Social media and democracy

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Social media's nature & nurture

Socio-technological as much as socio-political. Inosculated relationships are complicated.

Global South as Petri Dish

Exceptionalism is weakness and strength

Prefiguring 1/6 in the US

- Online harms in Sri Lanka, Myanmar prefigured online harms, dynamics, and weaponisation leading up to 1/6 violence.

- First report on Facebook's weaponisation in 2014, studying dynamics already entrenched which expanded over 2013.

- Complicity of SM companies in harm production, promotion and normalisation as much as its role in fighting mis/mal/disinfo.

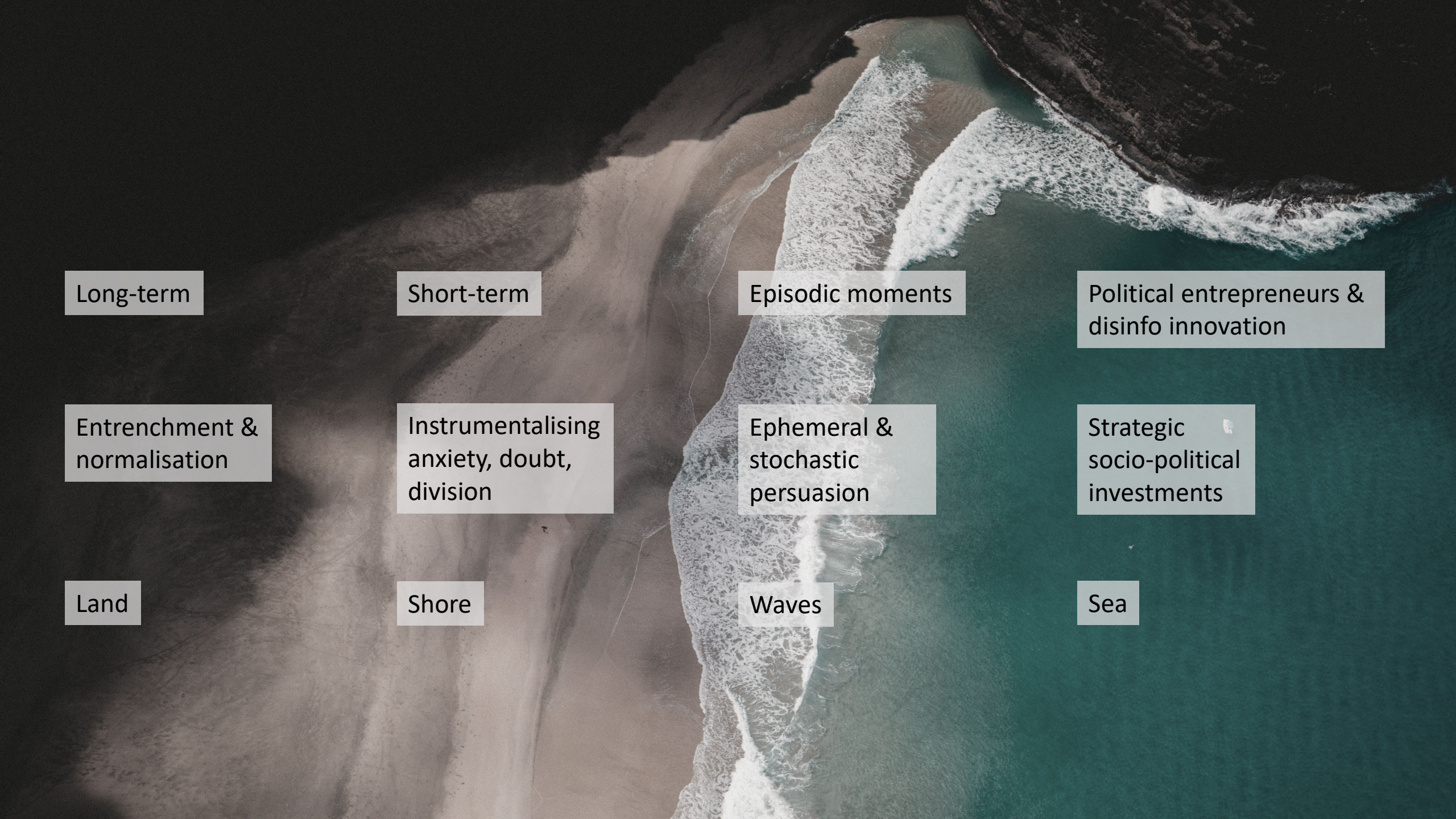- Algorithmic harms and corporate culture harms.

