



Emerging Scholars Network

Abstracts of papers accepted for presentation in the Online Conference Papers of the
International Association for Media and Communication Research¹

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Jodha Akbar (2008): A reflection on the contemporary two nation theory

Authors

Wajiha Raza Rizvi - Film Museum Society | Beaconhouse National University

Abstract

The paper discusses Ashutosh Gowariker's Indian feature film Jodha-Akbar (2008) and Akbar's interfaith dialog against the two nation theory that led to the Partition of British India, or the creation of Pakistan and India in 1947. The film focuses on the 16th century royal romance and matrimony between the Muslim Mughal emperor Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar and Hindu Rajput princess Jodha Bai, the daughter of the king Bharmal of Amer. Akbar introduces a syncretic religion Din-i-Ilahi (lit. Religion of Allah) and merges some of the elements of the religions (Islam, Hinduism, Christianity, Jainism, Sikhism, and Zoroastrianism) of his empire to promote interfaith dialog and tolerance among his people in 1582 CE. Akbar and Jodha practice interfaith, and/or continue practicing their original faiths after their marriage and develop admiration for their partners despite the problems and reluctance shown by many family members and the religious commands. The paper examines how the 16th century royal romance between the Muslim emperor and Hindu princess Jodha-Akbar reflects on the 19th century two nation theory that led to the Partition of British India; if Jodha-Akbar shows the emperor Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar disliked the ideas of division between the two nations (something like the two nation theory), and believed in something more contemporary like "Aman ki asha" (Hope of peace, a campaign launched by India and Pakistan for their peace efforts in the new millennium) than the two nation theory. The paper reviews literature to compare Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar's system of governance against the British system of governance and the situations that led to the creation of the two nation theory and the 1947-Partition. The paper compares the ideology of Pakistan with Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar's ideology of 16th century India, and Muhammad Ali Jinnah (the creator of Pakistan) and Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar's sense of nationalism. It uses the authoritarian, normative and strategic communication theories for the study of Jodha-Akbar, the distinctly different systems of governance in the 16th and 19th centuries and the two nation theory. Jodha-Akbar shows the Muslim emperor Jalaluddin Muhammad Akbar did not believe in something like the Partition of India on the grounds of the two nation theory—Hindus and Muslims being two separate nations or cultures with distinctly different foods, drinks, dresses, languages, religions and conduct choices in one country. Akbar believed in the interfaith dialog and only one not two nations existed in his India. The Indians' sense of nationalism was compromised in the heat of freedom movement that led to the 1947-Partition of British India.

Submission ID

240

Toward a Russia-China Axes of Digital Power? The Money Network in U.S. Internet and Its Global Implications

Authors

Min Tang - University of Washington Bothell

Abstract

This paper examines the increasingly interlocked interaction between the financial and digital sectors that takes place on a transnational level. While the contours and nature of such connection is still unfolding, this study focuses on one emerging aspect in the post-crisis global rebalancing, the integration of the Russian and Chinese capital in the U.S. Internet industry. Specifically, it builds on the case study of a major venture investor in the digital industry with Russian origin: Digital Sky Technologies (DST). By tracking the history and current status of DST's investment activities in U.S., the paper maps the transnational capital and investor linkages behind the U.S.-based Internet industry. Taking a political economy approach, the paper also examines the ownership structure of DST which shows closed ties to Chinese capital. It therefore highlights the collaborative, rather than adversarial, relation between investors from U.S., Russia and China that straddle across digital and financial sectors. As this case study provides an update to the ongoing trends of financialization and transnationalization in global digital industry, it demonstrates an inherent neoliberal logic of expansion and reproduction that transcends the national boundaries and inter-state rivalry narrative. The paper concludes with a discussion on the implications of such intersectional and international connections on the power dynamics in digital capitalism, as it adds complexities to the geopolitics around information networks that is often led by nation-states.

The format of this presentation will be a video presentation, with the main image frame featuring the author's PPT slides, author's voice over to explain the study, and possibly a small side window where audiences can also see the author.

Submission ID

313

Safeguarding Ethnic Cultural Identities through Community

Radio: The Case of Radio Dhimsa in Odisha, India

Authors

Aniruddha Jena - Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad

Abstract

This paper examines community radio as a form of ethnic media for safeguarding ethnic cultural identities. This study is based on an ethnographic study of Radio Dhimsa, a Desia (a tribal ethnic community) community radio station in the Koraput district of the eastern Indian state of Odisha. This paper aims at understanding the idea of ethnic community media and how community radio can play an important role in safeguarding the ethnic cultural identity of a particular indigenous community. Being in a locationally disadvantaged space, Desia community is vulnerable to the cultural hegemony of the mainstream Odia community in the state through its cultural mainstreaming project. In order to tackle that challenge, Radio Dhimsa offers an alternative to the Desia community to revitalise the ethnic cultural identity of the community by producing, circulating and consuming content in the Desia dialect.

I draw on the existing literature in the contexts of countries like Australia, New Zealand, Canada, North America by scholars who have argued about the potentialities of community media as a form of ethnic media to counter the majoritarian and more dominant cultures and identities (Deuze, 2006; Skinner, 2014; Forde, Foxwell & Meadows, 2009; Bukhari, 2019). However, there are few studies that deal with how community media engage with ethnic cultural identities in the Global South. This paper proposes to add a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how ethnic community radio transacts with the idea of ethnic cultural identities. The paper will examine ways in which an ethnic community radio station addresses questions related to the fractures and politics of culture. I also address the role ethnic community radio plays in safeguarding marginalized cultural identities, thereby countering the cultural hegemony propagated by the more dominant and mainstream media.

This study takes Radio Dhimsa as the research site to understand the Desia community and its cultural identities. An NGO called South Orissa Voluntary Action (SOVA), with the support of UNICEF, established Radio Dhimsa in the year 2012 to give the Desia community of Koraput a platform to express their voices and strengthen Desia cultural identities.

Methodologically, the paper will mobilize data from ethnographic observations, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and content analysis of selected programs of Radio Dhimsa to understand the alternative ways and means of how Radio Dhimsa constructs, frames, and represents ethnic cultural identities of the Desia community.

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Submission ID

398

Mediating Peace in Conflict Reporting: Newspaper Coverage and Framing of Conflicts in South-East and South-South Nigeria

Authors

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Ifeoma Dunu - Nnamdi Azikiwe University, Awka

Abstract

This study aimed at examining how selected Nigerian national daily newspapers have adopted and applied Peace Journalism (PJ) principles in reporting Nigerian conflicts with focus on the two conflict situations in South-East and South-South Nigeria – the Indigenous People of Biafra (IPOB) and Niger Delta Avengers (NDA) conflicts. The study was anchored on Framing, Social Responsibilities and Conflict theories. Mixed research methodologies – Survey and Content Analysis –, were employed for the study. Five hundred and eighty two (582) journalists were sampled in the survey, while 168 editions of four selected newspapers were content analyzed from 2014 to 2016 using a census and simple random sampling techniques respectively. The data were analysed using simple percentage through SPSS and presented in tables and pie charts. Findings from the study showed clear ambivalence between respondents’ claimed pattern of conflict reporting and the actual manifest reports in the sampled newspapers. The conflict news as reported by the Journalists yielded a war journalism result. The IPOB and NDA conflicts received the least attention of all other conflicts reported in the sampled newspapers. The findings by implication, brought to the foreground the disconnect between knowledge of peace journalism principles and the pragmatic translation of same in every day journalism practice among the journalists in South-East and South-South Nigeria. The study concluded that peace journalism paradigm has not yet been adopted by the sampled journalists as the new principle in reporting conflicts that could help in the de-escalation and general conflict management. It was therefore, recommended that journalists should be trained and retrained in this new approach to conflict reporting. Again, this new paradigm should be introduced in the Nigerian Universities’ Mass Communication curriculum to further enhance the training of student journalists.

Submission ID

496

(INC/ESN) Diaspora Diplomacy in Digital Era: A Comparative Analysis of Overseas Chinese Media in China-Indochina Peninsula

Authors

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Abstract

Overseas Chinese media (or Chinese diaspora media) are run by and meet the needs of Chinese diaspora who are geographically scattered around the world but culturally bonded with China. Overseas Chinese media have become an important part of the global communication network of China for diplomatic purpose, especially in Southeast Asia where the economic, cultural and political interactions between the Chinese diaspora and their motherland has lasted for more than a century. In the past few years, the overseas Chinese media in Southeast Asia has been promoted by development of network technology and artificial intelligence that allow the media to engage with broader audiences. Moreover, while diaspora diplomacy has been an important strategy of Chinese government, these Chinese diaspora media have also been affected by the larger international context during the China–United States trade war that began in 2018 and reached the Phase One trade deal in 2020. How do the overseas Chinese media in Southeast Asia assist in diaspora diplomacy for China in the digital era? What role that the media play in the global communication network of China? To address these questions, this study conducts a comparative analysis on the news report on China by the overseas Chinese media in Southeast Asia in 2018 and 2020. It first provides historical analysis about the migration of Chinese diaspora and the development of overseas Chinese media in Southeast Asia, and then conducts textual analysis on the overseas Chinese media in seven countries along the China-Indochina Peninsula Economic Corridor (hereinafter ‘China-Indochina Peninsula’), including Vietnam, Laos, Cambodia, Thailand, Myanmar, Malaysia and Singapore based on their official websites and social media accounts (i.e., Twitter, Facebook, Sina Weibo, WeChat official accounts). The results show that in 2018, the overseas Chinese media in Southeast Asia helped represent China’s image to some extent; however, they also had three features: (a) social monologue, which means that the overseas Chinese media lacked audiences, (b) internal and external imbalances, which means that the global communication of the overseas Chinese media actually focused on the audiences from mainland China rather than the audiences from Southeast Asia and the rest of the world, and (c) dialogical counterpoint, a concept borrowed from Said (1994) and Kraidy (2005), which means that the audiences especially those on social media actively commented on the media content with varied or even counter views,

creating a space for all the audiences to construct multi-dimensional perspectives of China. This study will further analyse and compare whether these communicative features have changed or not in 2020 and explore in depth. (work in progress)

