



Community Communication and Alternative Media Section

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

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- 1 These are the abstracts of the papers submitted to the IAMCR section or working group named above for presentation in the Online Conference Papers component of the 2021 annual conference.

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Online activism and local participation in the oil spill disaster in the Northeast of Brazil

Authors

Ms. Fatima Santos - UFF

Abstract

In the second half of 2019 a major environmental disturbance occurred on the coast of the Northeast region of Brazil: an unknown oil spill polluted extensive areas of open, closed sea, mangroves and rivers. Immediately, communities of fishermen, urban dwellers, environmentalists and protectors of the environment among biologists, teachers, students and residents of the cities affected by the oil spill got united to clean up the affected ocean areas. Alternatively, pages on Instagram were created by different groups to report what happened, call for volunteers to clean up and charge government officials with solutions to the environmental disaster. At the same time, the Brazilian media ignored the facts for the regional issue: the Brazilian Northeast is historically underprivileged in the mass media. This is the reason why the alternative social media accounts and reports were necessary during the times when the oil spread all over the areas: making sure people from other regions of Brazil and outside the country knew what was happening. The oil spill reached mainly the state of Pernambuco, one of the nine states in the Northeast. Thus, the territory of Pernambuco suffered the most with the social, environmental and economic consequences of such natural disturbance. This leads to the type of reports made by alternative media accounts: crossing the territorial perspective of state and founding it as a nation as if an imagined community taking place to guarantee its place under the light of media. Following the idea of breaking borders, in this present project I aim to analyze the impacts of social movements that rose on the social media platform Instagram in the time of the oil spill in 2019. First, I will briefly explain the importance of coastal areas to the development of Pernambuco in an economic-historical perspective followed by how mangroves, open seas and rivers are vital to the balance of the world's environment. Secondly, I shall recognize how communities can lead "the mediatization of local and translocal communitizations" (Hepp 209). The next steps include analyzing the results of the impacts of such community communications led by different groups online. It includes highlighting the importance of collective participation among civilians, the sense of *nation-ness* (Anderson 30), media activism in the post-modern era and the achievements of the online engagement: volunteers cleaning the affected areas, international reports as well as the online engagement quantified by numbers of "likes", comments and followers. As an achievement of the results of volunteer work in community



communication, I finally present how the sense of nation within the territory of Pernambuco is enough to break the media barriers imposed on the Northeast, creating a chain of online activism that goes into real life created and enriched by the local population.

Submission ID

93

Radios libres y normalización del catalán

Authors

Mr. Eloi Camps - Universitat Pompeu Fabra

Abstract

Los medios de comunicación comunitarios son actores importantes para reforzar la diversidad cultural y favorecer la pluralidad lingüística (Fuller, 2007). Asimismo, existen múltiples legislaciones y declaraciones oficiales que defienden los derechos de las minorías lingüísticas a disponer de canales de expresión adecuados (Cormack, 2005). Incluso en contextos donde no existe tal marco legal, la sociedad civil organizada impulsa medios comunitarios para utilizar las lenguas minoritarias en la esfera pública ante su escasa o nula presencia mediática.

Esta comunicación analiza el papel de las radios comunitarias –también llamadas libres– en la normalización lingüística del espacio catalán de comunicación, formado por los distintos territorios donde se habla catalán (Gifreu y Corominas, 1991). El estudio se centra en los años posteriores al fin de la dictadura del general Franco en España y el proceso de democratización, cuando el catalán empezó a recuperar el uso público y a superar su situación de minorización lingüística (Figueres, 2002). La nuestra es una indagación exploratoria y cualitativa. Analizamos si estas radios se proponían contribuir a la normalización, cuál era la presencia del catalán en su programación y su relación con otros agentes de normalización lingüística.

Nuestro estudio analiza emisoras que funcionaron entre 1979 y 1989, el período inicial de la normalización lingüística y del desarrollo de medios audiovisuales en catalán (Gifreu, 2014). Trabajamos sobre una muestra de 17 casos, proporcionalmente representativa de los territorios del espacio catalán. Realizamos una entrevista estructurada a un informante clave de cada estación y lo completamos con el análisis de contenido de las hojas de programación, en caso de estar disponibles.



Los resultados indican que las radios libres realizaron una contribución importante a la normalización de la lengua catalana cuando ésta se estaba iniciando y no gozaba de protección legal ni presencia mediática relevante. En conjunto, las radios libres reflejaron y fomentaron la pluralidad lingüística del espacio catalán de comunicación, previamente o en paralelo a iniciativas audiovisuales públicas y comerciales. Podemos considerarlas, pues, agentes informales y populares de la normalización lingüística. Nuestro estudio ayuda a entender el impacto social de los medios comunitarios en la habilitación de la diversidad lingüística, concretamente en un contexto de reconstrucción nacional y democrática, y corrobora las potencialidades de estos medios respecto a las lenguas minoritarias.

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Submission ID

104



The rise of the consumer sphere under the new short video activism strategy of Chinese consumers

Authors

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Abstract

Short-video-based social media platforms are becoming a common tool for an increasing number of consumers to safeguard their legitimate interests in China. In July 2018, an increasing number of homebuyers in Chengdu, China uploaded short videos of their offline protests against various housing quality problems of their new-buying houses onto the short video platforms. The clips spread out instantly and attracted massive attention of the public and the media. They successfully urged the Chengdu housing administration to establish a mutual communication platform to solve the problems between homebuyers and real estate companies. Similarly, In April 2019, a Female consumer sat on the hood of a Mercedes car in a dealership in Xi'an and protested against the engine oil leakage problem of her Mercedes car. The video of her tearful protest went viral on multiple short video platforms, received much attention from different parties, and finally got fair reimbursement.

However, there are few studies on this short video activism strategy of Chinese consumers (Yu, 2021). Hence, by drawing lessons from Habermas's public sphere theory and the "third realm" theory of Huang, and interviewing 12 key informants in four groups (Chinese consumers, media journalists, public relation officials and relevant government officials), and analysing one latest "short video activism" case that represents how short video platforms are deployed by consumers to make appeals, this article argues that Chinese consumers can effectively use short videos to share injustices they encountered with the general public and the mass media, then urge the government to amend their regulations on a specific area, and demand the company to correct their faults.

Consequently, this research has defined and explored a remodelled public sphere – "consumer sphere" that exists in today's Chinese society. This new model has filled the current research gap in the lack of a "public sphere" model that is more in line with China's actual conditions by providing empirical evidence. This "consumer sphere" model proposed and demonstrated in this research has also provided a new direction for the future research of Chinese scholars who study the "public sphere" theory in the field of media and communication studies: based on the actual situation of Chinese society, explore other new public spheres instead of simply applying the theory of "public sphere to Chinese society or simply criticizing it. This approach of examining the short video activism strategy of Chinese



consumers from the perspective of public sphere theories allows me to understand this strategy more comprehensively.

Submission ID

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REDES VIRTUALES DE SOLIDARIDAD VECINAL CONTRA UNA INFODEMIA

Authors

Dr. Eva G. Tanco - Universidad del Cauca

Abstract

La emergencia sanitaria causada por la pandemia de la COVID-19 generó, en España, una situación inédita de confinamiento poblacional general y distanciamiento físico. No obstante, solo se puede hablar de un “distanciamiento social”, fórmula empleada por gobierno y medios masivos españoles, si no se tienen en cuenta las múltiples iniciativas de solidaridad instaladas en las redes sociales virtuales, que cobraron protagonismo por su capacidad para mantener los lazos de apoyo y el tejido social sin poner en riesgo la obligatoria reclusión. La investigación que se presenta intenta contextualizar las posibilidades y limitaciones que ofrecen estas redes sociales para construir capital social y explorar la percepción de sus integrantes sobre la eficacia del control colectivo contra la desinformación. Se utilizaron técnicas de la etnografía virtual como camino metodológico apropiado para investigar de forma simétrica, participativa y autoetnográfica en ese entorno ausente de interacción física. En esta presentación se centrarán los resultados relacionados con las prácticas y las percepciones de los integrantes de estas redes en relación con el control colectivo contra la desinformación, y con el contenido político de los debates. A partir de las respuestas de los participantes, de la observación, la revisión documental y las entrevistas, se concluye que se dio una renovación y resignificación de la figura clásica del gatewatcher, diluido ahora en un ejercicio de anonimato grupal pero con prevalencia de sus clásicas funciones. Esta dinámica suscitó además una reacción de confianza en la capacidad de autogestión colectiva de la información, entre los participantes, y nos lleva a valorar de forma positiva el rol que las redes virtuales basadas en la solidaridad pueden jugar para apoyar a las instituciones y a los profesionales de la acción social en momentos de emergencia.



Submission ID

248

FridaysForFuture and the “kaleidoscope effect” between climate, digital and youth activism.

