# Article information:

Spiral of silence on social media and the moderating role of disagreement and publicness in the network: Analyzing expressive and withdrawal behaviors - Hsuan-Ting Chen, 2018
<https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1461444818763384>

# Article summary:

1. The study examines the spiral of silence process on social media, including both supporting and disagreeing opinion expression and examining not only expressive but also withdrawal behaviors on social media.

2. The study investigates the moderating roles of disagreement and publicness as two affordances on social media that influence the spiral of silence process.

3. Results suggest that fear of social isolation has an indirect effect on discouraging disagreeing opinion expression but not supporting opinion expression and on encouraging withdrawal behaviors through enhancing willingness to self-censor on social media.

# Article rating:

May be slightly imbalanced: The article presents the information in a generally reliable way, but there are minor points of consideration that could be explored further or claims that are not fully backed by appropriate evidence. Some perspectives may also be omitted, and you are encouraged to use the research topics section to explore the topic further.

# Article analysis:

The article "Spiral of silence on social media and the moderating role of disagreement and publicness in the network: Analyzing expressive and withdrawal behaviors" by Hsuan-Ting Chen provides a comprehensive analysis of the spiral of silence process on social media. The study examines the factors that influence self-censorship and refraining from expression, including fear of social isolation (FSI) as an individual personality trait at an internal level, and political disagreement and publicness as two digital affordances on social media at an external level.

The article is well-written, with a clear research question, theoretical framework, methodology, and results. The study's use of two-wave panel data from Hong Kong provides a unique perspective on the spiral of silence process in a cross-cultural context. The article also extends the literature by including both supporting and disagreeing opinion expression and examining not only expressive but also withdrawal behaviors on social media.

However, there are some potential biases in the article that need to be addressed. First, the study focuses solely on Hong Kong, which may limit its generalizability to other contexts. Second, while the study acknowledges that FSI has been conceptualized in different ways, it does not provide a clear definition or operationalization of FSI. Third, although the study differentiates between expressive and withdrawal behaviors to understand how people stay silent, it does not explore why people choose one behavior over another.

Moreover, while the study examines the moderating roles of disagreement and publicness as two affordances on social media that influence the spiral of silence process, it does not consider other potential moderators such as age or gender. Additionally, while the study finds that higher levels of disagreement and publicness promote the spiral of silence process on social media, it does not explore why this is the case or what implications this has for online discourse.

Finally, while the article provides insights into how individuals navigate online political discussions in response to perceived majority opinions, it does not address potential risks associated with self-censorship or withdrawing from online discourse altogether. For example, if individuals refrain from expressing their opinions due to fear of social isolation or encountering disagreement online, this could lead to echo chambers where only like-minded individuals engage in political discussions.

In conclusion, while "Spiral of silence on social media and the moderating role of disagreement and publicness in the network: Analyzing expressive and withdrawal behaviors" provides valuable insights into how individuals navigate online political discussions in response to perceived majority opinions using two-wave panel data from Hong Kong; there are some potential biases that need to be addressed. Future research should consider other potential moderators such as age or gender; explore why people choose one behavior over another when staying silent; examine potential risks associated with self-censorship or withdrawing from online discourse altogether; and consider broader implications for online discourse beyond individual-level behavior.

# Topics for further research:

* Age and gender as moderators in the spiral of silence process on social media
* Risks associated with self-censorship and withdrawing from online discourse
* Echo chambers and their impact on online political discussions
* The role of social media algorithms in shaping online discourse
* The impact of online anonymity on the spiral of silence process
* The relationship between online and offline political participation

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