Submission ID

627

Communicating Markets: Competition Discourses and Digital Platform Power

Authors

Pawel Popiel - University of Pennsylvania

Abstract

Competition is at the heart of contemporary communications policy dilemmas (Khan, 2017; Napoli & Dwyer, 2018; Winseck, 2017). The disciplining value of market competition is often taken for granted in contemporary communications policy discourse and invoked to both delegitimize state intervention in communications sectors and to justify it. However, discourses of competition and their role in shaping communications policy are understudied. This gap is particularly salient as reforming antitrust and promoting competition gain currency as an increasingly global policy elite response to the problems associated with digital platforms like Amazon, Facebook, and Google – from the spread of disinformation to surveillance and the commodification of user data.

Through stakeholder and policy document analysis, this article examines the role of competition discourses in addressing the power of digital platforms in a series of 2019 U.S. congressional hearings on the subject, with implications for the wider global debate. Denaturalizing competition as simply a technocratic concept, the article traces how the politics underlying these discourses emerges at multiple stages. In particular, following critical policy studies, which emphasizes the power of discursive policy problem definition (Black, 2002; Fischer, 2003; Schmidt, 2015), the article maps how stakeholders' discourses articulate the problem they try to address, what solutions they present, and what these solutions imply about stakeholders' visions of digital communications.

The findings reveal that even the most reform-oriented of these discourses imply commercial notions of digital communications, expanding market logics within communications policy, while refocusing reform efforts away from democratic values and social justice. Following Cammaerts & Mansell (2020), the analysis foregrounds “discursive practices, both repressive and emancipatory [revealing] that many currently proposed policy and regulatory responses to digital platform power have contradictory consequences for economic value generation and for upholding public values” (p. 147), while denaturalizing “the prevailing digital platform common sense” (p. 146).

Cumulatively, the case study exposes the politics of competition in addressing digital platform

power and describes the stakes in framing the response to platforms in the language of antitrust reform.

Submission ID

1035

Tik Tok As a Geographic Medium: The Flaneur's Daily Life and Social Interactions

Authors

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Abstract

The popularity of such videos as "drinking and throwing bowls at Xi'an's Yongqing square" and "passing through buildings" at Chongqing's Liziba rail station have illuminated the "fuzzy" space that people had not noticed, and brought new ideas and creativity to daily life. The implantation of digital media in daily life enables urban residents to be endowed with more possibilities and creativity as individuals or collectives, which to some extent dissolves the mediocre and gloomy state of daily life, and reuses or programs urban space in their own way. In addition, Tik Tok has become a "moving" travel notes and a "living" visiting card of the city. Xi 'an and Chongqing have become the "city of Tik Tok" and "city of web celebrity". In the future, urban landmarks will not only exist in the physical space, but also in the virtual form of Tik Tok, a pan-entertainment social media. The interweaving of media and geography transforms more and more traditional media into geographical media. It also creates a new space and time experience for people. The personal life and social interactions that people use as intermediaries have also changed.

This paper focuses on the embedding of network digital media in daily life and the expansion of urban space. Tik Tok was used as the research platform and the wanderer carrying Tik Tok around the corners of cities were considered as the research object. Based on Michel de Certeau's practical theory of daily life, two questions were answered:

1. How do people integrate new media technology into the rhythm of daily life to show the creativity of daily life? How does this process affect people's awareness and exercise of their "right to the city"?
2. How will the space-time created by the interweaving of media and geographic space construct the social interaction in the urban space?

The author found that people showed the "creativity" of daily life through the use of media resources such as "music" and "technology" in Tik Tok, as well as the space practice of "walking". In this process, people recognize and exercise the right to "participate" in the city, and the city becomes a work jointly created by citizens. In the process of transforming media into geographical media, the visibility of urban space is enhanced, which not only changes the appearance of urban

public space, but also completes the social production of space. A social relationship based on geographical location is taking shape.

Submission ID

1059

(CRI/ ESN) The action of Online nationalism from the perspective of structural theory ——The structure and actors collusion in the "Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement" in Hong Kong

Authors

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Mengmeng Guo - School of Literature and Journalism, Sichuan University

Abstract

The purpose of this paper is to study the online collective action of internet communities which have strong nationalistic sentiment.

First of all, We take the news reports about the chaos since June 2019 from mainstream media in mainland China as research sample.

In the second step, Through the way of discourse package construction, we explore the discourse expression of users who attended the largest online campaign launched by "Di Ba" on August 18, 2019.

Thirdly, This study aims to gain a deeper understanding of the organizational form, mobilization strategy and ammunition preparation of the "Di Ba". At the same time, To fulfil our goal, we interviewed several candidates in the "Di Ba" expedition and performed participatory observation.

Finally, With the results of quantitative and qualitative analysis, we will use "Structural theory" to analyze the phenomenon of "Di Ba" expedition, and try to think about whether there is collusion of "structure" and "actors" in the expedition.

By analyzing the news reports of the mainstream media and the discourse analysis of the public opinion, this paper will analyze the collusion of "structure" and "actors" in the "Di Ba" from the perspective of structural theory.

With the data analysis, we illustrate that the online collective action, as an actor, is affected by the structure; the online collective action is restricted by the structural elements, and the online collective action can produce constructive effects on the structure and then regenerate the structure.

We argue that in the online collective action with nationalistic characteristics, there are multiple action identities in the duality of structure, which are reflected in the reflective monitoring of structure, the resonance between subculture and mainstream culture, and the integration of structural resources and rules.

Throughout the process of discovering the online collective action that appears to be formed spontaneously by netizens, the restriction and influence of structure Throughout, and the function of structure is ubiquitous. Therefore, it is far from exploring the root cause only to interpret the collective action of network from the perspective of actors. As Giddens sees it, the rules and resources used by actors in the "interactive scenarios" across "space" and "time" are structures.

As actors, the behavior of netizens itself is integrated into the structure, inevitably affected by institutional factors. The behavior of actors is always purposefully "embedded" in the specific social structure and social network, and affected by social relations.

NOTE:

1. "DI BA" is a kind of online interest community. The participants of "DI BA" are mostly netizens gathered together based on the interests of the game. In the online collective action of "DI BA", most of them express their opinions in the way similar to their experience of war games.

2. Since June 2019, Although the Hong Kong government has repeatedly said that the revision of the Fugitive Offenders Ordinance has been completely stopped, they continue to use the "anti revisionist example" as a cover to make progress, increase the intensity, escalate violence and spread more and more widely.

Submission ID

1113

INC/ESN - China's Media "Going Out" in Africa: a comprehensive scoping review of the empirical literature on Sino-African news content

Authors

Robert Boughen - University of Wes

Abstract

A growing interest in China's relations with Africa and, more generally, its global media "going out" campaign has catalysed a relative explosion of studies exploring Chinese news content made in or for Africa. Up until now, this body of scholarship has avoided systematic review. This paper presents the results of a comprehensive scoping review of the literature's empirical studies (n=22) which I conducted using best-evidence synthesis, an approach which marries the systematic

quantitative approach of meta-analysis with the detailed qualitative style of narrative reviews. My review highlighted a number of lacunae in the literature, occasioned by a tendency towards particular methodological approaches. These included: the use of content analysis as a primary research method in the vast majority of studies; a narrow geographical and events-based focus for sampling; and an overwhelming interest in content produced by China Central Television/China Global Television Network (CCTV/CGTN), rather than, for example, the Xinhua News Agency or Chinese newspapers. Research into representations of nations beyond Kenya and South Africa or into mediums besides television was particularly scarce. Where research went beyond these confines it was generally focused on particular events, such as the 2015 West African Ebola epidemic. I argue that this constitutes an insufficient foundation from which to make any well-grounded and generalisable conclusions about what type of news content Chinese media produces for or about Africa.

Moreover, I contend, these methodological choices are both produced by and reproduce various problematic assumptions about Chinese media in Africa. The scholarship's focus on Kenya and South Africa, for example, is often justified on the basis that these nations are key Chinese partners, but may also reinforce the assumption that Chinese media are only interested in covering regions of Chinese political interest. Similarly, the content analyses which were reviewed commonly applied the tripartite classification of news content as "positive," "negative," or "neutral" as *a priori* operational definitions. This was often justified by the importance of "positive" reporting in Chinese journalism more generally, but ultimately lacked the nuance to avoid misclassifications: for example, news stories concerning war and security issues were often labelled "negative" regardless of their slant. This obfuscates the power relations present in the processes of journalistic production, which would be better understood through other methods, such as critical discourse analysis. Finally, the focus on the medium of television – embodied by CCTV/CGTN – was, arguably, the result of an academic paradigm shift which occurred when CCTV opened its Nairobi production hub in 2012 that has continued to influence studies to this day. However, since television in Africa remains the preserve of a relatively small group of well-educated urban elites, this focus may reproduce a problematic understanding of China's intended audience in Africa: the majority of Africans continue to digest their news through alternative mediums. This paper, therefore, challenged the literature's assumptions to argue for a more pluralistic methodological approach in further research. This includes, particularly: a wider geographical and non-events-based focus; a broader focus on alternative news mediums; and complementary methods to content-analysis.