Authors

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Mrs. Stellamarina Donato - LUMSA University

Mrs. Arianna Bussoletti - Sapienza University of Rome

Dr. Francesca Comunello - Sapienza University of Rome

Abstract

After Greta Thunberg started her Friday school strikes in front of the Swedish Parliament in 2018, young people have been massively mobilizing for climate and social justice worldwide. The newborn FridaysForFuture movement (hereinafter: FFF) has effectively combined knowledge, mobilisation and communication, with social media being pivotal in spreading the protests while raising awareness about the climate crisis. This is why we attempt to unveil *the way climate activism, digital activism, and youth activism interplay until shaping this novel movement for climate and social justice.*

The theoretical framework we draw upon encompasses studies about social representations of climate change (Höijer, 2011; Fischer et al., 2012; Smith & Joffe, 2013; Jaspal et al., 2014; Castro, 2015; Ferrari et al., 2019, among others), research on technopolitics and the connective use of social media by grassroots movements (Castells, 2009; Bennett & Segerberg, 2012; Toret et al., 2015; Vaccari et al., 2015; Bakardjieva, 2015; Trerè, 2019, among others), and literature on participatory culture and politics in youth activism (Cohen et al., 2012; Jenkins et al., 2016; Vivienne, 2016; Earl et al., 2017; O’Brien et al., 2018; Ting, 2017; among others). To these strands of studies we add a deeper understanding on *the way FFF activists experience (RQ1a) social media usage practices and (RQ1b) climate activism, and (RQ2) how these experiences are mutually entangled.*



Within a broader ongoing qualitative research informed by an ecological approach (Barnes, 2008), interpretative framework (Morse, 1997) and transformative paradigm (Mertens, 2007), we carried out 4 focus groups with all-gender activists of the FFF-Rome group, aged between 13 and 26 years. The ethical protocol, based on an iterative and volitional consent, be it individual and collective (Nairn et al., 2020), reflects our epistemological posture as researchers committed to social change and accountable not only to the academy but also to the movement (McAteer & Wood, 2018; Gerlach, 2018). Accordingly, we have been reciprocating by sharing the research results, and engaging ourselves in the movement itself.

The thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998; Braun & Clarke 2006; Guest et al. 2014) of the focus groups' responses shows that the steady background noise of climate change and its effects in the long run resonates in the routine and constant technopolitical practices of FFF activists, who have found a natural habitat for climate activism in the connective action and participatory politics winding through social media platforms, schools, and squares. FFF activists conceive climate change as a crisis (a current but long-term problem) affecting each and everyone (a common problem) but young people at the forefront (a generational problem). Their activist practices (be they offline or online) reflect this same pattern, with social media being privileged environments attended by all users, but still a prerogative of young (and) activist ones, and protests timed along both the here-and-now, and forthcoming scenarios. This is how the environmental, generational and technological experience inherently *mirror each other* in shaping FFF.

Submission ID

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Women Journalists of Khabar Lahariya and Namaskar: Enabling Gendered Media Ecology in Rural India

Authors

Dr. Annapurna Sinha - Independent Scholar



Prof. Kanchan K Malik - Professor, Department of Communication, S. N. School of Arts and Communication, & Faculty Fellow, UNESCO Chair on Community Media, University of Hyderabad, India

Abstract

Media in India is dominated by men, and this is especially true in the case of newspapers – whether national or regional. It is rare to find a woman stringer in India, and various studies have revealed that there are negligible numbers of women journalists in the language press in India. Even in the national newspapers, there are not just less women in the newsrooms, but they continue to be given soft beats, while men get to cover the ‘serious’ news. In the top English language newspapers of India, although the presence of women journalists, the inclusion of women’s perspectives, and discussion of gender issues in the content is on the increase, but it is nowhere close to being considered an equal representation (GMMP, 2015).

What this research paper documents, however, is, how community newspapers in two distant districts of rural India have transformed this gender-imbalanced picture of the print media ecology. ‘Namaskar’ in Odisha and ‘Khabar Lahariya’ in Bundelkhand are changing the gendered narratives in media, and the women journalists of these community newspapers take pride in “invading” a field that is considered as, “mardon ka kaam” (men’s job) in the rural areas. Most women working for Namaskar and Khabar Lahariya are from the marginalized communities, with negligible access to media, and have gained their ground as journalists through unabated hard work against all odds. The all-women community newspaper, Khabar Lahariya, has come a long way in its journey and is run now as a multi-media news organization. Women at Namaskar too take the lead in reporting and several women’s groups from the community participate in news making.

Based on the in-depth case studies of these two community newspapers, this paper contends that such grassroots initiatives seek to address the gender gap in the access to communication spaces and enable a media ecology (Strate, 2017) that is gender sensitive. The women journalists foreground gender issues in these community newspapers and cover stories of the injustices faced by women in different spheres of life as well as their successes. Women have become the primary readers of the community newspapers, overcoming the challenges of low literacy levels through forming communities of practice (Lave and Wenger, 1991) around community newspapers where they read the newspaper in groups by helping each other in making sense of the news reports.



Building on the work on women empowerment (Kabeer, 1994; Cornwall, 2003); the gender dimension of community media (Pavarala and Malik, 2007, 2010; Malik, 2020), metamorphosis of community newspapers (Sinha and Malik, 2020), and the multi-theoretical approaches to community media (Bailey, Cammaerts and Carpentier, 2008), this paper argues that community newspapers contribute to giving marginalized women, a voice that matters (Couldry, 2010), and one that forges diversity and plurality of perspectives in the media environment through its participatory approaches, rhizomatic networks, and democratic practices.

Submission ID

363

The Development of Local Media Hybrids for Active Audiences. Craft and Precarious Journalism

Authors

Prof. Sergio Ricardo Quiroga - Instituto Cultural Argentino de Ed

Abstract

This paper is an initial description of the emergence, development and role of local media in the province of San Luis, Argentina, which were favored by the development of the web and social networks and the appearance of connection devices increasingly. They are small and satisfy the informational needs of citizens by offering alternative points of view and constitute a small barrier to political and economic power.

The category of "local media" can be novel to characterize small alternative media that with great difficulties try to offer different visions of reality from their subordinate journalistic practices. The local media are those that build and spread the local news and are characterized by hybridity and constant renewal. The space built by these local media allows people not only to be heard, but also to express their vision of reality, with a clear influence on the social and cultural norms that sustain the knowledge and exposure of the abuses of power.



These hybrid digital media, publishing on the web in the style of a digital newspaper, often have a radio station and a growing participation in social networks, making the web communication model a reality. The paradigmatic case of El Chorrillero (elchorrillero.com) and Villa Mercedes.Info (www.villamercedes.info) are examined. The analysis is formulated taking into account their news production, their networks and the interviews with journalists.

Possibly the mid-1990s, year after year began a permanent decline in the number of readers of paper newspapers. Easy desktop publishing on the Internet took little time to complete and required technical skills. Blogger was invented in the late 90s and that was your sea change. Some advertisers began redirecting their investments to digital sites. So social media changed distribution and a printed newspaper controlled the content and how that content was obtained because it controlled the distribution. The newspaper showed the best news, now Google does.

It is often observed that there are usually discrepancies between the interests that politicians make visible in their social networks and the concerns expressed by citizens, but in the case of these local media there is a clear affinity between them and their public.

Local media do not exist in all places and their subsistence is difficult. There is no adequate investment, technologies are primitive in some cases, and journalistic work has become precarious. Despite the progressive and incipient development of local digital media, favored by the emergence and availability of useful and available technologies, in many places we are witnessing true news deserts, communities without media that have informational difficulties to monitor what their officials do. public, what they do with public money and how they manage it. The precariousness of journalists is an emerging phenomenon in recent years in the Argentine context and is a clear difficulty of the local media in the province of San Luis and Argentina. Journalists appear in the mono-tax category, since they are not employees of the media.

Submission ID

377



Radio personalities: community radio broadcasters and the performance of community identity

Authors

Dr. Bridget Backhaus - Griffith University

Abstract

There is no shortage of opportunities to express identity in this digital age. From curated social media feeds and the echo chambers of selective news engagement, to the more insidious depths of personalised algorithms, in the contemporary digital landscape, identity is a meticulously scripted and fiercely protected performance. Though this represents an area of research ripe for investigation, the focus of this presentation is more low-tech. Community radio has, historically, been a space for voice, activism, and alternative discourse; a place for people to find their community whether that be those with similar taste in music, a shared cultural background or language, or even simply from the same place. The formation and expression of community identity is critical to the value of community radio and represents a significant part of community radio's role as a cultural resource

While community radio in Australia is a lively area of research, identity formation and expression represent a distinctly under-explored area. There has been extensive work conducted in the areas of audience studies (Meadows, Forde, Ewart, & Foxwell, 2007), community radio as social movement (Anderson, 2017), and community radio journalism in Australia (Forde, Foxwell & Meadows, 2003), yet very little that details how radio as a medium is used to express identity. This presentation explores how community radio facilitates the expression of community identity through broadcast content. The research employs the concepts of community media as rhizome (Bailey, Cammaerts and Carpentier, 2007) and the mediated self (Couldry, 2003) as theoretical frameworks in order to develop an understanding of the role of community radio and, more broadly, radio as a medium for identity expression. Drawing on a critical discourse analysis of programming from 10 community radio stations from the same geographic location, the findings of this research demonstrate the diversity in terms of content, broadcasters, and approaches to identity expression within a small area.

