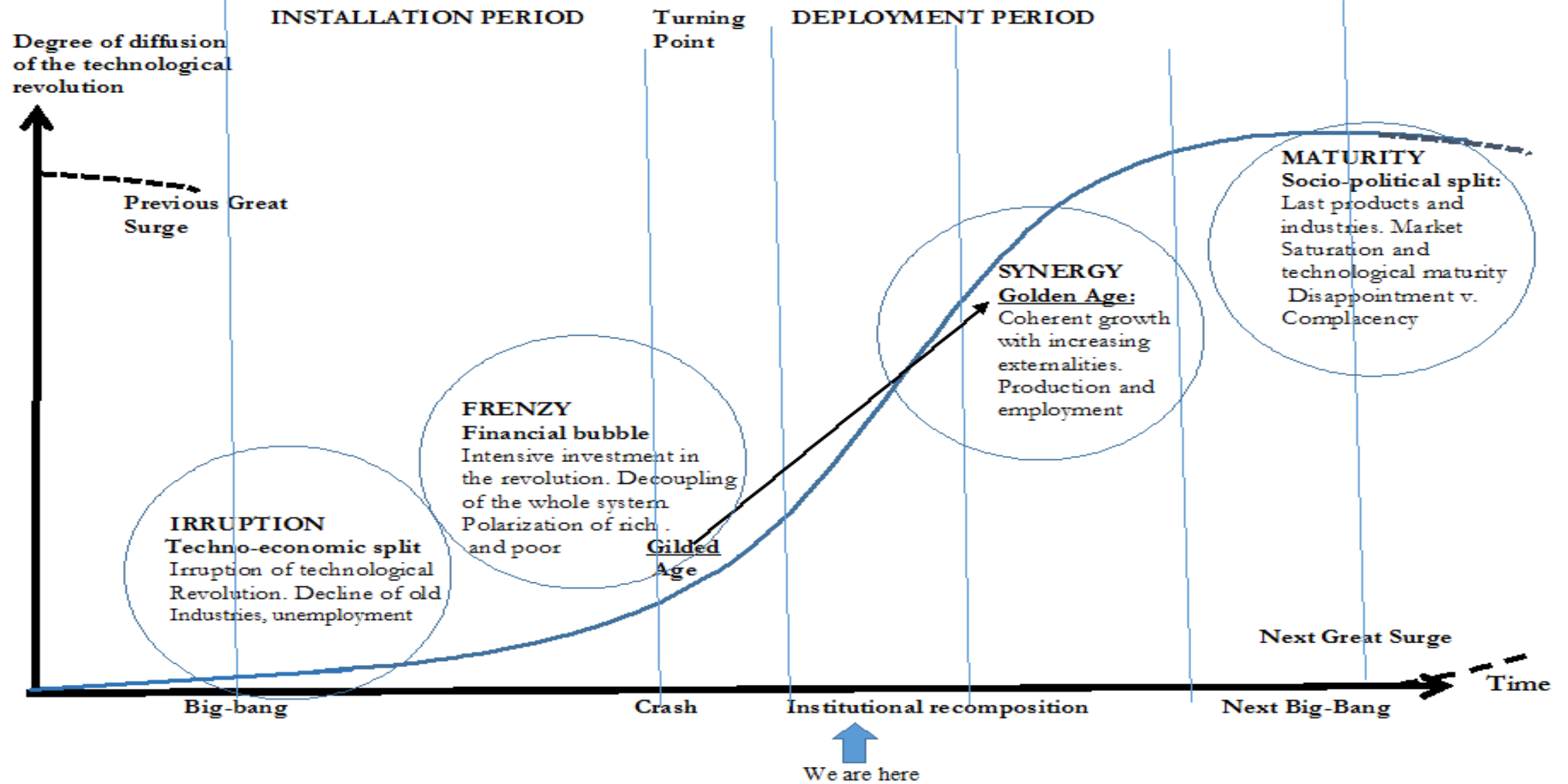
## THE VIRTUOUS CYCLE OF INNOVATION AND INVESTMENT



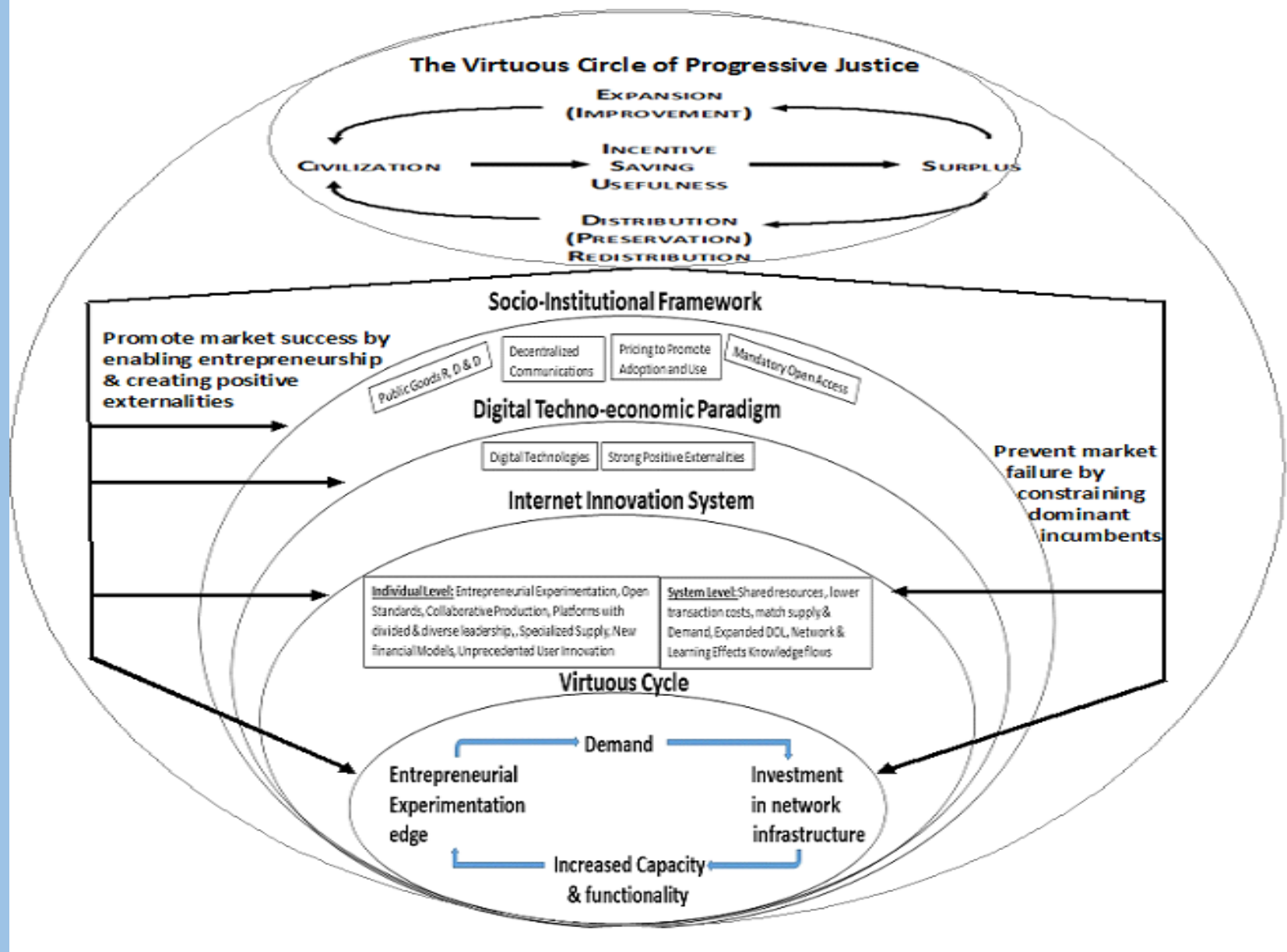
## THE VIRTUOUS CIRCLE OF PROGRESSIVE JUSTICE



**EXHIBIT IV-2: RECURRING PHASES OF EACH GREAT SURGE OF THE TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTIONS IN THE CORE COUNTRIES**



# PROGRESSIVE DEMOCRATIC CAPITALISM: THE CONTEXT OF THE DIGITAL MODE OF PRODUCTION



# PROGRESSIVE POLICIES PROMOTING MARKET SUCCESS OF DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

## Sector Specific Policies

- Neutrality of the communications protocols and network devices
- No need to engage in costly bilateral negotiations over the cost and quality of access
- Interoperability
- Open access to open standards
- Freedom to experiment