Submission ID

1335

China's cyber-nationalism during international conflicts: framing the US-China trade war on social media

Authors

Jinyi Ye - Communication University of China

Abstract

Nationalism, as a mode of political discourse, is in a delicate relationship with state politics and national identity. In recent years, nationalism among Chinese mass has been on the rise with the help of social media, especially under the context of international conflicts. However, existing research has mainly concentrated on how the general public constructs and displays nationalism online, instead of how news media coverage sparks and shapes this discourse.

This study focused on the framing of the US-China trade war on China's social media. As one of the major international events in 2019, the US-China trade war (aka the Sino-US trade friction) has broad influence worldwide and provided national media institutions, key opinion leaders and other interest groups with an opportunity to frame the event in ways that resonate with local audiences. Data mining is used to sort out posts on Weibo (one of China's largest social media platforms) which contain nationalist sentiments in their texts and comments. Frame analysis of 477 influential Weibo posts is conducted. In addition, the study also identifies the signature matrix of the coverage and the main interpretive packages comprising it.

Results showed: (1) National media and elites (key opinion leaders) play leading roles in generating the discourse of nationalism, while the general public mainly echoes and participates in the discussion. (2) Three types of frames are commonly used to spark nationalist sentiments - the cultural identity frame, the political frame and the economy frame. (3) Coverage of the trade war on social media tends to use expressions that trigger emotional response rather than cognitive response.

Following the research results, the authors make further discussions on how cyber-nationalism resonates with China's mainstream political discourse and also, the possible influence of this fast-growing mass nationalism on China's diplomacy and international image.

This paper is a periodical result of our study on the role of social media companies in shaping political discourse in China. A survey related to this paper examining the relationship between media exposure and one's nationalist opinions is in progress.

- **The video presentation format - PowerPoint / Animation Presentations With Voice-over:**
A narrated PowerPoint presentation created in PowerPoint or video authoring software such as Camtasia. The author will record a short introduction in front of the camera at the beginning of the video.

Submission ID

1400

Discriminating algorithms: Who codes for whom?

Authors

Linda Siegel - University of Salzburg

Abstract

Over the last few years, several examples of technological devices or software-based services proved to be sexist, racist or in some other way discriminatory: “Image recognition technologies miscategorize black faces, [...] chatbots easily adopt racist and misogynistic language [...], and Uber’s facial recognition doesn’t work for trans drivers” (Myers West et al. 2019: 6) – these are only a few examples.

Software itself must not necessarily be inherently sexist or discriminating. However, algorithms depend on datasets that can be discriminatory, or chosen by software developers based on their respective beliefs and opinions that may be biased, especially when considering that software production is a specifically male-dominated area (Myers West et al. 2019: 5ff.). Furthermore, algorithms learn from and adapt to the information given back to them by (biased) users. Following this understanding, it makes sense that several researchers called attention to discrimination in the tech industry:

“The diversity problem is [...] about gender, race, and most fundamentally, about power. It affects how AI companies work, what products get built, who they are designed to serve, and who benefits from their development.” (Myers West et al. 2019: 5)

Considering that we are living in a deeply mediatized and connected world (Hepp 2016), we need to acknowledge that software engineers have a significant role in shaping how we perceive the world, thus, they “make decisions that shape the way in which society functions, in turn helping shape our social futures” (Bialski 2019). The outcome of coding that can lead to intersectional discrimination has been in focus for quite some researchers already (e.g. Neerukonda et al. 2018), but more research is necessary on the making of algorithms. I want to present a preliminary study for my dissertation that focuses on how software is designed with an intersectional approach.

As Gillespie puts it: “Information systems are always swarming with people; we just can’t always see them” (Gillespie 2016: 26). To focus on the creating of algorithms I chose an ethnographic approach to accompany software engineers in different companies in their everyday work. I combine data from observations in the field with semi-structured interviews, in order to gain insight into their personal background, daily working routines, opinions and values. Ethnographic research on algorithmic systems is “crucial [...] to explore how the systemic and the ad hoc coexist and are managed within them” (Gillespie 2016: 27). I want to question why and how certain codes are created and in what way that correlates with the categorization of people, which might result in discriminatory software.

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Submission ID

1553

CPT/ESN The legitimacy challenge of cryptocurrencies: a contested field

Authors

Nina van der Giessen - Salzburg

Abstract

Blockchain is considered a viable technology with great potential in industrial, scientific and policy circles. Although they are applications of this technology, Bitcoin and other cryptocurrencies remain niche instruments opposed by representatives of central banks and large financial institutions. The paper investigates the legitimacy challenge faced by cryptocurrencies, under the assumption that legitimacy is, for the latter, a necessary condition for becoming an alternative to fiat money and a global instrument for exchanging and storing value. Legitimacy is the condition of being desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values and beliefs (Suchman, 1995). Key to legitimacy is justification, the act of providing clear and persuasive accounts of strategy and actions.

Drawing on thematic analysis, consisting of 29 expert interviews and 41 online texts, we analyse how this legitimacy challenge is carried out by mapping justifications provided by three competing groups of stakeholders: State and private institutions (macro), large technology companies (meso), and crypto start-ups, investors and communities (micro). The research questions are the following: Which dynamics best describe the legitimacy challenge faced by cryptocurrencies? Which justifications do different stakeholders put forward to explain their attitude towards cryptocurrencies?

The choice of focus stems from the assumption that the legitimacy challenge of cryptocurrencies can be described as a 'symbolic struggle' (Bourdieu, 1979), where social groups and organisations challenge incumbent, dominant players that try to maintain their position in the field. The paper also explains that large technology companies bear the potential for creating successful cryptocurrencies that overcome the legitimacy challenge, by using the global symbolic power of

their own brand.

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Submission ID

1602

[CPT/ESN] Diversity or preference: Whether algorithm recommendation system in news media expands our information horizon or not?

Authors

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Abstract

In the context of massive-news media environment, the information distribution no longer just relies on editor or professional staff under the interruption of algorithm recommendation system. Some have worried that the involvement of algorithm may reinforce existing ideas and dim those messages that should have been given more priority, leading to the phenomenon such as 'Echo Chamber' (Jamieson, K. H., & Cappella, J. N., 2008; Garrett R K., 2009), 'Filter Bubble' (Pariser, E., 2011), or 'Information Cocoons' (Cass R. Sunstein., 2001). Reports of Pew Research Center (2010) and ofcom (2013) also exacerbate this anxiety, calling for more occasional news items to resist narrow interests and diets of users. What's more alarming is that it's difficult to communicate between different political tendencies because of the barriers to discourse (Susan Jacobson, Eunyoung Myung & Steven L. Johnson, 2016), leading to ideological segregation and polarization (Stroud, N. J., 2010).

However, latest researches respond to previous doubts through empirical measurements (Flaxman, S. R., Geol, S., & Rao, J. M., 2016), some even challenging the impact of narrowing information horizon (Elizabeth Dubois & Grant Blank, 2018) and considering algorithm recommendation as a relatively diverse approach of information distribution (Judith Möller, Trilling, D., Helberger, N., & Es, B. V., 2018). Such arguments force us to explore the role of algorithm recommendation in information distribution and measure the implication of users' information horizon.

Computational communication science methods including word embedding and LDA topic model are ready to calculate the internal similarity between news titles, representing the range of information choices. In order to reduce the interruption of concentration of hot news and users' attention in short period of time, we operate chase experiments to follow up 40 users' continuous

recommendation results of news titles when they generate click history during browsing, which we call it ‘digital trace’, adding up to about 800,000 news titles and their genres during 7 times of data gathering for 2 months. Then we compare the content with ‘digital trace’ and without ‘digital trace’ recommended at the same point of time, whose differentiation of internal similarity could be seen as the degree of information horizons personally online. From the correlation between excursion online to users’ actual social characteristics offline, the portray of certain groups of people who are deeply affected by algorithm recommendation could be obtained.

The research is trying to answer two questions: first, whether the algorithm recommendation system is expanding users’ information horizon, or not. Second, if so, what characteristics could mostly be emerged on users who are deeply affected by narrowing information horizon.

The application of big data mining and computational analysis to express the interaction and paradox between human preferences and news automated transformation is closely related with the CP&T section. It’s originally significant that the introduction of control groups to compare the textual similarity involved by ‘digital trace’ opens up a new way to clarify the implication of algorithm distribution approach to users’ information horizon, furthermore, to dig into cultural consequences and social interpretation behind the data.