The implications of this research broadly serve to critically investigate the ongoing relevance of radio as a medium despite the increasing emphasis on digital media and podcasting. More specifically, the results illustrate the complex tools and approaches employed by community radio broadcasters to build and express a sense of community and identity. This research presents evidence of the enduring relevance of radio as a 'legacy media' particularly in relation to facilitating more democratic media



access. It also, however, points to the ongoing commercialisation of the Australian sector and the limits of audience engagement and community building imposed by more commercial approaches.

Submission ID

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Double Shooting: Citizen videography in Israel and Palestine

Authors

Prof. Liat Berdugo - University of San Francisco

Abstract

In 2013 Palestinian man named Muhammad ‘Awad was videotaping a protest in his village of Beit Ummar when he was hit squarely in the chest by an Israeli tear gas canister. ‘Awad was filming with a video camera issued to him by B’Tselem, an Israeli human rights organization which distributes cameras to Palestinians living in high-conflict zones as a means to give Palestinians power to expose human rights violations and seek redress. B’Tselem has gathered over 4,500 hours of footage, only a fraction of which is available to the public.

The blow of tear gas canisters has mortally wounded many Palestinian civilians, but luckily Muhammad ‘Awad survived and recuperated in a hospital. Yet the footage of his injury lived on, circulating in the international mediascape. In the seventeen-second clip, ‘Awad was positioned behind a mass of Palestinian demonstrators when an Israeli soldier took a few steps away from an army jeep, cocked his gun, and shot a tear gas canister directly at ‘Awad. The tear gas grows larger and larger in size as it nears the camera, its silver canister glowing hot white in the sun’s rays and blurring at the edges with speed. The canister then hit ‘Awad and he groaned in pain from behind the camera. The video ends with blurry pavement shots, and we understand that ‘Awad and his camera have both fallen to the ground.

There is a certain horror -- and power -- to images where the cameraperson suffers physical harm for their act of photography. But from whence does this power arise? In this paper I analyze videos from B’Tselem’s collection of Palestinian citizen-recorded media, and put forth a theory that the force of videos exhibiting mortal danger to videographers arises from the breaking of the cinematic “fourth wall.” That is, these videos make appeals directly to spectators because they enact a literal double shooting: when the gun shoots the cameraperson, it shoots us – the audience – as well. For a moment



we see the violent strike of the bullet from a first person perspective, as if by means of a first-person-shooter game in reverse. We spectators are momentarily in the direct line of fire. By breaking the fourth wall, these images do not remain neatly contained in the edges of the video frame. They demand a consideration beyond what Ariella Azoulay calls the “act of photography” that has produced them, instead forcing a consideration of the “event of photography” -- namely, a set of relations between a photographer, a subject, and a spectator that can be constantly reimagined and reinterpreted. With their force of action these videos galvanize an active spectator who does not merely “look” but “watches” in a reanimation of photography that offers new civic responsibilities and potentialities to images, themselves.

Submission ID

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Safeguarding Ethnic Cultural Identities through Community Radio: The Case of Radio Dhimsa in Odisha, India

Authors

Mr. Aniruddha Jena - Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad

Prof. vasuki belavadi - Department of Communication, University of Hyderabad

Abstract

This paper examines community radio as a form of ethnic media for safeguarding ethnic cultural identities. This paper 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 locational 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 contents in 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, 2003; Forde, Foxwell & Meadows, 2009; Ferrer & Retis, 2019; Bukhari, 2019; Viswanth & Arora, 2000). 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 ethnographic 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.

Submission ID

466

A Critical Overview of Development Communication in Nepal

Authors

Ms. Sujeena Shakya - Kantipur City College, Purbanchal University



Abstract

In developing countries like Nepal, a lack of communication among planners, media and people at the grass-root level, has limited the scope of development communication to information sharing, rather than facilitating dialogues across all levels. This article posits that the notion of development communication as well as development journalism has neither been properly introduced in academia nor practically utilized in the country, connecting multiple stakeholders.

The study reported here aims to analyze the situation, models, trends as well as key issues/challenges of development communication in both global and national context of Nepal. How can interactions and inter linkages among major development actors-development agencies, government, media and people be strengthened to investigate and identify development issues from the grass roots level through “dialogic” use of communication? Based on critical review of various literatures on development communication, this paper will seek to find answers to this question.

By reviewing research reports published by government and development agencies, including the National Planning Commission, World Bank and development scholars, it provides insights on understanding the role of development communication in uplifting the grass roots communities, along with connecting both global and national trends. It concludes with solutions to address the gaps in development communication, through “dialogic” use of communication, which promotes multiple levels of both horizontal and vertical communication among key development actors.

Key words: Development communication, development media, dialogic, grassroots, empowerment

Submission ID

575



A New Perspective on the Study of Public Media Literacy in China—An Investigation Based on the Dimension of Chinese Alternative Media Culture

Authors

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Abstract

With the rise of new media technology in China, alternative media has also begun to rise and attract a large number of audiences, affecting the daily lives of Internet users. From the perspective of political empowerment, the study attempts to go beyond previous studies, regarding "alternative media" as the description of "radical media", taking the dimension of cultural significance as the main axis, and from a critical perspective, to explore how alternative media affects citizens' media literacy in the special media context of China. Taking Chris Atton's definition of alternative media as the criterion, this paper studies the ecology of alternative media in China. It holds that the mode of operation and communication practice presented by alternative media in China play an optimizing role in the public's media literacy, and tries to construct a positive relationship between alternative media and public media literacy in order to achieve this goal. Active participation, interactive communication, innovation of content, so as to improve the purpose of media literacy. In order to provide a new research perspective for the optimization of media literacy, it is also a functional extension of alternative media in our media environment.

Submission ID

736



Narrating Community and Producing Social Space: An Ethnographic Study of a Suburban Migrant Community in Hyderabad, India

Authors

Mrs. Deepika Ratan - University of Hyderabad

Abstract

By foregrounding Henri Lefebvre’s “The Production of Social Space”, this paper explores the narrative strategies mobilized by an urban, working class migrant community in Hyderabad India. These narratives, I suggest, not only help the community to understand and communicate the sense of community to itself, but also contribute significantly to the production of social space.

By analysing the “community narratives” constructed by a suburban Odiya migrant community, this paper argues that the community narratives and the lived experiences of space, which Lefebvre terms as lived space, are interdependent and shape each other. This argument is built on the premise that the various strategies employed by the community help it to consolidate its identity and negotiate its place in the socio-political-cultural landscapes of the city.

This study is part of a larger ongoing research project on the industrial working class, Odiya (people from Odisha, a south eastern state of India) migrant community in Katedan, an industrial area on the outskirts of Hyderabad, the capital city of Telangana, India. This work should be seen in the wider context of internal migration in India, largely triggered by the neo-liberal economic policies of the government. India has 25 of the 100 fastest growing cities in the world and a significant source of this growth is rural-urban migration. This has led to crises in the cities and ‘space’, both physical and psychological, is at the centre of this crisis.

Not undermining the challenges and disruptions caused by migration, this paper, through participant observation and in-depth interviews with community members, attempts to demonstrate that communicative strategies centered on promoting a set of narratives about the community’s past and present reinforce internal solidarity and offer an ideal image of itself to the outside world. These narratives then also become a vital component of the process through which the community produces a sense of space, thereby rendering the concepts of space, community, and narrative dynamically interrelated.



Submission ID

748

MPS paper - Challenges for Social Movement Research in Contexts of Inequality: The MST in Brazil

Authors

Dr. Mayrá Lima - University of Brasilia

Dr. Solange Engelman - IELUSC College

Abstract

Research on social movements in Brazil is a fruitful area that brings up debate and discussion about the ways in which marginalised and underrepresented sectors of society succeed in demanding and achieving rights. The most common research approaches include attempts to explain the action of such organisations, their protest repertoires as well as strategic and tactical perspectives developed by social movements. The question guiding this chapter is thus: how does these types of research contribute to make social movements' demands visible in the public space, considering the contexts of inequality and criminalisation of social movements in Brazil? In this sense, the text problematizes the relations between research and the objectives of social movements, centering on the case of the Landless Workers Movement (MST), the main organisation acting in the struggle for agrarian reform in Brazil. We do this by analysing how postgraduate programmes in Brazil relate to MST as subject of research, looking into approved masters theses and doctoral dissertations in Brazilian universities during 2017.