## External Supports

- Sustained support for basic research, development and initial deployment of key technologies
- Commitment to strategic defense of decentralized networks
- Support for the Internet Protocols and the development of a browser
- Quasi-governmental management of the network, while norms were being developed
- A significant market in the public sector
- Long standing New Deal tradition of pricing to promote use:
  - bill-and-keep for interconnecting networks
  - flat rate pricing for end users

# **PREVENTING MARKET FAILURE IS IMPORTANT, TOO, AND INVOLVES A LOT MORE THAN CONTROLLING THE MARKET POWER OF INCUMBENTS**

## **Incumbent network operators**

**can dampen the willingness and ability of the edge to experiment:**

- imposing counterproductive “worry” about the network and its devices
- increasing costs substantially by forcing edge entrepreneurs to engage in bilateral negotiations
- undermining interoperability
- chilling innovation threatening the “hold up” of successful edge activities.

**have a conservative, myopic bias and are less innovative and dynamic than the edge based on**

- a preference for preserving the old structure
- pursuit of incremental, process innovation rather than radical, product innovation
- proprietary culture that prefers restrictions on the flow of knowledge.

**face weaker competition than edge companies, which means they**

- face less pressure to innovate
- have the ability to influence industrial structure to favor their interests at the expense of the public interest
- can use vertical leverage to gain competitive advantage over independent edge entrepreneurs
- have the ability to extract rents, where they possess market power or where switching costs are high.

## **BUILDING BLOCKS OF THE VIRTUOUS CYCLE**

### Micro-Level

- User-driven to an unprecedented degree
- Importance of platforms
- New relationship to capital markets
- Dramatic increases in entry
- Voluntary, Multi-stakeholder management of Open Standards

### Autonomously Generated, Sector-Specific Externalities

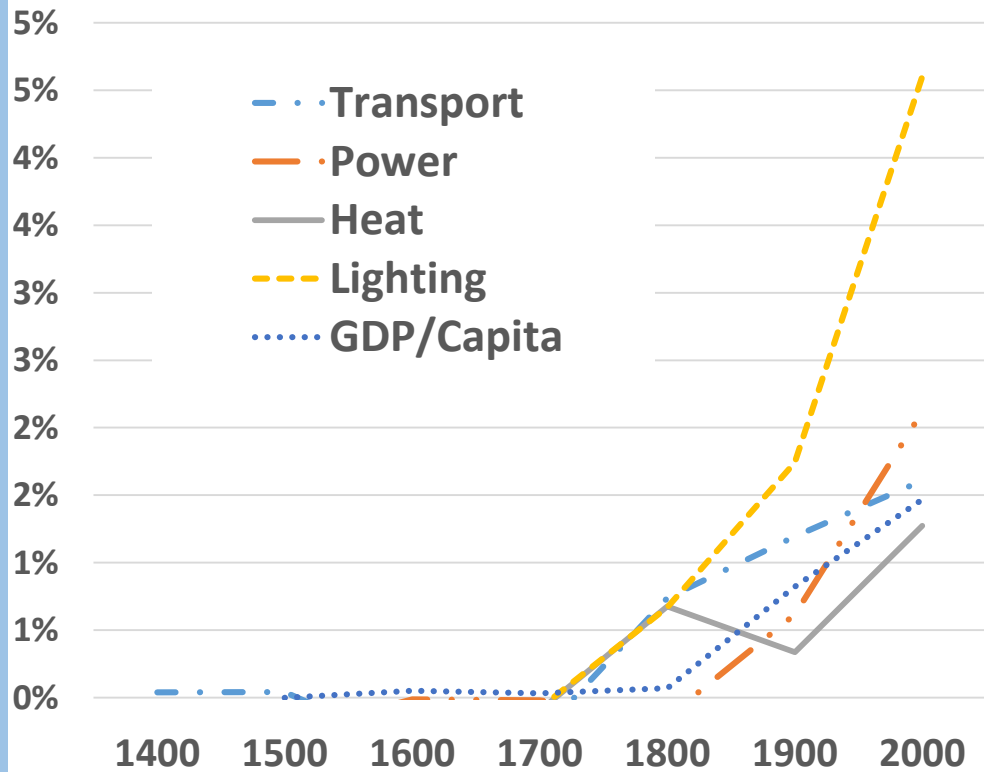
- Expanded division of labor
- Divided and diverse technical platform leadership
- Specialization of supply firms
- Network effects
- Knowledge flows
- Learning externalities