Submission ID

1768

Two wheels, one route: Wheelchair-users and navigation tools

Authors

Lisa Schulze - University of Salzburg

Linda Siegel - University of Salzburg

Abstract

Navigating and following a route is a matter of course for many people. Technological developments allow us to move successfully from one place to another without much effort, even in unknown environments. However, how do mobility-impaired people navigate? Can wheelchair-users easily use any smartphone-application like *Google Maps* or a traditional paper map and have all the information they need accessible to navigate themselves to a destination and successfully follow a route?

Space can be considered a representation of power, ideologies, gender and other factors (Soja 1996: 6) that increases in complexity in this time of deep mediatisation and affects the social reality of everyone (Hepp 2016: 230). Therefore, navigation media are fundamental for the collective and individual perception of our surroundings, how we move through space. Still, navigation tools hardly ever offer route options that go beyond car, bike or walk. They seem to be addressed to and representing the ‘able-bodied’, even though disability “is central to the human experience [...]

whether as part of the aging process or unexpectedly at any age” (Alper 2014: 1f.). As a result, navigation applications and websites that are not easy to follow or even inaccessible as a wheelchair-user “strongly discourage individuals with disabilities from cultural as well as societal participation” (Alper 2014: 58).

I want to present the first findings of my dissertation project that investigates the significance of media technologies for social participation for wheelchair-users. The study focusses on the following questions:

- (1) What (digital and analogue) navigation tools are used to plan and follow a route?
- (2) How do wheelchair-users use navigation services in their everyday lives?
- (3) How do digital navigation tools influence the societal participation of wheelchair-users?

Data is collected through participatory observations while the participants plan and follow a route combined with subsequent interviews, notes and pictures. They document places or objects that pose a somewhat meaningful situation for following a route; e.g. a very high curb or an intelligent traffic light (Adlam 2007: 3). I present repertoires (Hasebrink/Domeyer 2012) of media and other tools that are significant for planning and moving on routes

Moreover, obstacles the participants faced within infrastructures and navigation services are identified and discussed within a broader understanding of social participation and citizenship (Yu et al. 2019), space, representation and power (Soja 1996).

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Submission ID

1887

ESN/CPT - An Updated Conceptual Evaluation Model for Enhancing Transparent and Democratic E-governance: Considering the Information Dissemination Power

Authors

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Abstract

Introduction

E-government refers to web-based services from agencies of local, state and federal governments (Sharma & Palvia, 2010). Providing government information and services on governmental websites is the primary functions for e-governments. As of 2008, all Chinese governments at national level and city level had set up governmental websites, and these websites are required to disseminate information timely, delivering various types of services and responding to online petitions.

Theoretical Framework:

Transparency is a basic condition for power-monitoring system, the government websites and data portals can enhance public access to public information. A number of stage models and indexes have already developed to measure and compare the eGovernment's advancement from country level to city level (Lee, 2010). While prior stage models and indexes for measuring governmental websites neglect the dissemination of websites contents, higher content quality and more media citations of website articles will enhance the spreading of governmental websites information, leading to a more transparent and democratic e-government. Lee-Geiller & Lee (2019) developed a conceptual model for democratic evaluation named democratic e-governance website evaluation model. By providing first-hand interviewing evidence and practical amendments, and adding the new dimension – information dissemination, the goal of this study is to develop an updated and practical democratic evaluation model for China's governmental websites.

Methods:

Firstly, it is necessary to review the literature from various disciplines to reveal essential elements of and prior findings for government website evaluation. Secondly, a series of exemplar governmental websites were chosen to explore their content quality, function characteristics and information spreading. Thirdly, we conducted a series of in-depth interviews and focus groups with experienced Chinese government officials and industry experts to gain insight about the research topic. Finally, a popular descriptive-interpretative approach suggested by Elliott & Timulak (2005) was applied for our qualitative meta-analysis.

Results:

An updated version of democratic e-governance model has been proposed and it has four dimensions:

1) Transparency:

Open Accessibility: Free of charge; Non-proprietary; Multiple system availability; SNS/Smartphone application;

Information Disclosure: Types of information; Quality of information; Information update; Information support for other institutions

2) Information Dissemination:

Website Popularity: Website visibility; Network traffic; Media coverage of institution

Article Dissemination: Article visibility; Media citation; Popular article online

Social Impact of Public Events

3) Service Quality:

Interoperability of Services: Coordination at national level; Accuracy; Navigational structure; Content organization; Visual element; Processing capacity; On-site search

Credibility: Error management; Website and function guideline; Terms of use statement; Privacy; Safety; Fraud supervision; New technology adoption

4) Citizen Engagement:

Political Efficacy: Online public service; Responsiveness to inquiry/complaints; Encouragement/promotion of participation; Sharing the products and outcomes created through collaboration

Deliberation

Collaboration

Submission ID

1956

Intercultural adaptation of sojourners in the era of social media: a case study of international doctoral students in China

Authors

Yue Yuan - Institute of Communication Studies, Communication University of China.

Abstract

Amid the accelerated process of globalization, cross-border mobility and complex cultural mixing have drawn scholarly attention to intercultural communication of immigrants, sojourners and separated ethnic groups. Since 2012, China's "Belt and Road" initiative further pushed the globalizing process and hosted more sojourners from all around the world, among which international students are one of the fastest growing groups. They attempt to seek new knowledge and accumulate intercultural experience.

As early as in the era of mass communication, classical intercultural adaptation studies have explored whether mass media use can promote intercultural adaptation for sojourners (Lily a. Arasaratnam, 2015; Kim YY, Sohn D, Choi, S.M.,2011, etc.). Nowadays, "new media's connection across time and space and the transmission of information have become the most advantageous communication tool for sojourners or immigrants"(Chen, 2012). As Kim putted it in his research, intercultural individual will experience a stress-adaptation-growth dynamic process. They are likely to acquire "intercultural identity" (Kim, 2015). But in social media era, existing modes of intercultural adaptation (Venkatesh et al.2016; Chen, 2012; Wen Bo Kuang & Xiao Li Wu, 2019) are not enough to explain how international students use social media platform to accelerate their own intercultural adaptation. Among others, the dynamic process of foreign students' acquisition of intercultural skills and intercultural adaptation has drawn continuous attention (Mitchell R. Hammer, Richard L. Wiseman, J. Lewis Rasmussen & Jon C. Bruschke, 1998; Yuefang Zhou, Divya Jindal-Snape, Keith Topping & John Todman, 2008; Guo-Ming Chen, 2012) Built on previous studies, this paper will explore the relationship between social media use and intercultural adaptation of foreign students in Chinese university by taking an empirical approach, and try to answer the following questions: whether social media use promote international students' intercultural adaptation, and how does this happen.

The study will be conducted at Communication University of China in Beijing and adopt semi-structured interview and focus group as data collection methods. Ten doctoral students were already selected for semi-structured interview. Each student will be interviewed twice to get acquaintance with him or her first and dig deep into their social media use later on. Central to the questions are the relationship between social media use and everyday life, the cognition of their own cultural identity, and their views towards "intercultural identity" and "intercultural personality". In addition, two focus group discussions, themed "My study abroad life" and "What has social media brought to my intercultural adaptation", respectively, will be conducted following the two stages of interview. Each focus group will consist of five international doctoral students from CUC.

Finally, the study aims to contribute to the understanding of how international students utilize social media in China to recognize his or her intercultural identification and adaptation on the one hand, and how China's social media, which is supposed distinctive in the global sphere, interact with sojourners' cultural adaptation on the other.

Keywords: Intercultural adaptation, sojourners, social media, China, international students

Submission ID

1984

On or Off? The Influence of Motivations and Risks in Meeting Offline or Staying Online in Mobile Dating Apps Use

Authors

Randy Jay Solis - The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Janice Wong - The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Abstract

In China, heterosexuals use mobile dating applications (MDA) like Momo as “a magical tool to get laid” (Nelson, 2013) or a “one-night stand mystical device” (De Seta & Zhang, 2015). In an earlier study investigating the motivations and risks involved in the use of MDAs and meeting strangers for dates or sexual encounters, Authors (2019) found that the motivation for sexuality predicts MDA use to meet people offline for both dates and casual sex, while the perceived risk of self-exposure to friends, professional networks, and the community is seen to be a reason why MDA use would not result to users meeting people offline for casual sex. While MDA users use the app largely as a tool to seek matches online and then to meet up in person for dates and sex, some users choose to stay online. As an extension to their earlier study, the authors now aim to determine the motivations and perceived risks that influence MDA users to stay purely online. Thus, this study would like to explore the question: How do demographic characteristics, motivations, and perceived risks predict whether a MDA user stays online or meets online matches offline? After logistic regression analysis of survey data from 433 respondents, the results of the study show that the more frequent the MDA use is, and the more motivated a user is for fun and connectivity, and sexuality, the more likely for this MDA user to go meet a match offline. Implications are discussed in the context of the emergence of the Chinese sexual revolution in the past three decades, with the increasingly mediatized spaces for love and sexuality in China (Zhang, 2011; Xiao, Mehrotra, & Zimmerman, 2011) vis-à-vis the government’s “sanitizing and desexualization” projects of apps like Momo to appease public concerns of its “sexual nature” (Liu, 2016).

This research contributes to the growing body of studies on mobile dating applications. While there are already abounding studies about specific apps like Tinder and Grindr, most of these are from the western regions. Only a few are about MDA use in China and, of the available ones, most of these are specific studies on Momo (Chan, 2019; Liu, 2016; De Seta & Zhang, 2015). It also aims to contribute to Uses and Gratifications (U&G) studies by developing the concept of risk and how it complements or complicates the motivations behind MDA use. On a practical level, this study wishes to add to knowledge about how to manage, rather than eliminate, risks in a highly mediatized society, especially as children, in this study as young as 11 years old, are increasingly gaining access to mobile phones and apps.