Submission ID

766



MPS paper: Disrupting Settler Colonialism and Oppression in Media and Policy-Making: a View from the Community Media Advocacy Centre

Authors

Dr. Gretchen King - Lebanese American University

Abstract

The regulatory regimes that dictate media and telecommunications practices in Canada uphold the colonial settler state and do little to combat systemic racism in the media. This is in part due to communication policy-making processes that marginalize and disempower diverse communities. Too often policy makers and researchers neglect prioritizing the specific needs and rights of people who are racialized, Indigenous, or living with disAbilities to access and representation in media. Within this context, the Community Media Advocacy Centre (www.CMACentre.ca) was founded in 2015 to disrupt settler colonialism and oppression in the media. CMAC was co-founded by experienced media activists who worked for decades in the vibrant community and Indigenous broadcasting sectors within Canada. Today, CMAC is a registered non-profit organization uniquely comprised of academics, lawyers, policy consultants and media practitioners who prioritise the perspectives, voices and lived experiences of Indigenous Peoples, racialized people, and people living with disAbilities. CMAC prioritises these voices because they are underrepresented in the media landscape generally and noticeably absent from media policy processes. Through research, relationship-building, advocacy, and learning, CMAC works to foreground the experience and knowledge of people who are racialized, Indigenous, or living with disAbilities in media research and communication policy processes.

Submission ID

767



MPS paper: Dealing with Ethical Dilemmas in Activist Research on Social Movement Media

Authors

Dr. Paola Sartoretto - Jönköping University

Dr. Leonardo Custodio - Åbo Akademi

Abstract

This paper addresses dilemmas and strategies in dealing with ethical risks in ethnographic research. Based on the authors' research processes on social movement media in Brazil, we compare dilemmas arising from relationships – as Europe-based Brazilian researchers – with activists in Brazil. The widespread uses of digital media in political demonstrations and protests has created epistemological and methodological challenges to research on communication for development and social change. A key challenge lies on the relationship between the researchers and the researched. As Brazilian researchers in European institutions we become mediators of knowledge about Brazil and Latin America among research communities in Europe, experiencing ethical dilemmas regarding how we represent the groups about which we do research. We compare our experiences researching the communicative processes and media practices in the Brazilian Landless Workers' Movement and the trajectories in media activism of low-income youth in favelas of Rio de Janeiro, focusing on four different areas: (a) overcoming suspicion and resistance to researchers among activists; (b) justifying research to activists; (c) balance between science and advocacy; and (d) collaboration and dialogue. We conclude that by engaging in activist research, we become mediators between two realms of knowledge and action: academia and social movements.

Submission ID

768



MPS paper: The Ethics of Media Research with Refugees

Authors

Prof. Eugenia Siapera - University College Dublin

Dr. Sara Creta - Dublin City University

Abstract

This paper is structured around the argument that the literature on media ethics tends to ignore the political dimensions of ethical positions. In the literature, ethical dilemmas arise with respect to how the media can approach refugees; what might constitute an appropriate representation, and how must audiences be positioned vis-à-vis the distant suffering of refugees. However, in treating these as ethical questions from a philosophical-moral point of view, there is a tendency to overlook the political dimension that is always present in ethical positions. Secondly, in this discussion and notwithstanding important exceptions, the overall tendency is to focus on those who represent refugees and not on the refugee/migrant communities and their attempts to reclaim their media representation. This shows that the subject of research is turned into a voiceless object to be studied. This chapter foregrounds the politics of ethics by looking at political activist interventions by refugees themselves. The actions of refugee/migrant communities indicate a clear shift towards emancipation from imposed narratives, whether they come from the NGO and governmental sectors, the media or academic researchers. We argue that this shift represents a new phase in media activist ethics because through the political act of reclaiming their own voice, refugee/migrant communities resolve ethical dilemmas: very simply, for these communities the only ethical position is one that directly addresses the source of exploitation, subjugation and oppression. In this interpretation of ethics emerging from refugee and migrant activists themselves, media ethics and politics collapse into one another.

Submission ID

769



Countering the stigma of homeless people: The Swedish street paper "Situation sthlm" as a counter-hegemonic voice for the re-humanization of homeless people

Authors

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Dr. Vaia Doudaki - Charles University

Mr. Ali Ihsan Akbas - Bilkent University, Ankara

Ms. Tianyi Wang - Independent researcher

Abstract

Contemporary polarization debates often focus on the growing presence of extremist ideologies and the evaporation of the political centre. This focus comes at a cost, as it ignores structural practices of exclusion, that pitch mainstream society against stigmatized groups. In the case of homeless people, we can see how they are constructed as outgroup through the centrality of the home as site of civilization, the removal of social agency and the denial of citizenship. This paper aims to contribute to this discussion, by deploying Laclau and Mouffe's (1985) discourse theory to produce a (discursive-) theoretical re-reading of the homeless identity (or, in discourse-theoretical terms: the homeless subject position), analysing how the nodal points of home, agency and citizenship are constructed. Street papers, publications that are distributed, and in a modest way co-produced, by homeless people, offer alternative voices that attempt to counter this hegemonic stigma by re-humanizing homeless people (Daly, 1996; Whang and Min, 1999; Howley, 2003). They do this through the deconstruction of the bourgeois home, the re-allocation of agency, and the defence of homeless rights and citizenship (Doudaki and Carpentier, 2019). In this paper, we will focus on the Swedish street paper "Situation sthlm", analysing a content sample of 6 months, 12 interviews with producers and vendors and a set of brief participant observations. Particular about this street paper, and the Swedish context, is that it is operating in a society which is still structured—at least to some degree—by the principles of the welfare state. Methodologically driven by discourse-theoretical analysis, this paper will demonstrate how "Situation sthlm" counters polarization and stigmatisation, in a context where the welfare state is re-treating, but also what the limits of these counter-hegemonic strategies are.



Submission ID

792

Diálogo de saberes de y con mujeres mayas en un proyecto de crianza de animales de traspatio para el auto-sustento familiar

Authors

Dr. Carmen Castillo Rocha - Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán

Dr. Roxana Quiroz Carranza - Universidad Autónoma de Yucatán

Abstract

En México, como en muchos países, existen comunidades indígenas en situación de marginalidad que por condiciones socio-históricas, fueron interrumpidas en sus procesos de transformación social, quebrantando su capacidad de auto-sustento y arrastrándolas a formas de producción y consumo dominantes en las sociedades capitalistas occidentales.

La imposibilidad de acceder en condiciones justas y favorables a los productos alimentarios disponibles en aquellos espacios donde prevalecen la oferta y la demanda propias de las economías de libre mercado, terminó por imponerse a una diversidad de pueblos indígenas mediante procesos de dominación económica, colonial y de exclusión de los conocimientos ancestrales (de Sousa Santos, 2009).

La presente investigación expone una experiencia de crianza de gallinas desarrollada por un grupo de mujeres mayas yucatecas en su propio territorio, y articulada con un proyecto social en apoyo a la sustentabilidad de su comunidad (ubicada en Yucatán, México). Dicha experiencia nos permitió analizar cómo en este contexto adverso se han estimulado o preservado ciertas prácticas tradicionales de auto-sustento, basadas en la crianza de animales para el consumo doméstico-familiar. Asimismo, pudimos adentrarnos en los conocimientos negociados que se manifiestan en los procesos comunicativos comunitarios.

Es importante destacar que el conocimiento vernáculo de esta comunidad maya está en contacto con el conocimiento occidental. De ese contacto, pueden generarse conflicto, sumisión, o colaboración. Para



observar esto, decidimos emprender la experiencia antes mencionada, conjuntamente con el grupo de mujeres maya, con el objetivo de que nos permitiera mejorar la disponibilidad nutricional en los hogares, fortalecer la comunicación y el conocimiento comunitarios, y a la vez observar la interacción entre los conocimientos vernáculos y occidentales con relación a la crianza de gallinas.

Encontramos 1) que estas mujeres poseen conocimientos propios suficientes para emprender la crianza de animales de traspatio; 2) en las tareas realizadas mezclan conocimientos nativos y occidentales; 3) aunque pueden hacer las actividades de manera independiente, ven necesario el apoyo de los conocimientos occidentales, particularmente en la figura de un veterinario, y 4) en general pueden emprender la crianza de gallinas de manera exitosa, pero carecen de recursos económicos para iniciar un proyecto doméstico de esta naturaleza.

El diálogo de saberes constituye la metodología cualitativa (Hernández y otros, 2017) aplicada en este proyecto social. Tal metodología nos orientó para la comprensión de las prácticas y conocimientos compartidos de y con las mujeres mayas participantes en el proyecto, así como en el entendimiento de los procesos comunicativos que se articularon en el mismo.

Submission ID

838

Anti-Corruption Practices in the Digital Era: the Role of Media in Whistleblowing Initiatives from Below.

Authors

Ms. Alice Fubini - University of Bologna

Ms. Alessandra Lo Piccolo - Scuola Normale Superiore

Abstract

The ubiquitous presence of digital media in contemporary societies has contributed to reshape and broaden activists' repertoires of action related to contentious issues, as the struggle against corruption. Recently, anti-corruption studies have singled out the role played by digital media in fostering civil society efforts in anti-corruption practices. Similarly, social movement studies have dedicated a large share of their efforts to investigate the ways in which media practices interact with processes of mobilization emergence and endurance. These perspectives have recently crossed their paths to assess



how digital media impact upon grassroots anti-corruption initiatives in terms of practices, mechanisms, and processes. However, scarce attention has been paid to the way in which digital media affect social movements consequences at the political level and more precisely during the different stages of the institutionalization processes. On the contrary, this work extends the analysis to the mediating role that civil society actors play over the implementation phase of anti-corruption policies, increasingly fostered by the strategic use of digital media. To explore this matter, this study focuses on the whistleblowing phenomenon, framed as an anti-corruption practice that aims at disclosing illegal, immoral, or illegitimate institutional behavior from below. Drawing on an interdisciplinary theoretical framework, this work looks at the effect of digital media over the whistleblowing process to shed light on the role of civil society organizations as necessary intermediaries in the anti-corruption field.