## DEMOCRATIC EQUALITY

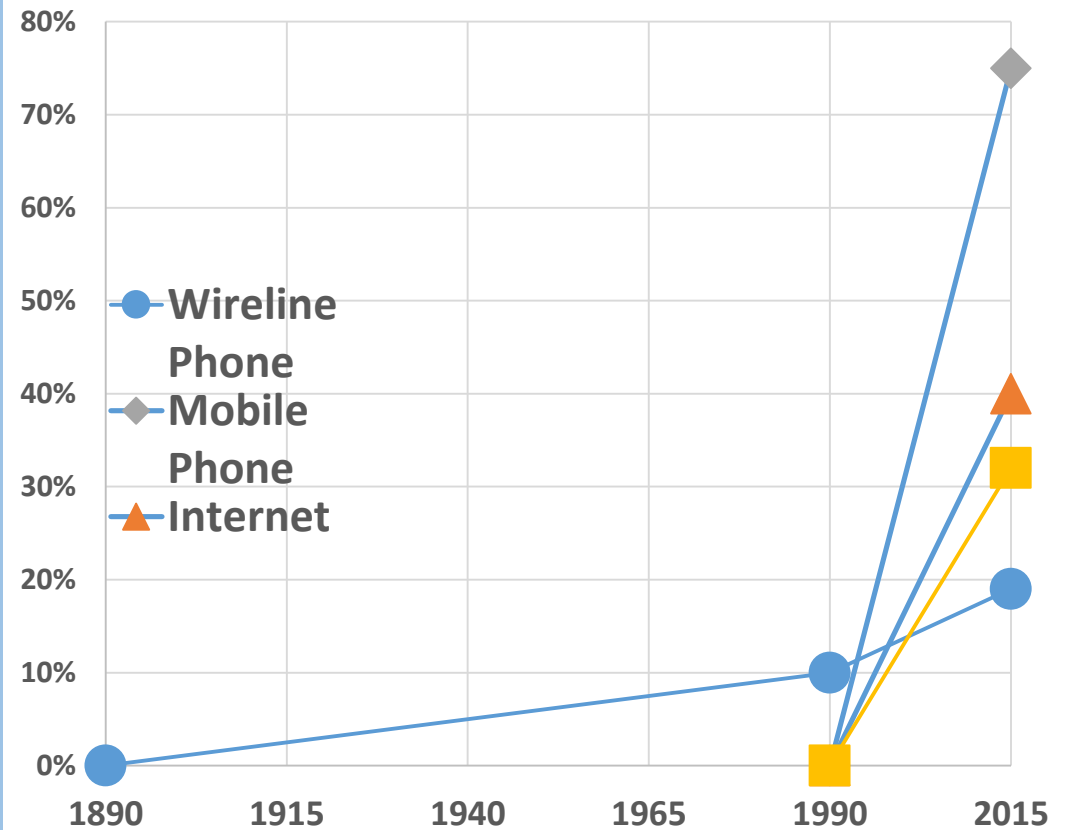
<b>Focus</b>	<b>Social Purpose</b>	<b>Income Level</b>
<b><u>Democracy</u></b>	Collective self-determination by means of open discourse among equals, Cooperative social experimentation, Epistemic justice to create institutions to foster norms of communicative justice & expand scope of prosocial norms	All the way
<b><u>Property-owning market economy</u></b>	Individual & Collective responsibility, Agency, Recognize role of capital labor & firms, Understand capitalism's dynamism, progress, & risk management	All the way & Global
<b><u>Range Constraints</u></b>		
Equality based on sufficiency	Entitlements set the thresholds to achieve Sufficiency, Autonomy, Equal Standing, Reciprocity & Personal Independence in social relationships of equality	Bottom
Independence based on security	Ensure freedom to choose, Security, Promote Solidarity & Community	Middle
Constrain inequality	Prevent leverage for advantage, Avoid Crypto-Plutocracy	Top

**95% of the improvement in the material conditions that affect well-being (e.g. income, light, heat, transportation, communications) has taken place in the last 2% of human history, the era of industrial capitalism**