Submission ID

2020

Politics by Other Means: Internet Infrastructure Providers and Governance Beyond Legal Disputes (CPT/ESN)

Authors

Steph Hill - Ryerson University

Abstract

This paper examines the cancellation of the website 8chan's web security services and hosting by Cloudflare and Voxility following the publication of a mass shooter's racist manifesto on that platform. Cloudflare and Voxility's choice to deplatform 8chan were part of an ongoing effort by mainstream internet infrastructure companies to distance themselves from alt-right content. Well-known, consumer-oriented companies, such as Nike, have long been vulnerable and responsive to criticism of their practices. However, less visible companies and industries, such as web hosting services, banking, and telecoms, have increasingly taken it upon themselves to actively intervene in political issues. In addition to the case mentioned above, advertising companies have cancelled controversial billboards, banks have cancelled funding for coal-power projects, and companies of all kinds have spoken publicly for or against political issues such as Brexit. These political advocacy events often have little to do with legal boundaries and instead revolve around murkier concepts, including individual morals, corporate values and mission statements, and public reputation. Cloudflare and Voxility's decisions prevented 8chan's access to online audiences for months and raised important questions about online freedom of expression, the rise of right-wing extremism, and the ability of commercial actors to unilaterally make very serious decisions about internet governance—questions raised by Cloudflare even as it chose to remove the site as a client. The concerns raised by Cloudflare echo longstanding questions within internet governance scholarship about the power of commercial actors in online infrastructure and the relationship between content governance online and the rule of law (For instance, in Musiani et al., 2016 and Suzor, 2018). This research paper asks: What do Cloudflare and Voxility's decisions to intervene in this case indicate about governance in practice, rather than in relation to existing law and policy? Online platforms and media attention oriented much of this controversy toward public communication and created opportunities to study the ensuing controversies and their resolution using methods based in controversy mapping and actor-network theory. Using a theoretical framework based on Boltanski and Thevenot's (2006) model of economies of worth, this paper examines public advocacy by the for-profit companies involved as tests of public justification, revealing the circumstances in which civic logics are adopted by market actors. In the case of Cloudflare, Voxility, and 8chan, the examination reveals awareness and responses to regulatory gaps, as well as creative, and troublingly arbitrary, attempts to address these gaps on a case-by-case basis through commercial actors.

Submission ID

2112

Media Trust in “High Choice Media Environments”: Conceptual Limits and a New Approach

Authors

Roland Holzinger - Universität Salzburg

Abstract

The study of current media trust phenomena in post-industrial societies has to reflect the changes in media frameworks from digitalization. I define these changes as a transition from "low to high choice media environments". An increasing offer of information makes it easier for recipients to adapt their media usage to individual preferences. As a result, media trust has to be understood against the background of interconnected media differentiation and audience differentiation processes. Given these transformations, it cannot be taken for granted that media trust theories developed for mass communication are still valid in “high choice media environments”.

This leads to the following research question: Can the conceptual challenges to media trust research in “high choice media environments” be adequately addressed and answered by communication science approaches to media trust and what theoretical extensions or new approaches are needed?

To answer this question, first, I identify potential conceptual challenges from the literature review of a broader meta-theoretical discussion on the conceptual and methodological foundations of research on media effects in high choice media environments (i.e. Bennett & Iyengar, 2008; Donsbach & Mothes, 2012; Mitchelstein & Boczkowski, 2010; Van Aelst et al., 2017, Vowe & Henn 2016). In this regard, the most pressing conceptual challenges can be summarized as [1] the need for contextualization of media effects within [2] a more differentiated perspective on audience groups and [3] public communication more generally, [4] the increased relevance of subjective involvement with topics and media frames, hence public discourse dynamics. In a second step, I analyze existing theories of media trust in communication studies, regarding the way how these conceptual challenges are addressed and answered.

An initial literature review of two main theories of media trust in communication studies (Bentele 1994, 1998, Kohring 2004) – a selection justified by their broad application, validation and elaborated system-theoretical basis – reveals: [1] a primarily content or output focused concept of media trust, [2] audience differentiation plays no or only a secondary role, [3] the underlying notion of the public sphere is a rather homogeneous and [4] public discourse dynamics are not conceptually relevant. With social change positioned in the conceptual center of the aforementioned media trust theories, this paper suggests theoretical extensions based on the notion of social change as (Imhof, 2008; Imhof & Gaetano, 1996):

[A] an interaction of functional, stratificational and segmentational differentiation of society. Thus the formation of media trust is contextualized by one's position in society. This leads to a heterogeneous understanding of media trust.

[B] different periods of active and passive publics. In times of active publics, reflexive media trust judgments of involved social groups relate to a conflict over the definition of a societal problem between a hegemonic center and certain alternative publics.

To conclude, these theoretical extensions take into account the multidimensional nature of media trust and provide the conceptual connection to more recent approaches of digitalized public spheres like dissonant and disconnected, affective or multiple public spheres.

Submission ID

2140

Media coverage of 21N National Strike in Colombia: a revision to the frames used by Colombian media

Authors

Emy Osorio - Universidad de Cartagena

Abstract

In the recent history of Colombia, November 21st of 2019 will be remembered as the most important civic protests against any government. The relevance comes from the gathering of different sociocultural, political, and economic sectors of the country that actively participated in the protests that took place in the capital, Bogotá D.C., as well as in small cities. Some reports suggest that between million Colombians took the street that day, although official reports from governmental agencies suggest less (El Espectador).

This paper aims to explore the media representation of the social protest of 2019 against the national government in the context of the post-conflict Colombia. The protests, that have been increasing since right-wing leader Ivan Duque became president, were concerned about possible pension, labour, and tax reforms, as well as to the latest corruption scandals, failed policies of national security, and the failure to implement the peace agreement reached in 2016 with left-wing FARC rebels. People have been in the streets since the 21st of November and so far, an agreement has not been reached.

Colombian media has historically prioritized issues regarding the armed conflict itself. Nonetheless, since the end of the conflict with the guerrilla group FARC the focus has transitioned from it to social justice matters as well as other forms of violence such as cultural and structural (Galtung, 1989; Osorio Matorel, 2017; 2018).

What were the main generic frames used by those media outlets? How different was the coverage between native digital and migrated media? Could the media have had an impact on people's

perception of the 21N protests? Is it possible to assume that social issues are becoming a central conflict in post-conflict Colombia?

This research paper aims at analysing the media coverage of the news about the 21N protests published by seven national media outlets that were created in different regions of the country, have political views, and work of distinct platforms. To explore it, the paper draws from Framing Theory (Entman, 1993, 2007; Vreese, 2005); focusing only on the framing-building process. Generic frames which were defined by Vreese (2002) as frames that transcend thematic limitations and can be identified in relation to different topics, time and cultural context. Semetko & Valkenburg (2000) proposed the following typology to study them: a) attribution of responsibility, b) human interest, c) conflict, d) moral, and e) economic consequences. In that sense, this theory is chosen because it allows us to see the news-building process.

The paper is an important contribution to the understanding of the various socio-political and economic conflicts in post-conflict Colombia.

Keywords: Colombia, media frames, post-conflict Colombia, economic conflicts.

Submission ID

2180

Exploring Potential of Communication Infrastructure Theory in Disaster Risk Management: A Study on Cyclone Fani in Odisha, India.

Authors

Manas Kanjilal - Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad

Abstract

Drawing on the case studies of past cyclone turn disaster 'Fani' on the coast of Bay of Bengal, the paper discusses the 'responsive approach' in disaster preparedness and collaborative actions. It explores the engagement of 'multilevel actors' and their 'storytelling' capacity to build a climatic condition of behavioral change in the disaster-prone areas of Odisha by borrowing the theoretical underpinning of the 'storytelling community' and 'communication context' of Communication Infrastructure theory (CIT). The paper has drawn on Kim and Ball-Rokeach's, idea of 'multiple community storytellers' where they argue that CIT distinguishes 'macro,' 'meso-' and 'microstorytelling' actors based on their storytelling referent and their audience. Macrostorytelling agents represent 'mainstream media' that tells the story about the whole city, nation, or even world, 'mesostrorytellers' are deals with a particular section of the town or specific communities. In contrast, neighbors, family members, friends are microstoryteller agents who talk story on certain premises. Disasters like 'Fani' reflected multilevel actors' engagement in the process, such as 'mainstream media,' 'federal government,' 'civil society' and many others in their respective

circumstances. The entire process is the outcome of collaboration and coordination efforts of the long-run engagement of community members, the federal government, and their storytelling networks that able the tackle the fury nature of the natural disaster. The paper also has drawn the idea of the 'communication context' of CIT, where they talk about the 'residential environment' (i.e., cultural, social, economic, and physical) that facilitate or constraints the vitality of the storytelling systems. The frequent occurrence of disasters in the coastal belt of Odisha strengthens the community 'disaster resilience' and also everyday conversation with the people, media, and grassroots organizations promote 'culture of resistance' in the areas. Cyclone Fani, a 'tropical cyclone' struck on the 3rd of May of 2019, more than 1.5 million people evacuated and shifted to the safest places within the 24 hours. The paper is supporting the arguments by presenting the example of such intervention with the help of data collected through an in-depth case study method involving various qualitative methods of data collection such as In-depth interviews, focus group discussion, and participant observation. The study analyses the communication context in the disaster scenarios with the case study of cyclone Fani.