Building on the Italian case, this work draws on a qualitative research design which combines interview material and documents analysis. Nowadays, within the Italian context, major whistleblowing initiatives from below are coordinated by civil society organizations, among which we have selected two case studies that use different repertoires of media in their anti-corruption practices: 1) Whistleblowing PA, an open-source whistleblowing software based on digital reporting system for public administrations provided by Transparency International in collaboration with Hermes Center for Transparency and Digital Human Rights. 2) Linea Libera, based on traditional reporting channels as a telephone service and a mailbox dedicated to potential whistleblowers and victims or witnesses of corruption, conceived by LIBERA Associations Names and Numbers Against Mafias. These actors were already involved in the campaign Vocidigiustizia, the grassroots initiative that led to the approval of the whistleblowers' protection act in 2016. Following the positive but partly unsatisfactory result of the campaign, civil society actors kept on mobilizing on the issue and obtained relevant refinements of the legislation at the administrative level, also taking advantage of the window of opportunity offered by the 2019 European legislation. This article suggests that initiatives based on the strategic use of digital whistleblowing platforms have indeed granted grassroots organizations a role of intermediaries in the accountability field.

Submission ID

842



Folk songs, Loudspeakers and Internet Celebrities: Community Communication and Collective Collaboration of Ethnic Minorities in China among COVID-19 Pandemic

Authors

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Prof. Liao Weimin - School of Humanities and Communication, Dongbei University of Finance and Economics

Abstract

Since the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic, the ethnic minority community in China demonstrated their wisdom and ability in communication and collective action. Based on the data mining and content analysis of 3714 micro-bloggers, this study finds that ethnic minorities with different cultural characteristics gave their outstanding answers in this great examination: folk songs, loudspeakers and internet celebrities, showing a comprehensive communication strength and collective collaboration ability from local community to outside cyberspace. It has built a solid “Great Wall” for people's life and health with efficient organization and mobilization, a positive and autonomous participation and initiative, and a driving force and creativity in a risk environment.

First of all, in some microblogs with high forwarding and communication influence, we can find that various of communication tools are adopted for the epidemic prevention and dissemination in ethnic minority areas, such as Zhuang folk songs, Mongolian traditional musical instruments, Tibetan drama and opera, and artistic expressions of various ethnic cultural traditions, so as to make the epidemic information and the knowledge of scientific prevention disseminated rapidly, and make it well-known to people.

Secondly, in the physical community prevention and control, the means to effectively block the transmission of COVID-19 virus in the community is to make all people being fully informed by the knowledge of prevention and control the pandemic, to ensure that the social distance should be kept and the flow of people should be restricted. Thus, loud speakers are necessary and are wildly used to repeated announcing strong information about COVID-19 pneumonia epidemic in local ethnic minority community in suburban and rural area.



Thirdly, the main body of news reports about COVID-19 pandemic is on social media, such as WeChat, Weibo (Chinese micro-blogs), Various short video platforms. There are mainly institutional media and opinion leaders, big V users and some new internet celebrities. Generally speaking, the official agencies and mainstream media mainly report the pandemic information in ethnic minority areas with positive content, mainly focusing on strengthening the publicity for information releasing. It can be seen that all ethnic groups, like pomegranate seeds, hold together closely, have the sense of national community, show the national cohesion, and common resistance against panic to the pandemic, to a certain extent, constitute a strong construction of the community.

On the above basis, the following three targeted suggestions are put forward for future community communication and collective collaboration: 1) strengthen the minority language reports, and use the relevant advantages to expand the scope of information dissemination. 2) Enrich the content release form and strengthen the in-depth report. 3) Release information in time to eliminate time difference. In general, the purpose of this paper is to enrich the theoretical studying about community communication and collective collaboration of ethnic minorities for facing huge disaster in the world.

Submission ID

897

Community Radio a Safe Space for Women in the Slums of Nairobi, Kenya

Authors

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Dr. Elske van de Fliert - The University of Queensland

Prof. Pradip Thomas - The University of Queensland

Abstract

Whilst a police station in the community is a place to report problems affecting people in the community, the women of Kibera and Mukuru slums in Nairobi are changing the narrative and communicating issues to community radio station serving them. Evidence in support of this position emerged from a broader study that aims to understand how community radio can contribute to the empowerment of women living in informal settlements in Nairobi. The study specifically addresses



how women in the slums engage with and perceive community radio and associated listening groups. Focus group discussions with women who participate in listening groups of Pamoja FM and Ruben FM revealed that these community radio stations have become the first choice for women to report (1) emergencies like fire breakouts, (2) a missing child, and (3) gender-based violence (GBV) in the community. Further, Pamoja FM and Ruben FM community radio are providing a platform to young mothers to share challenges and experiences and gain emotional support. They also serve as a source of guidance for teenage/adolescent girls, and as a space for women to develop and support one another. These stations have become women's favourite due to the trust that has been established through women's participation in community radio listening groups, and as audience, community radio employees and volunteers. Through call-ins, SMSs, social media posts and face-to-face interactions, women began to contribute to their favourite programs and topics on community radio. Radio programmes that particularly targeted women empowerment led to women gaining the courage to report as well as speak out against injustice. They also learnt to be entrepreneurs, both individually and collectively, gained the confidence to speak in public, and became encouraged to pursue careers of their choice. Study participants reported that more women are now seeking leadership positions in the community, and they are more aware of harmful cultural practices violating their rights. Further analysis of the above findings in relation to the strategies employed by the radio programmers will make an important contribution to our understanding of how community radio can be used to contribute to the empowerment of women.

Submission ID

903

WeChat Group and migrant community: The subjectivity and modernization of Chinese poverty-alleviation relocation migrants

Authors

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Abstract

Information Communication Technologies (ICTs) play a role in the construction of the relationship and communication network of a community. Based on the context of poverty-alleviation relocation policy in China, this article conducts a research on migrants' use of WeChat Group, a multi-person chat service in WeChat which is a leading Chinese social media platform, exploring the embeddedness of WeChat Group into the poverty-alleviation relocation community and unfolding the functions of the chat service performing in the process of migrants' construction of their subjectivity and modern transformation. With the method of in-depth interview and online observation, this article finds that WeChat Group bridges between the virtual world and real life of migrants, reflecting the power relations of grid management in the poverty-alleviation relocation community. As virtual communities, WeChat Groups facilitate the construction of migrants' subjectivity, with the self-othering of migrants extending from the real world to the virtual field. Finally, in the process of modern transformation, migrants are supported by WeChat Group in the aspects of information communication and human interaction.

Submission ID

1023

The emergence of an alternative economy behind the Umbrella Revolution: A new process of socio-spatial transformation within the Pearl River Delta region

Authors

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Abstract

“When we take off our masks, the world will see us as natives; when we wear them, we are you.” _
Subcomandante Marcos

Nearly 30 years after the ZAPTISTA, Hong Kong's 2019 uprisings in various urban districts once again shook down the world, the multitude paralyzing the circulation of capital in the world's financial hubs



under the authoritarian ruling and a new chapter in the urban alternative economy was written. Whether the nine-month-long democracy movement is characterized as revolution or rebellion, it should be seen as a revelation of China's self-contradiction under the turbulent class antagonism and unsustainable reform behind the new globalization "Made in China 2025".

In the first part of this paper, by means of a half-year field investigation, a series of the grass-roots uprising within the Pearl River delta was sorted out—the anti-demolition struggle in Kowloon (1993), the alternative economy self-organization in Sham Shui Po (2010), and the container terminals labor uprising in Kwai Tsing(2013). From within China are the Honda factory strike incident in Foshan(2010), Foxconn worker's cross-border struggle (2015), and Shenzhen Jasic Technology worker's rights incident (2018). The second part will be based on interviews with the new working class who participated in the 2019 Anti-Extradition Law Amendment Bill Movement in Hong Kong. After the Reform and Opening-up from 1978, the Hong Kong economic zone siphoned off the rural areas' surplus population from South China and became the most labor-intensive manufacturing center in the history of the human industry — the “World Factory” established after twenty + years after the transformation of Internet technology and the new financial matrix that how the traditional working class has been abandoned by the elite in its drive for progressive reform. The third part uses the concept of platform cooperativism to explain how the Digital Natives, who have been given a key role in the process of the fight— accomplish the information production by combining the new technologies of urban production structure. How China responds to the global wave of identity-based social movements,defensive exclusion of workers and consumers, and anti-unilateral hegemony will determine its future position in the world.