**100-Year Annual Rates of Change**



**Global Penetration of Modern Communications Technologies**

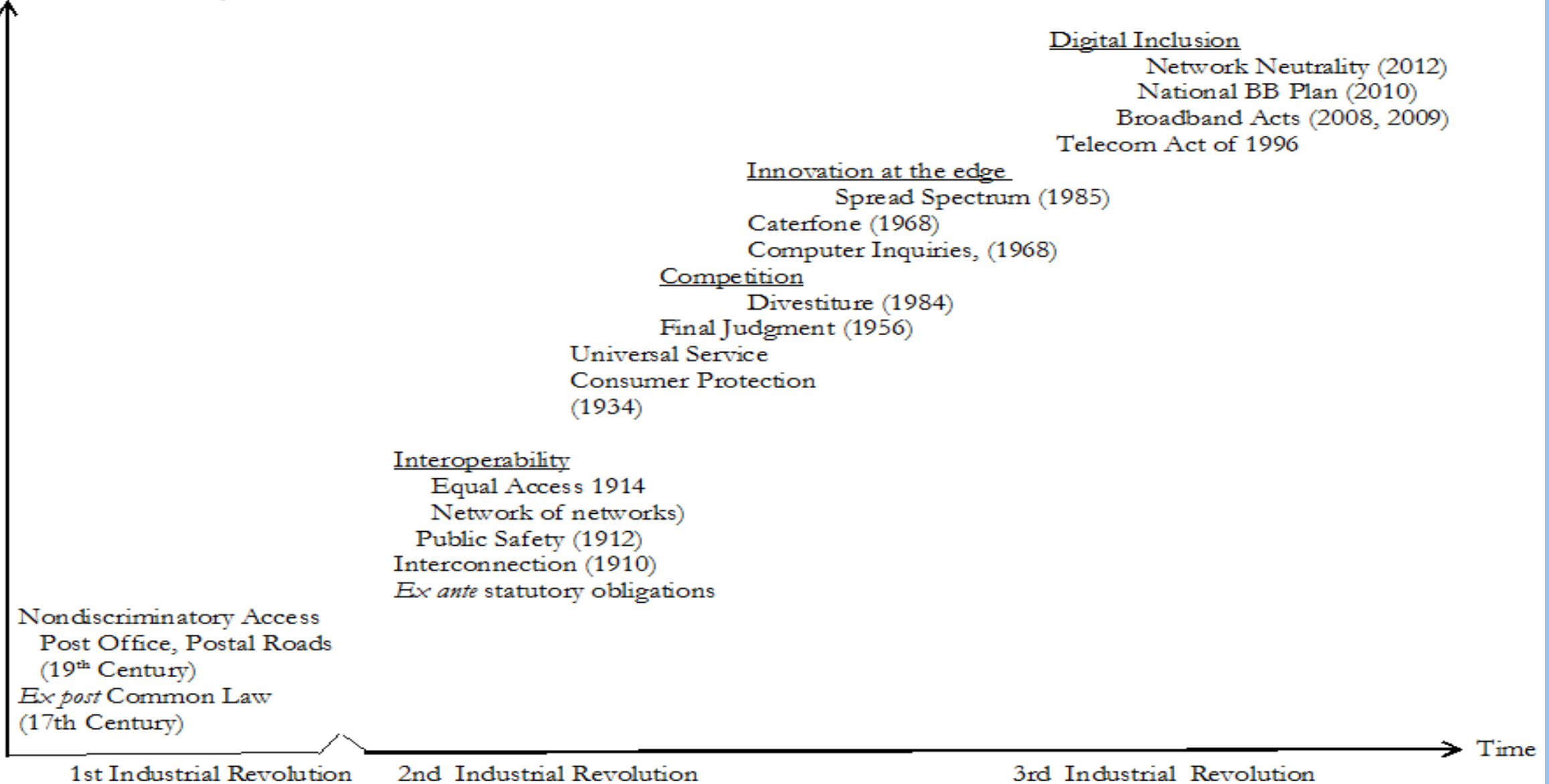


## **THE EVOLUTION OF UNIVERSAL SERVICE GOALS IN U.S. COMMUNICATIONS POLICY**

- **Nondiscrimination under Anglican Common Law (18<sup>th</sup> century)**
- **Commitment to post office and postal roads (19<sup>th</sup> century)**
- **Nondiscrimination in Network Operation: Mann-Elkins Act of 1910**
- **Equal Access & Interconnection: U.S. v ATT, Consent Decree, 1914**
- **Basic Goal of Universal Service: Communications Act 1934**
- **Universal Service as an Evolving Concept: Telecommunications Act of 1996:**
- **Focus on Adoption and Utilization: Broadband Data Improvement (2008) and the Broadband Technologies Opportunities (2009)**