Submission ID

2308

Me, My Echo Chamber and I: Social media's role in perpetuating cyber-nationalism, radicalization and self-identity in Pakistan and other Muslim-majority states.

Authors

Fatima Ali - Vrije Universiteit Brussel

Abstract

Discussions on digital media largely revolve around the rise of an entrenched divide among the digital natives. Internet is seen as an enabler of radicalization and in effect concretizes pre-existing beliefs resulting in an echo-chamber, by means of homophily. However, it also cannot be denied, the potential of digital media to reinvigorate the practice of citizenship and assertion of hitherto marginalized identities as it gives the people the space to voice their opinions. To this end, users hailing from the Global South are increasingly shaping their own isolated online publics. Digital spaces like Twitter and Facebook are conducive in snowballing radicalization while playing a vital role in reshaping national identities, where notions of nationalism and religiosity often overlap. The changing nature and scope of media publics forms an important new ground for the staging of political, religious, cultural and social dynamics. It is in this context that one is witnessing the rise of a digital public in South Asian countries like Pakistan. Using Pakistan as a case study, this paper aims to investigate mediatized publics in countries that previously had been managed by the state. Within this context, the staggering rise of digital publics has brought forth issues of cyber-nationalism, radicalization, and questions of national identity – often categorized by “us” versus

“them” or ‘discourse of sameness and discourse of difference.’ By gauging online discourse and trending hashtags on Twitter, this paper studies the phenomenon of political echo chambers on Pakistani social media, and its role in the rise in jingoism or polarization, as a result of feedback loops guiding users to toxic viewpoints, hate speech and even *jihadist* content. Three schools of thoughts (*i.e. the Islamist, the Pluralists and the Nation-state*) exist in Pakistan, which will lay the foundation for three ‘echo chambers’ for empirical research. This paper examines dominant topics and preemptive issues therein by analyzing the content of the tweets and categorizing varying discourse. While theorizing how the Pakistani Twittersphere functions as an echo chamber, this paper aims to explore digital practices, citizens’ behavior and national identity, from the lens of a region that is often under-researched in academia. Overall, it hypothesizes on the nature of the digital public in Pakistan, and by extension to other Muslim-majority nations with similar milieus and contribute to the emerging scholarship on the region vis-à-vis political discourse, collective identity and online engagement.

Submission ID

2330

A colorful opinion party on social media with fitness blogger, travelgrammer, foodfluencer, and co. An empirical study.

Authors

Jessica Kühn - Department of Media and Communication, LMU Munich

Abstract

Social networking sites (SNS) such as Instagram and YouTube are experiencing a colorful influencer boom in a lot of different fields: companies already recognized their potential due to their high presence and activity on SNS and are using them as brand ambassadors of a wide range of products and services like travelling, fitness, and/or restaurant-recommendations. So-called fitness blogger, foodfluencer, and travelgrammer take on a new role in the communication environment on SNS: as medial pre-decision-makers and online opinion leaders they essentially determine which content on SNS gets wide coverage by selecting specific topics and collaborations. They disseminate such content with a wide range – with almost a fifth of the users actively following and listening to them.

To address this current phenomenon with its increasing impact (especially for young vulnerable followers), the study focuses on the influencers themselves and asks: *To what extent do influencers see themselves as opinion leaders with a role model function for their followers?*

To answer this question, qualitative semi-structured guideline-based interviews with 28 influencers have been conducted via telephone or Instagram's Messenger in 2019. The interviewed influencers are working in different subject areas (e.g. fitness, fashion, travel). The interviews focus on the influencer’s private and professional use of SNS, as well as their role perception and their

understanding of their role as digital opinion leaders. They were transcribed (word by word) and analyzed by using a theory-driven approach.

The category-based analysis shows that influencers – regardless of their area of expertise – are aware of their role as opinion leaders and that they actively construct this role. Depending on the topic area in which they are working, both the understanding of themselves and the self-constructed role model as opinion leader and inspirer change. They are aware of the effects of their behavior on their followers, actively exploiting this – both for cooperation with advertising companies (which are aimed at purchases by the followers) and to draw attention to important issues (such as environmental protection).

In contrast to previous studies about influencers from an economic perspective in the context of studies on influencer marketing, this study refers in particular to the colorful role that influencers have for the diversity of opinions we found on SNS.

Submission ID

2348

Embracing Data Sovereignty: An Analysis of Data Laws, Data Policies, and Data Centres in China

Authors

Haotian Guo - University of Cambridge

Abstract

Data is important for governance in many respects, but as the most important resource in the digital economy, data is collected and possessed by internet companies, which means that data is potentially stateless. This has led to governments' concern over national security. For instance, the US has accused several Chinese internet companies such as TikTok and Alibaba of sending users' data to the Chinese government. In recent years, China has published a series of laws and policies with respect to data regulation and established several data centres.

This article explores the relationship between the Chinese state and digital companies, both foreign and domestic, in terms of the ownership of data. Drawing upon concepts of data sovereignty by Irion (2012) and Woods (2018), I integrate scholarships from the intersections of internet law, political economy, and communication policy to interpret Chinese government's efforts to establish control over data.

I have collected various documents, including laws, policy papers, lawsuit cases, media reports, business analyses, and company reports to analyse the battle over the ownership of data. I particularly focus on three documents, namely *Cybersecurity Law*, *Measures on Security Assessment of Cross-Border Transfer of Personal Information and Important Data*, and *Personal Information Security Specification*. Besides, I also pay attention to the infrastructure of data and

probe into data centres in China, including Guizhou Data, jointly established by Guizhou Province and Alibaba, and Amazon Web Services' data centre in Ningxia Hui Autonomous Region.

I argue that the core aim of China's data laws and policies lies in data sovereignty, and this sovereignty has two dynamic tensions. The first tension is between private and state ownership of data. Since China is a state-led socialist market economy, data is officially and primarily depicted as public goods rather than sources of profits. The second tension is between national and international control over data. As Chinese internet companies are extending their global reach and foreign ones expanding their business in China, the Chinese government has to balance its political task and the economic performances of the internet industry, which is reflected in the making of data policies and infrastructure.

This research contributes to the understanding of China's strategy and ambition to develop a form of state-led platform capitalism. It also provides insights into the intentions and implications of data policies and laws in China. It may also be a prism for debates over the nationalisation of data and internet companies in some Western countries.

This paper is a work in progress.

Submission ID

2366

Communication for Action: Going beyond Parochial Emotions in Climate Change Cooperation

Authors

Fei Huang - Ts

Abstract

The 2015 Paris Climate Negotiation Agreement is considered to be a milestone in climate change global governance, on the one hand the global goal of the 2 °C limit has been reached, on the other hand, the introduction of Intended National Determined Contributions (INDC) have enabled actors to have more initiatives, challenging the top-down governance model in the pre-Paris Agreement scenario. This article concentrates on the Paris agreement and INDC texts, the dichotomous divide between the administrative and the political discourse is discovered. This research also illustrates how actors conquer their natural parochial emotions in order to reach agreement on cooperation through experimentalist governance model.

Transnational cooperation in climate change has often been plagued by the different stages of development of the actors involved. In the Paris negotiations in 2015, the governance logic of the experimental paradigm was introduced. Through the peer supervision and real-time feedback and modification mechanisms, the actors at the sovereign state level were given more autonomy,

achieving common global goals and consensus, Paris Agreement has become a milestone of global climate governance.

This paper uses the method of text analysis to explore the efforts of the “Paris Agreement” and the independent contribution in terms of the mechanism setting to build up “globalism”. This includes: peer-to-peer supervision, real-time feedback and revision of the INDC, giving the actors more autonomy. On the other hand, international cooperation and support are the backing of countries to respond more actively to climate change. But at the same time, this paper also finds that due to the influence of the ruling party of a country and the influence of geopolitics, the discourses of INDCs texts split into two types: one is the administrative discourse to maintain the status quo; the other is the political discourse, promoting the revolution of current international system. The division of ideology is also a question worth considering in the process of promoting global climate change cooperation.

The tension between globalism and nationalism can be adjusted through the coexistence of universalism and pluralism. Due to the reality of the international order with sovereign states as the basic unit, the state is the most powerful executive body of international cooperation. The realization of globalist goals and action planning is also a more dialectical understanding and treatment of nationalism. Based on the findings of case studies, this paper proposes that in the context of international governance and cross-border collaboration, parochial emotions, as a natural state of priority for sovereign states, need to be coordinated with global goals through effective governance and communication mechanisms. Through the maintenance of a stable international cooperation and support environment; granting more discretion and action power to sovereign states; real-time communication at different levels and peer-to-peer monitoring mechanisms; and geopolitical, domestic party politics, ideology and other factors will also have to be given full consideration when helping a country to transcend parochial emotions.