Catalogs: Activism、 Genealogy 、 Grassroots mobilization、 Identity、 Information have-less

Submission ID

1137

Research on self-identity and social identity of new marginalized group in Chinese online community Douban

Authors

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Dr. Yini Wang - Hunan University

Abstract

Marginalized group refers to people ignored by society that occupy fewer social resource than mainstream groups, and are marginalized in economic, political, cultural, and religious participation, and others. With the rapid development of social media, more and more groups turn to social media platforms for needs satisfaction. “New marginalized group” therefore comes to the fore extending the meaning of marginalized group. It represents people who generally lack effective emotional support and healthy interpersonal relationships in their real life but resort to online communities for self-expression. Douban, an interest based Chinese online community which is characterized by user generated content and groups that share similar tastes for books, movies, music, etc., has become such a space for various new marginalized groups, for instance, people suffering from social phobia and people with the experience of domestic violence.

This paper studies how the self-identities and social identities of new marginalized group members develop on Douban by applying the theoretical framework of stigmatization and social identity. It adopts both quantitative and qualitative methods including model calculation and netnography which consists of participatory observation, indepth interviews and textual analysis. 19 marginalized groups, each with more than 10,000 users were selected from Douban. Python was used to crawl and analyze the text of posts publicized in the groups. The researcher interacted in the online communities on Douban and implemented a 6-month participatory observation. 11 representative users were invited to indepth interviews. This paper finds that new marginalized groups presented the character of “small world”, anonymity and decentration. As stigmatized in real life, new marginalized groups turned to Douban group to look for people in similar situations. They expressed negative feelings and shared traumatic experiences with group members. Through online interactions, their emotions were sustained and their notion of themselves being marginalized and different from normal people was strengthened. Moreover, through offline interactions with other group members, this cohort also built good social relationships and developed better understanding of their social identities.

Submission ID

1139



A decolonial research? Non-indigenous academia and indigenous media and communication practitioners

Authors

Dr. Claudia Magallanes Blanco - Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla

Abstract

This paper uses dialogue as a springboard to discuss the possibilities of a decolonial relation between non-indigenous academia and indigenous media and communication practitioners.

Based on my trajectory working with community media and indigenous peoples in Mexico for the past 15 years I discuss indigenous communication as a key aspect for the political project of decolonization. I argue that communication, as understood and used by indigenous peoples, is both an ontology and an epistemology and reflect on the knowledges I have acquired derived from the dialogues I have had with the individuals and their practices and the lessons learnt on how to go about doing activist research.

I draw on Linda T. Smith (2012) when she argues that researchers working for social (and cognitive) justice contribute to social change while building a career from the margins, paying special attention to the integrity of the research and of researchers, developing a strong work ethics and cultural sensibility as well as a keen and reflexive mind to hold an epistemic vigilance about our practices. From this perspective I focus on three main themes in this article. 1) The personal lessons and transformations in my research practices emerged from my ongoing dialogue with indigenous peoples and community communications practitioners. 2) How to approach Eurocentric knowledge processes in dialogue with the indigenous communication matrix. And 3) How to deal with the tensions emerging in academia and its institutions while doing activist research on communications with indigenous peoples and community communication practitioners.

Submission ID

1260



Participación, sostenibilidad y redes del tercer sector de la comunicación en España

Authors

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Dr. Laura Bergés - Universitat de Lleida

Abstract

La red es una de las estructuras más comunes de organización entre los medios del tercer sector. Partiendo de la colaboración física y abarcando el entorno digital, ya sea asociándose entre medios de índole semejante, así como con otras organizaciones de la ciudadanía o con activismos de los más diversos ámbitos (legal, técnico, periodístico...). Del grado de interconexión, intensidad, cohesión o centralidad de dichas redes dependerán factores tan relevantes como la sostenibilidad misma de los medios del tercer sector de la comunicación, así como su capacidad de articular la participación que los define, dos de las características esenciales a la hora de valorar el cumplimiento de sus objetivos.

Precisamente las redes de medios del tercer sector de la comunicación, su estructura y organización, sus objetivos y su incidencia en la sostenibilidad y participación de dichos medios, son el objeto de este capítulo, el cual repasa su historia y principales características en España.

Así, el presente trabajo pretende analizar cómo las redes de medios del tercer sector han tenido como principales ámbitos de trabajo la acción político-legal, la coproducción de contenidos, la formación y el desarrollo técnico, cuatro ámbitos estrechamente relacionados con la sostenibilidad de sus miembros. Y, por otro lado, analizar en qué medida los medios del tercer sector se conectan también a otras redes transdisciplinares -que van más allá de los propios medios-, articulando así mecanismos de participación en los procesos comunicativos y generando nuevas dinámicas de colaboración.

Este capítulo toma como fuentes de análisis las diferentes investigaciones desarrolladas sobre redes y medios comunitarios, así como investigaciones propias, desarrolladas, precisamente, en el marco de la Red de Investigación en Comunicación Comunitaria, Alternativa y Participativa (RICCAP), como parte también de este conjunto de interconexiones en las que se desarrollan los medios del tercer sector.

Submission ID

1271



Networked communication and activism. Visibilization and support to the cause of the victims of the 2017 fires (Portugal)

Authors

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Prof. LUIS LOUREIRO - LUSOFONA UNIVERSITY CICANT

Prof. RUI PEREIRA - Lusófona University

Abstract

Assuming the communication in digital social networks and the networked activism as theoretical frameworks, this article intends to analyze the communication in networks initiated and maintained by the MAAVIM movement - Associative Movement for Supporting the Victims of the Midões Fires, which was constituted on October 19th 2017. This research is part of a broader study that examines the activisms emerging from the great fires that hit central Portugal, in June and October 2017, immediately followed by the resurgence of blogs, websites, individual and collective pages, collaborative platforms, based upon citizens' initiatives. In this context our aim is to generically analyze: (1) the communicational interactions and the social and political actions and interventions of these citizen associations who created online communication platforms and, simultaneously, gave rise to social movements and public demonstrations; (2) the effects and repercussions of these communicational practices at the level of the local communities, traditional media, public authorities and audiences. This presentation fits within the first of these two analytical frameworks.

Following a survey of empirical data gathered out of the communicational exchanges both in the digital networks and in the public demonstrations that took place, several questions arise such as: which communication media (text , image, video, etc.) were used in the digital networks by these associations; to which extent and in which way is manifested the intended effect of conferring visibility to the cause of the victims and to achieve its presentification i.e. its maintenance over time in the public eye; to which extent have these online community platforms constituted or not “virtual communities”; which e-mobilizations resulted in actual demonstrations and collective actions on the streets, and what were their objectives and consequences; what is the content of textual and conversational communication in terms of social and political intervention; to which extent have both the digitally



networked action (DNA) and the networked activism instituted an alternative virtual public space that became a basis and a resource for social and political action.

Regarding MAAVIM, who develops a work based on giving assistance and direct support to the victims of the 2017 October fires, the proposed analysis will focus on a survey of the contents published on their Facebook page from October 2017 to the end of 2018 (please note: this temporal delimitation will be justified).

Computer Mediated Discourse Analysis (CMDA) will be applied to analyze data and discuss results aiming to demonstrate (or not) a previously identified element: the messages (texts, videos) published on the MAAVIM Facebook page aim to support the victims of the fires. What is questioned and intended to be demonstrated is whether its contents (concepts and statements) and the frequency of their occurrence are or aren't produced within the objective of making the cause visible and of keeping it in the public sphere over time.

Submission ID

1300

Development of New Media Space through Alternative Journalism in Syria after Arab Uprisings.

Authors

Mr. Bishal Sharma - Northwestern University Qatar

Ms. Selina Atat - Northwestern University Qatar

Abstract

Arab Uprisings (2010-2011) have ushered a range of alternative media platforms like online radio, citizen videos, graffiti, and various publications by/for the Syrian community to express their voices. The fragmented activists, state actors and international media offer competing political narratives about Syria. This paper examines the development and trajectory of digital media platforms that offer a space to develop a public discourse about Syrian politics. The media space within Syria is characterized by censorship, so the digital platforms transcend the notion of state boundaries and includes the activists, diasporic Syrian communities and others who are interested in cultural and political issues about Syria.



Using a case study approach, we examine an alternative media platform called *SyriaUntold* which was founded in 2012. *SyriaUntold* serves as a news producer and curator that captures and documents the Syrian conflict. Currently based in Germany, this website publishes narrative features, investigative reports, and in-depth analyses that highlights socio-political dynamics and Syrian civil society. We use a multi-theoretical approach highlighted by Bailey et al. (2008) to describe and evaluate the participation, accessibility, representation, trans-hegemony, and the elusiveness related to the digital media platform. Since alternative media cannot be understood in a monolithic way, we examine how *Syria Untold* develop overlapping multiple trajectories for multiple communities, vibrant civil society, and counter-hegemonies. We support our analysis using archival methods and in-depth interviews with journalists, activists, content creators, and developers of the organization. The analysis of *SyriaUntold* reveals that despite being described as one of the worst places for journalists, *SyriaUntold* has extended participation to include the trans-hegemonic alliances and the involvement of Syrian and non-Syrian communities sharing a similar concern to represent the voices in Syria. Interviews with digital journalists suggest that *SyriaUntold* aims to become counter-hegemonic and third voice by reporting on pressing social, cultural, and political issues which do not necessarily align with the western media, radical Islamic groups, and the state-owned media. The interdependencies and elusiveness of the digital and Alternative media groups the role and importance in credible content curation, reconciling public views, and shaping the public discourse in the mainstream media as well. As with many Arab digital platforms (Ikyfada, Mada Masr), *SyriaUntold* aims to achieve inclusiveness, professionalism, and credibility by voicing out about the unheard but pressing issues. Like many dissident alternative media platforms, major challenges include censorship, political polarization, fragmentation of public opinions, and dependency for sustainability.