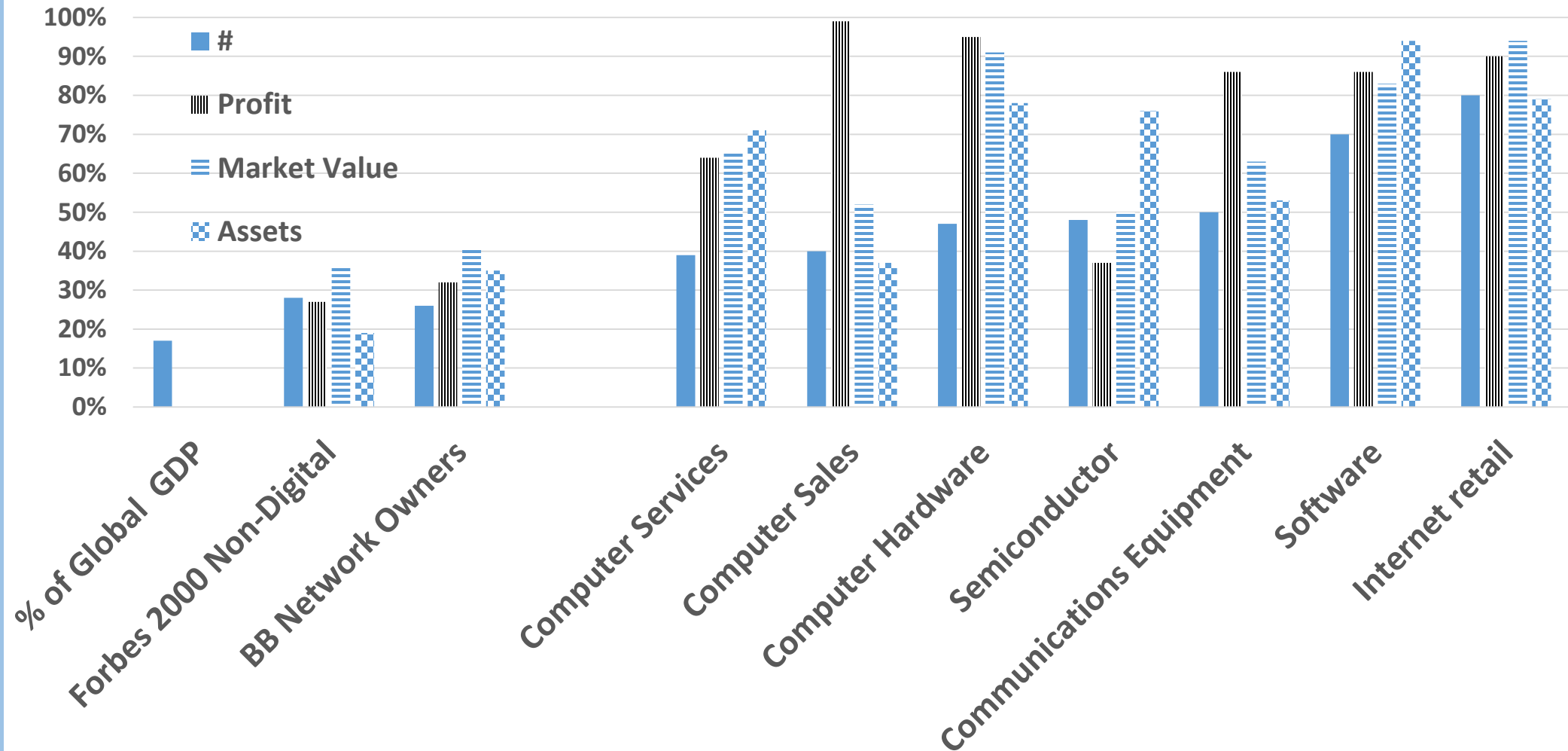
# THE PROGRESSIVE EVOLUTION OF PUBLIC SERVICE PRINCIPLES IN THE U.S COMMUNICATIONS SECTOR

Extent of connectivity



# The Digital Revolution is an American Revolution

## (U.S. Share of Forbes Global 2000)\*



\*The output of the *Forbes Global 2000* equals 44% of the global GDP.