Submission ID

2450

Power, asymmetries and surveillance in networked domestic space. The experience of female domestic workers in Cape Town

Authors

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Abstract

This paper draws on in-depth qualitative research to investigate the link between the precarious lives of female migrant domestic workers in Cape Town and their use of digital media technologies in the context of an asymmetrical relationship with their predominantly white, wealthy employers. I

investigate racial and gendered politics in previously circumscribed domestic spaces where digital technologies have become increasingly significant.

The research draws on interviews and focus group discussions conducted between 2016 and 2017 to explore female migrant domestic workers' communicative strategies, appropriation patterns and coping mechanisms in a precarious environment.

I find that ICTs have opened up the private spaces of domestic work into a digitally mediated space that is contested politically and contradictory site of dissidents. These spaces are where domestic workers can renegotiate their domestic responsibilities and attempt to subvert the social structures that deeply embed them. However, these negotiations are subjected to power and hierarchy. Thus ICTs use by migrant domestic workers is subjected to control and surveillance. Nevertheless, the restricted access to employers' WIFI, for example, generates an ingenious form of appropriation that produces agency.

A polarized and unequal society such as South Africa provides poignant examples of complex machinations of class differentiated oppression and exploitation. These operate between women of lower upper classes while exploring the limits and possibilities of loyalty within the boundaries of tenuous relationships. The paper elaborates on the overt and covert instances of participants' resistance to exploitation, surveillance and employer control.

The paper also argues that access to digital media has enabled spaces for the expression of discontentment needed to overcome notions of docility and precarity. At the same time, digital communication technologies reinforced asymmetrical power relationships between these workers and their wealthy employers. I find that, on the one hand, being mobile and connected digitally subjected the workers to more control, surveillance and vulnerabilities. On the other hand, connection to ICTs and digital technologies opened up opportunities to claim agency and to negotiate consensual relations. Ultimately, the study provides valuable insights for designing public policies geared towards improving internet and reduce digital inequalities in the global South. It also highlights how such policies can improve relationships between female migrant domestic workers and their employers to reduce vulnerabilities and asymmetry.

Submission ID

2488

Journalism, Media and Sociality in Russia, China and Brazil: A Comparative Study

Authors

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Yan Liu - Xi'an Jiaotong University

Wedencley Alves - UFJF

Abstract

This study provides a cross-cultural approach to journalism and its sociality in the digital age. We explore the connotation of the sociality in terms of the role of journalism "to foster cultural integration and sense of belonging," as discussed by Widholm (2019). At the same time, we seek to overcome the tensions on the past-future axis, where journalism was "understood as a provider of a cultural and social glue" (Widholm 2019), which now is liquefacted by technologies (Splichal 2018). To avoid this, we consider sociality as an essential quality of journalism, which needs to be preserved in the digital environment.

The sociality of journalism has consists of many institutions, which are also entitled to social media and the Internet. Thus, the categories of the sociality are living of the whole, public-worthiness, the common good, 'bringing together' a significant number of people, important long-term consequences, wholeness and seamlessness (Splichal 2018: 8-9; Hallin 1992: 14; Deuze, Witschge 2018: 166). The study of sociality could grasp many modern processes, such as Internet governance, and different regimes of ICT regulation.

The sociality of Chinese journalism is nourished on the "cultural legacy of traditional literati 'scholar-officials.'" As the sociopolitical elite, scholar-officials were obligated to draw attention to the sickness of the state, provide the emperor with wise advice for the good of the people, and refuse to serve the emperor if he wasn't guided by virtues (Vasiliev 1971). In modern China, being an intellectual or journalist would mean not only functioning as a recorder, but also serving as a defender of justice, supporter of underprivileged groups, and promoter of reforms of socially obsolete structure (Pan, Lu 2003).

The Russian researchers note the role of the state in the formation of journalism science, education and culture. Due to the media ownership control in the 19-20th centuries, the influence of the state on journalism during the Soviet and pre-Revolution periods was predetermined by such features of journalism as direct political participation and consolidation of many political functions. These historical factors have shaped the tradition of seeing practicing or teaching journalism as a "politically significant profession." (Vartanova ed. 2019: 38-39; Korkonosenko ed. 2018: 128)

In Brazil, journalism follows Ibero-American features, where the "professional 'empirical' models that have evolved and changed over time, as technology advances and new social, economic and political realities arise, legitimizing and ensuring the existence of a 'typical' Ibero-American journalism with its own professional rules, practices, and conventions merged with the customs, traditions, taboos, beliefs, ceremonies and folklore of an intercultural and multiethnic region." (Moreira, Alonso 2018: 313)

We propose a different approach in a comparative perspective. Despite globalization, different regions have many singularities and asymmetries, and sociality could be an essential component of journalism in transition, which cannot be reduced to the struggle between the 'old' (modern,

industrial and class-oriented) journalism and 'new' (post-industrial, networked, liquid, ambient) journalism.

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Submission ID

2501

Sentiment and Social Network Analysis of the Rohingya

Twittersphere

Authors

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Abstract

Social media has altered the course of how conflicts are created and fought. This revolutionary change in the communication landscape has nurtured questions related to how information flows from one user to another and how users can influence these flows especially during times of wars and conflicts. This study picks up the case of the Rohingya crisis, which is dubbed as 'one of the world's worst humanitarian and human crises' (United Nations, 2018) of the 21st century. Social media has been mentioned often in various news articles and foreign policy documents as one of the key tools used in securitising the population. By using sentiment analysis and social network analysis, this study seeks to find out the public sentiment related to the Rohingya conflict and who among Twitter users act as the main influencer in the network that segmented ideas and information. This paper is a preliminary study to assess how sentiment analysis and social network analysis can help assess an ongoing conflict.

Submission ID

2920

Define, Develop, Deploy: evaluating and improving transcription practices at the SABC TV News Archives.

Authors

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Abstract

South Africa's television history stretches back to 1976 when the *verligtes* won over the *verkramptes*, allowing television into the highly controlled apartheid state for the first time. Television news broadcasts followed shortly thereafter. The South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) is South Africa's national broadcaster and largest TV news archiver in the country. Here, broadcasts from some of South Africa's greatest and worst moments are kept in both digitised and analogue format – Nelson Mandela's release from Robben Island, the first democratic election in 1994, footage from the FIFA 2010 World Cup, the Marikana Massacre. And yet the transcription, cataloguing, and dissemination of these broadcasts is highly problematic.

The SABC TV News Archives is in a state of disrepair due to continuous de-funding by government and political interference, yet the archive is rich in cultural and historical value. The archive deserves to be protected and catalogued correctly for future use, and the first step in doing this is to determine the practice of archiving at the Corporation. Since there is no standardised transcription procedure at the SABC, the aim of this project is to develop a needs-based method in order to improve practice. Objectives are three fold: firstly to evaluate and define, using action research, existing practices of transcription at national TV news archives; secondly to develop a standardised transcription method by compiling existing frameworks and theories of transcription (particularly multimodal discourse analysis) and test this method for human-transcribed multilingual use; and thirdly to deploy the method at the SABC by training archivists with the help of assistance from the South African government and International Federation of TV Archives (IFTA).

This project is in the initial "define" stage of the research and is a work in progress. This paper, designed for the Emerging Scholars Network and International Communication, presents early findings from evaluations of the SABC TV News archives as well as other leading archives. The sample of these archives are BBC Scotland, Getty Images, Vanderbilt TV News archives, the Internet Archive, the British Library, and the South African eNCA archive. The paper presents the theoretical and conceptual frameworks for this project, including multimodal discourse analysis, previous studies on TV news transcription, archivist procedures, and the SABC media/political environment. The paper then discusses future steps for the project and impacts of each step at the academic level (analysis, implementation) and also in policy (a standardised transcription procedure for TV news archives).

Submission ID

2926

(CRI/ESN) Media frame, risk evaluation and organizational trust in 2020 coronavirus outbreak: A case study of China Red Cross Society scandal

Authors

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Abstract

This paper explores antecedents and consequences of public's **trust** towards Red Cross Society of China, which is an NGO controlled by the Chinese government, during the current coronavirus outbreak. While a plenty of medics suffered from the shortage of medical supplies and appealed for public donation, it is revealed that Red Cross Society allocated its medical supplies to hospitals that are not designated to receive coronavirus patients due to internal corruption. Furthermore, in 2011, Guo Meimei, a 20-year-old who claimed to have connection with the Red Cross Society and boasted online about her luxurious lifestyle, also rose public's criticism against Red Cross Society of China.

Previous "trust" research suggest that contextual antecedents (e.g., judgement and service quality) and individual antecedents (e.g., familiarity and satisfaction) can predict donors' trust towards charity. This study hypothesizes that media's frame, whether mentioning the former "Guo Meimei incident" or not when reporting the current Red Cross Society scandal, can also affect donors' trust towards Red Cross Society. Moreover, because Red Cross Society of China is controlled by the Chinese government, it is reasonable to believe that individuals' trust towards government will mediate this effect. Besides, since the current coronavirus outbreak has caused thousands of death, this study also posits that individuals' evaluation about the coronavirus risk will mediate this effect. In terms of consequences, we hypothesize that public's trust towards Red Cross Society will be negatively related to their intention of seeking alternative charities.