Key words: Alternative media, Digital media, Online activism, Civil societies, Diasporic media, Syria, Arab-Spring, Trans-hegemony

Submission ID

1544



Assemblage theory, communicative assemblages and problematising the notion of ‘borders’ in community communication

Authors

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Abstract

This paper proposes a theoretical reflection on the notion of ‘borders’ and discusses its implications for issues of community socio-cultural preservation and change. It draws on assemblage theory as conceptualised by Gilles Deleuze, Félix Guattari and more recently Manuel DeLanda and its application to communication. Assemblages are the building blocks of natural and social life. They are constituted, dissolved and reconfigured through processes of territorialisation and deterritorialisation, which carry with them the constant making, dissolution and re-configuration of borders. Assemblage theory enables a fresh look at theorising borders. First, it suggests that processes of territorialisation and deterritorialisation – and associated borders, are provisional fixations, which may gain some stability over what may seem like long periods of time, but will remain temporary. Second, assemblages may be constituted at multitudes of scales that interrelate and overlap – for example at the level of a community, of groups within the community and at individual level. The implication is that the borders that come with them are relative to the assembling entities and elusive.

The paper discusses these aspects in relation to processes of information exchange and communication. It fleshes out the concept of “communicative assemblages” as assemblages whose primary function is to produce and exchange information, and shows how these play a critical role in defining borders instantiated at various scales, community to individual.

These notions are illustrated through empirical research with two Roma minority communities in the UK and Romania. The Roma transnational minority is considered an example of a persisting cultural system, a quality associated with its strong intra-community orientation. While there are various different groups of Roma, and they have all adopted to various degrees the language and customs of host populations in different countries, many Roma groups still maintain their cultural identity, sticking together as a community and abiding by ancestral social values and norms.

Thus, Roma communities are particularly insightful settings for researching borders and the interstices between one’s own and other, inside and outside, and processes of preservation and change. The paper



approaches these processes through a communicative assemblages lens, looking at information flows and networks and the making, dissolution and reconfiguration of borders in concrete cases when the agents are going through processes of change. Stories of change of individual Roma members will elucidate the importance of communication at the borders, and how these communication hotspots, through increased frequency, gradually come to challenge pre-existing borders and reconfigure them, enabling the agent to join in novel communicative assemblages. When these assemblages stabilise, for example forming into interpersonal networks, we witness the temporary fixation of new borders, relative to the individuals that enact them and at times ignoring pre-existing community borders.

This paper will contribute to on-going debates about borders and border-making in community communication studies, challenging established dichotomies such as global/local, or physical/digital, and arguing instead for the provisional, elusive and relative nature of borders constituted at different scales, and the critical role of communication in their configuration, temporary stabilisation and transformation.

Submission ID

1773

Revolutionary Music in Lebanon and Egypt: Alternative imaginaries for self-representation and participation

Authors

Ms. Sahar Bou Hamdan - Northwestern University - Qatar

Ms. Bouthaina El-Kheshn - Northwestern

Abstract

Around the world, many communities and social groups are absent, misrepresented, or stereotyped in mainstream media. Whether it is done deliberately to avoid state opposition, or calculated for lack of commercial ‘significance’, exclusion from the media results in significant community absences from the public sphere as well as a decrease in political participation. In these contexts, alternative media play a vital role in offering meaningful self-representation and political participation. Alternative media are often used as a tool for the marginalized, allowing them to represent themselves and make their voice heard. These communication tools become vitally important in revolutionary contexts, where



people rise to stand up against the injustices of their respective governments. In particular, revolutionary music serves as a form of alternative media that motivates and mobilizes a fragmented audience into a united crowd. Revolutionary music can be utilized in sit-in protests to keep the demonstrators motivated, or it can be professionally produced and disseminated in an attempt to mobilize the crowd as well as articulate popular demands. In the process, it serves as a source of hope and inspiration in societies suffering from repression under their respective governments.

Following Bailey et. al in *Understanding Alternative Media* (2008), we evaluate the role of revolutionary music ten years after the Arab Spring. Our goal is to examine how music becomes a weapon revolutionaries use in the midst of a humanitarian crisis to combat oppressive tyrannies in the Arab world. In this paper, we examine two specific examples of revolutionary music in the Middle East: Cairokee in Egypt and DJ Madi K in Lebanon. Both artists find revolutionary elements integrated into the art of lyrics, melody, harmony, and rhythm. While music offers a space to articulate alternative imaginaries of representation, artists remain subjects to structural challenges. Essentially, we want to explore how these artists served their role as a form of alternative media and to what extent were they successful in reaching their goals.

Using archival research and in-depth interviews, this paper starts by offering a case study approach to revolutionary music in the Middle East. After a review of theoretical and conceptual approaches, we review the socio-economic and political contexts behind the emergence of alternative media in Lebanon and Egypt. The paper offers a detailed analysis and evaluation of the case studies identifying shared media practices and competencies. Through singing along with these artists, protestors express their rage, antagonism, and opposition against unjust governments. We propose that music is an effective way to bind revolutionaries together and build a persistent community when demanding change and reform. We will explore the limits and potential for revolutionary music in these locations, and how it shapes an alternative way of self-representation and political participation.

Submission ID

1785

Learning from each other: reciprocity and comparability

Authors

Dr. Andrew O'Baoill - National University of Ireland Galway



Abstract

To what extent can community media projects benefit from the experiences of those in other cultural settings? What types of lessons maintain saliency and relevance when transferred from one context to another?

This paper offers an analysis of three key questions in attempting an assessment of community media projects:

- What is the role of ideology in defining success for community media projects?
- What is the utility of comparisons, across temporal and geographic boundaries, in assessing such projects?
- What are the limits of arbitrage as a strategy for projects seeking to operate within dominant systems that are not innately sympathetic to community media?

These are among the questions raised by an ongoing project exploring the issue of sustainability in community media projects. This paper will discuss the value (and limitations) of cross-cultural information sharing to community media practitioners and scholars, drawing on theory and lessons from this project. Drawing on the experiences of community media practitioners across North America and Europe, as well as a wider set of case studies from contemporary and established literature, this project has examined these tensions, and the strategies adopted by those working in the sector.

However, one of the unavoidable complexities of such an exploration is the extent to which some aspects of a case study are particular to that project, and the extent to which generalisations can be drawn. While some distinctions are straight-forward, there are a range of issues that are tied up in particular contexts - e.g. regulatory frameworks; organisational cultures; the socio-cultural role of community media - and which, nonetheless, allow some transfer of lessons between projects. In addition, the mission and goals set for the project can be in conflict with dominant social system, requiring strategies of arbitrage and compromise, which offer a dynamic and uncertain set of benefits and trade-offs.

It is in the uncertain middle-ground – where comparisons and evaluations are possible, but non-trivial – that this paper is based, analysing the conditions under which useful lessons can be drawn from one project for the sector as a whole, or for particular sub-sectors of it, and also the constraints that limit generalisability and comparison. The findings will be valuable to others engaged in comparative work in community media, and to those thinking about the role of community media research.



Exploring questions of sustainability offers a bridge between questions of mission and those of implementation. It allows a focus on the tension between ideology and praxis, and on the decision-making process undertaken by practitioners. In temporal terms, it focuses on the transition from start-up to institution, from the energy of activism to the (relative) stability of long-term projects. The paper draws on scholars exploring media activism, including Tufekci, Castell, Kidd, and Fuchs, as well as work that examines more long-term projects, from Howley, Forde, and others.

This paper forms part of a larger project, exploring questions of sustainability in community media, which is supported by a New Foundations grant from the Irish Research Council.

Submission ID

1852

‘Funny’ Politics: Effects of Stand-Up Comedy on Public Engagement, Critical Thinking and Opinion Sharing in India

Authors

Ms. Keya Saxena - University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication

Dr. S. Senyo Ofori-Parku - University of Oregon School of Journalism and Communication

Abstract

Background

Article 19 (1)(a) of the Indian Constitution promises every citizen of the country with freedom of speech and expression, with some reasonable restrictions. However, this fundamental right is under threat with dissenting opinions being met with dire consequences (Gettleman, Schultz, Raj, & Kumar, 2019). Most of Indian media toes the line of government’s ideology, providing little constructive criticism (Gowda, 2019). The emergence of several stand-up comedians on digital platforms, however, has opened-up avenues to talk about political issues that do not find space in the mainstream media. As humor can be an effective way of initiating public discourse and engagement in struggles towards social justice (Cameron, 2015), this study explored if *stand-up comedy in India prompts public engagement, critical thinking, and opinion sharing around political issues?*

Hypotheses



The study hypothesized that (a) exposure to online comedy about political issues promotes public engagement, critical thinking and opinion sharing, (b) the relationship between exposure to online comedy and the dependent variables is mediated by critical thinking, and (c) the relationship between online comedy and dependent variables is moderated by individuals' pre-existing beliefs.