"Normalisation of deviance"
Diane Vaughan

What undergirds family, children, friends, elections, democracy, institutions, media, trust, scepticism

Long-term

Short-term

Episodic moments

Political entrepreneurs & disinfo innovation

Entrenchment & normalisation

Instrumentalising anxiety, doubt, division

Ephemeral & stochastic persuasion

Strategic socio-political investments

Land

Shore

Waves

Sea

Platform convergences and divergences

Facebook, Twitter etc are not homogenous or immutable platforms

Ecological perspectives

Grounding essential to social media study. Pollination, spread, symbiosis.

The prosocial vs the antisocial

Simultaneously good and bad, always harming and healing
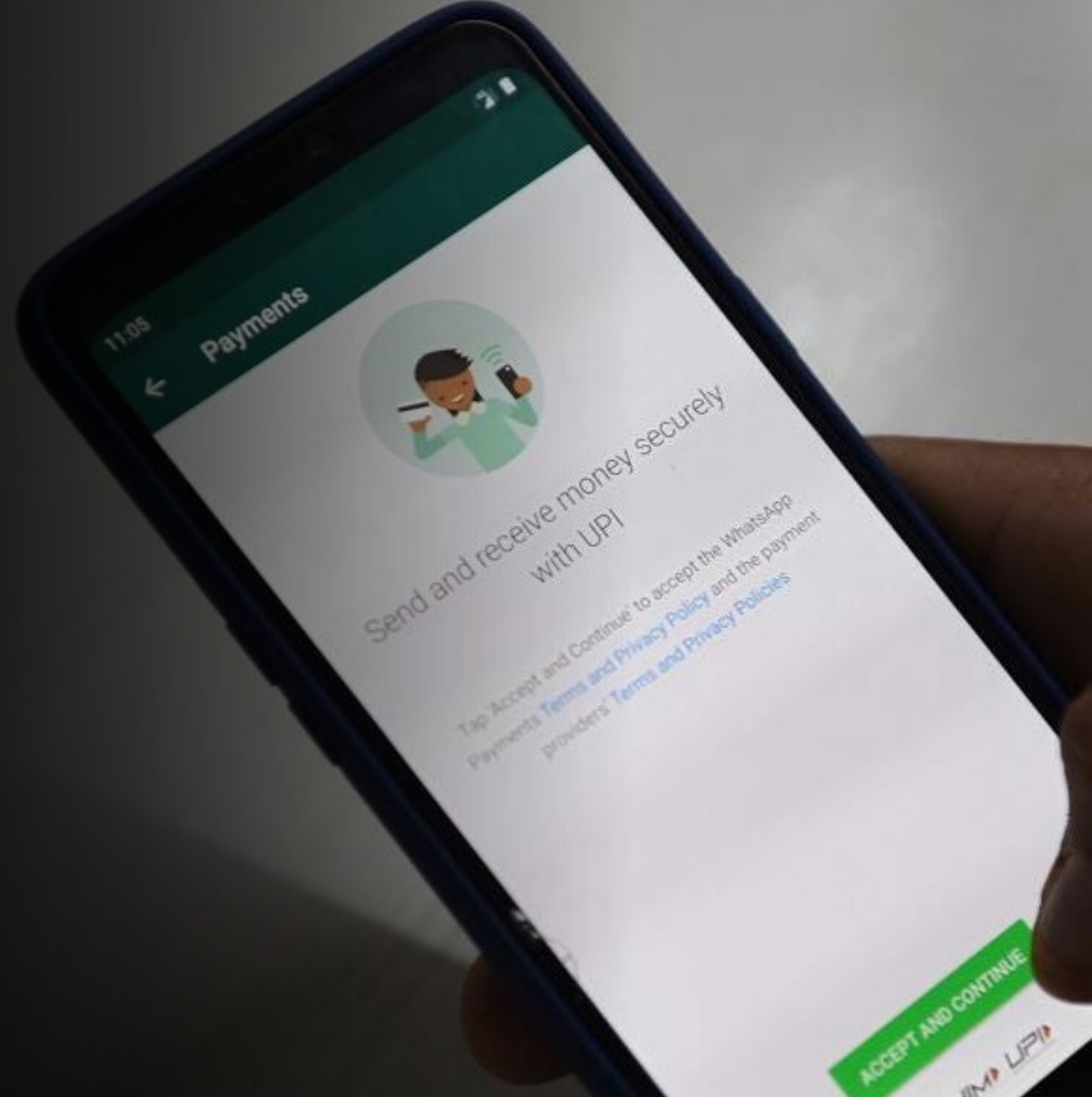
Social media for SMEs

Woman led businesses

Banking for the unbanked

E-commerce for the bottom of pyramid

Social media & activism

Integral to social and political activism

Complicated landscapes

- Simultaneously helping and harming prosocial initiatives, democratic institutions, electoral integrity and syndromic responses to address the pandemic.

- Embodied realities are different to data signatures.

- Data signatures provide clues to offline developments.

- Offline socio-political realities shape online content and commentary.

Corporate regulation vs. government regulation

The danger of agenda-setting by West

Thank you!

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