The method of this study is experiment. A total of 128 Chinese were recruited. After finishing the first part questionnaire in which respondents were asked questions about their attitudes towards the Chinese government, 2×2 experimental groups with "high/low trust towards government+mentioning Guo Meimei incident" and "high/low trust towards government+not mentioning Guo Meimei incident" were formed. Respondents were asked to read an original news coverage about the current Red Cross Society scandal(stimuli). Stimuli A is an original news coverage (around 1500 words) about the current Red Cross Society scandal with mentioning "the Guo Meimei incident", while Stimuli B is an original news coverage (around 1300 words) without mentioning "the Guo Meimei incident". After that, respondents were asked questions about 1)their trust towards Red Cross Society; 2) their likelihood of adopting another charity instead of Red Cross Society; 3) their evaluation about the risk of coronavirus.

The experimental results showed that respondents with stimuli A (mentioning "Guo Meimei incident") have lower trust towards Red Cross Society compared with respondents with stimuli B. Those who perceived the current coronavirus as more dangerous have lower trust towards Red Cross Society. Respondents' trust towards Red Cross Society negatively related to their intention of seeking alternative charities.

This study contributes to the risk communication academia by introducing frame effect into this area, and further, by emphasizing the impact of media exposure in shaping organizational trust. Furthermore, while previous research suggest that public's trust will influence their risk evaluation, we found out that individuals' risk perception can in turn affect their trust towards governments and institutions.

Submission ID

3583

Breakdown of Professionalism: The Framework and Ideology of online news in Coronavirus Disease 2019

Authors

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Abstract

Since the Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) emerged at the end of 2019, there had been lots of news reports covering this worldwide event. But it was easily to tell that different news conveyed different ideology, political stance and attitude on this crisis event.

In this process, researchers are concerned about the following questions: (1) Did the media guide or ingratiate the public during the crisis? (2) Has the media solidified the stereotype of the people of their country? (3) What kind of framework and narrative did their reports mainly adopt? Has there been any certain trend of change?

This research mainly takes New York Times, Wall Street Journal, and Financial Times (international) as examples, and uses framing analysis and discourse analysis as the main research methods to analyze the three of the most authoritative and influential media in the United Kingdom and the United States. And what effect it has, and what kind of ideology it reflects.

The preliminary findings of the research are: (1) The opposition between Chinese and American ideological levels had been widespread in media, and could be significantly reflected in the framework and discourse strategies used in reporting. (2) These media all generally used a set of "acquisition-domestication-performance" logic to produce news. The core step was to "domesticate" the collected information, that is, to use the perspective and the interests of local people as the starting point to select the facts that they believed the public should know, so as to create a pseudo-environment to make their people more comfortable and controllable when responding to crises. Therefore, at this level, the media was obviously more guiding than catering to the masses. (3) Compared with the Financial Times, the ideological antagonism with China of NYT and WSP was even more obvious and has already priced in. The Wall Street Journal, which was an elite and economic oriented media, reacted the most fiercely and even posted a report named "China is the Real Sick Man of Asia", which had been widely criticized for its racist and anti-China stance. (4) The Sino-U.S. propaganda war has already begun yet quietly. News reports from these countries have gradually showed an increasingly fragmented and antagonistic situation since the political event in Hong Kong happened last year. Behind the logic of the politicization of the media, the era of journalistic professionalism seems to have come to an end.

Submission ID

3782

State's Adoption of Activist Visual Strategies: The IDF Combat-Documentation Squad

Authors

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Abstract

This paper examines state's adoption of activist's visual strategies in order to promote and legitimize its own narratives. Specifically, it looks at the Israel Defense Force's (IDF) new Combat-Documentation squad—a military force that trains soldiers as both fighters and photographers—as a case study. Based on interviews with seven former members of this unit, the paper shows how IDF has responded to the surge of eyewitness media online. It contends that IDF's use of social media as a key platform to promote its own narrative reflects the growing centrality of the digital visual landscape as an arena in which struggles over information power unfold. Thus, the emerging visual practices by the military can be better understood as a contemporary means of state weaponization of information rather than a transparent vehicle for the advancement of justice.

"In one hand they hold a camera and in the other, a gun" is the tagline of the new squad. The understanding that the camera and the gun are both useful combat weapons emphasizes how militaries are developing strategies to operate in today's media environment. Following the 2012 Israeli "operation pillar of defense" in Gaza—another war in which Israel's human rights violations were exposed to the world by Palestinians, activist groups and international media—visual

documentation was expanded from an exclusively home-front-based film unit to include the realm of the combat field.

Activists worldwide have generally supported state's adoption of visual technologies (for example, activists' support for police use of body cameras) because of their potential to enhance transparency and state accountability. Underpinning the reasoning for these initiatives is a deeply ingrained belief in the ability of images to serve as a transparent documentation record that could potentially expose wrongdoings. Similarly, IDF's initiative was welcomed by some Palestinians and activist groups. These trends, though, should make us pause for a moment.

Not only has visual information been long weaponized as a tool of governmentality, control and surveillance (e.g., Tagg, 1988; Mirzoeff, 2011; Parks, 2018), but also the conditions of what constitutes state power have changed significantly with the rise of digital information technologies (e.g., Price, 2015). In this sense, states' attempts to gain control over visual information creation and distribution is not surprising. The findings of this study, then, shed light on the nature of the visual practices implemented by the IDF, which is learning how to tap into key public platforms where activists have thus far been relatively successful in enhancing narratives of resistance. The analysis shows how instead of being a means for advancing transparency, the camera in the hands of combat soldiers is becoming a weapon on par with others.

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Submission ID

4062

INC/ESN An emerging technocracy with blockchain technology for a decentralised politics? A case of the appropriation of blockchain technology in China

Authors

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Abstract

As a consequence of the financial crisis in 2008, the past decade has witnessed how Bitcoin has emerged and poised to become an alternative monetary system, as one of the applications of blockchain technology. It has been well accepted in China as well, with over half of the Bitcoin miners in China. Its underlying blockchain technology brings alive the idea of such a financial system rid of control and interference of any political and financial authorities.

Bitcoin can be considered as a socio-technological assemblage featured with a peer-to-peer transaction and communication. It is based on decentralised technology that has been argued by scholars it could circumvent political and financial authorities. (Golumbia, 2016; Hayes, 2018, Narayanan A and Clark J, 2017; Nakamoto, 2008, Zimmer, 2017)

This paper presents an exploratory case study on the nascent blockchain technology in China. To examine how blockchain technology has been appropriated in China.

Based on two-year ethnography from 2018 to 2019 on Chinese bitcoin community, this paper will first examine the design of bitcoin technological infrastructure to reveal design choices that represent the values of its designers. The paper then examines experiences that Bitcoin brings to its Chinese adopters on influencing the operation of blockchain technology in China. The paper concludes by pointing out that the design of bitcoin represents a flourishing of libertarian values and giving rise to a technological agency with libertarian values. As Bitcoin penetrates into Chinese people's social networks, it becomes socio-technological assemblages that coordinate and enforce the libertarian values. Although, the decentralisation and its consequential autonomy brought by the blockchain technology constantly reconfigure the way Chinese people believe in technology and society, the intensification of neoliberalism through blockchain technology foreground a governing rationality where digital computation technology become a centralised power.

Submission ID

4118

Narrating the “truth” in HBO’s “Chernobyl”: political discourse in Russia and commercialization of a nuclear tragedy

Authors

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Abstract

"Conversations about truth and representation continue to dominate political and media discourses around the world. One of the most popular US-produced TV shows of 2019, HBO's miniseries Chernobyl uses the 1986 nuclear disaster to allegorically engage issues about misinformation and fake news in contemporary American and Russian political discourse. Yet in making a show about

“truth”, Chernobyl illustrates how truth is constructed. Going beyond the conflations and condensations characteristics of historical fiction, Chernobyl creates a new epistemological understanding of history by framing events in ways that serve its contemporary concerns. In order to defend the truth, it must lie about the past, making it more desolate and more deadly.

The significance of Chernobyl is not just the claims it makes, but rather that the audience’s discourse around Chernobyl accepts the claims. In addition to critical success in the United States, the show was also extremely popular in Russia. The show raised conversations about the nature of the political regime, censorship, transparency and social justice in Russia and further enabled increasing commodification of the nuclear disaster site in Ukraine. To capture Russian audience’s reception, we used both a quantitative graphing mapping the spread of Chernobyl discourse over 2019 across Russian language social media, and a qualitative analysis of a random sampling of comments from VK, Twitter and Facebook as well as analysing media coverage of the show-centred debates by both state-owned and private Russian media.

The remarkably wide response to the show demonstrates that the Chernobyl disaster largely remains an unspoken scar on the collective memory in Russia where the current regime is actively engaged in celebration of its past and contemporary military and geopolitical victories. This is particularly visible among the young urban viewers, who receive Western forms of mass knowledge production as a counter to suspicion about Russian mass media’s presumed alignment with the current political regime (Omelchenko, 2019; Szostek, 2016). Chernobyl becomes a counter-narrative framed by Russian viewers as oppositional, but such reading is problematic given the show’s particularly specific allegory. As Western forms of mass knowledge production dominate among the young audiences (Pilkington et al., 2002) in spaces like Russia and have the power to shape conversations about politics and history, we argue that shows such as HBO’s Chernobyl become an important case study for a critical analysis of the contemporary global media in context of misinformation and post-truth. Much academic attention has focused on Russian influence on American social media discourse, but the reverse is under-discussed. There is a need for a critical reflection around such shows that position themselves as an alternative and truthful voice in non-Western states."

Submission ID

4138