Method and Results

A simple experiment using a sample drawn from M-Turk (N=576) was conducted. The experiment group was shown a video of stand-up comedy about political issues and asked about their perceptions about public engagement, critical thinking, and opinion sharing. The control group did not view any video before answering the questionnaire. (a) Firstly, the experiment found a negative significant relationship between exposure to online political comedy and public engagement [$F(1,574)=5.71$, $b=-.10$, $R^2 = .010$, $p=0.017$], and information sharing [$F(1,574)= 11.979$, $b=-.03$, $R^2 =.010$, $p=0.001$]. (b) Secondly, the overall model explained 48% of the variance in public engagement [$F(2, 573) =267.5320$, $R^2=.48$, $p<.001$]. Thus, *critical thinking* when combined with the participants' exposure to online *political comedy* helped explain almost half of the variation in individuals' *public engagement* on political issues. Critical thinking had a significant positive relationship ($b=.77$, $p<0.001$) with public engagement, and watching online comedy was negatively associated with public engagement ($b=-.01$, $p=0.01$). However, the hypothesis that critical thinking will mediate the relationship (i.e., watching online comedy → critical thinking → public engagement path) was not supported ($p=.44$). (c) Lastly, the pattern of relationship found in this study was true irrespective of individual's political (i.e., leftist-rightist) leaning ($p=.86$).

Conclusion

The results suggest that with increasing viewing of online political comedy, there is decreasing public engagement and opinion sharing on digital platforms. The results of this study disrupt the existing literature on the positive relationship between exposure to online political comedy and public engagement, critical thinking, and opinion sharing. Indicating a non-western trend of audience perception and behavior towards political comedy, its viewers in India are perceiving it as light-hearted entertainment, that is inhibiting their abilities of participating in public affairs, critiquing the government measures and sharing views about it on digital platforms.

Submission ID

1868



Grounding Tribal Radio Practices in Indigenous Critical Frameworks

Authors

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Abstract

This paper considers ways to analyse and explore production practices and content in Indigenous radio to more closely understand how these community-led radio practices emerge from and represent cultural specificities of particular tribes on air. Building on research with two tribally-owned radio stations in Arizona (US), I argue that the particularities of Indigenous radio production practices and content can be more substantively understood by situating these within Indigenous critical theoretical approaches, enabling recognition of tribal radio's decolonizing processes (see Tuck and Yang 2012).

Indigenous concepts such as grounded normativity (Coulthard and Betasamosake Simpson 2016) and self-determination can usefully enable exploration of tribal radio's capacities for 'acts of resurgence' (Corntassel 2013) in the context of settler colonialism's ongoing damage. Enduring tribal knowledges and everyday practices enable and sustain what Linda Tuhiwai-Smith identifies as Indigenous imperatives of 'the survival of peoples, cultures and languages' (Tuhiwai-Smith 1999: 142), determined by particularities of place and forged through resilience. To draw on the current 2021 context, considering the current pandemic's encroach from historicised Indigenous perspectives as simply the most recent in a history of genocides, many tribes have developed robust strategies drawing on place-based values rooted in such resilience, produced through longevity and historical experience.

I suggest that collective, community-led tribal radio practices can be understood as 'acts of resurgence' which reinforce the sense of shared tribal community through the broadcast familiarity of culturally specific radio programming. Jeff Corntassel argues for the importance of 'acts of resurgence' for Indigenous communities, suggesting that through "everyday" acts of resurgence, one disrupts the colonial physical, social and political boundaries designed to impede our actions to restore our nationhood' (Corntassel 2012: 88). In this exploration, this paper will draw on both Indigenous content and production practices, explored through practitioner insights, to examine ways in which two tribal radio stations reinforce particular values through community-specific programming and practice. Considering particular tribal production practices as rooted in place-based grounded normativity situates these practices as inherently of the tribe, emerging from and shaped by tribal values. At the



same time, the everyday nature of radio as a (usually) live broadcast medium lends itself to Indigenous community-building through familiar and ongoing articulations and expressions of shared community experiences, touchstones and values.

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Submission ID

1878

“Unmute Your Indigeneity”: A Case Study of Amazigh Community Media Raising Awareness About Covid-19

Authors

Mr. Hatim Rachdi - Northwestern University - Qatar

Abstract

In the time of COVID-19, the mainstream Moroccan media focusses on informing the Arabic-speaking Moroccan citizens living in urban areas about different aspects of the pandemic. However, the language of this messaging ignores the rural areas, mostly *Amazigh* communities, underscoring existing prominent linguistic, health, and income disparities.



Once geographically labeled as “useless Morocco” by the French protectorate in colonial time, the *Amazigh* indigenous communities remain victims of the long-standing impact of colonialism and present marginalization. Policies related to *Amazigh* indigenous culture, folklore, and language remain surface-level tokenistic initiatives to appease pressure, resistance, and activism from indigenous rights NGOs and interest groups (Talebi, 2020). Most *Amazigh* communities live below the poverty line and their communities are not given heed by local authorities, which forces them to live in conditions less favorable than the rest of the country.

This paper is a case study of alternative indigenous media, analyzing the way Hammou Hasnoui and Aissam El Nehali, two individuals from the *Amazigh* community, developed videos to raise awareness about the World Health Organization’s COVID-19 recommendations (e.g. hand washing, social distancing) in *Tachelhit* and *Tarifit*, two *Tamazight* dialects. The self-produced videos were distributed mainly on Facebook, YouTube, and WhatsApp. However, little attention has been given to understanding these initiatives, which is symbolic of how the indigenous “global south” responds to Western inspired state policies.

Guided by Bailey et al.’s (2008) theoretical framework, the paper argues that the production and distribution of the videos provided easy access, participation, and circulation for the wider community online and particularly in southern municipal sub-communities, who have been able to share and comment on the videos via WhatsApp groups. These sub-communities are rarely reached by mass media campaigns. *Amazigh* community members participated in the creation of these videos through copycats and re-sharing in Facebook groups and personal pages. Conducting a textual analysis of the videos and a semi-structured interview with their producer, the paper underscores the linear state narrative of an Arab Morocco. The perception that linguistic production is limited to Arabic and French is challenged through a “digitization of the mother tongue”, a process by which the use of the *Amazigh* letters (*Tifinagh*) was complemented by Latin letters, an emphasis on “visual iconization”, through the use of *Amazigh* cultural symbols in the videos; the dubbing and re-use of existing footage online, which lowered the production cost; and the remixing and the recycling of the videos. This case study showcases ways in which the creation of alternative media empowers indigenous communities and allows them a sense of ownership.

The trans-local and rhizomatic dimension of this alternative media emphasizes the need to look at the broader issues of the inclusion of minorities in the “Global South”, through participation in indigenous and community media. Governments need to pay attention to how these indigenous media are developed and circulated in times of crisis to mitigate disparities in access to accurate health information.



Submission ID

1917

The local in the global. Activists' digital media platforms to counter corruption from the grassroots.

Authors

Prof. Alice Mattoni - University of B

Abstract

Corruption is a global social problem that affects the lives of millions of people across the world. Among others, a wide array of grassroots initiatives developed in the past decade that see digital media's employment to counter corruption. Instead of focusing on massive protests in the streets, these initiatives frequently rely on protest participants' digital engagement, develop forms of non-contentious collective actions, and employ the creation and transformation of data about corruption as leverage to support their mobilization. Like corruption, digital media use by social movements and civil society organizations to support their mobilizations, campaigns, and initiatives is also a global trend. Despite their global diffusion, corruption and the related anti-corruption efforts from the grassroots and digital media as they are embedded in mobilizations, are also situated phenomena that acquire different meanings according to the situations in which they manifest themselves. This paper aims to consider the tension between the local and the global dimension of these two interrelated phenomena, considering how activists interpret the potential of digital media considering the specific situations in which they mobilize to fight corruption.

This paper draws on a cross-country comparative research project that analyzes 9 case studies in 9 countries in Europe, Latin America, North-Africa, and South-Asia. More specifically, it relies on a dataset that includes documents related to the 18 case studies and in-depth interviews with the activists involved in organizing initiatives against corruption that put at the center different types of digital media that activists created and managed themselves. The paper draws on a thematic analysis of these data to first develop a typology of such initiatives and the related anti-corruption technologies they create and/or employ to counter corruption. Then it discusses the imaginaries that emerge concerning the use of digital media to fight corruption, looking at the local interpretations of the two interconnected global phenomena under investigation: digital media, on the one hand, and



(anti-)corruption, on the other hand. Finally, it considers how the activists' media practices to create and employ digital media to fight corruption from the grassroots are consistent (or not) with their imaginaries about some central themes: the production of data related to corruption, the visualization of data related to corruption, and the recruitment of participants for anti-corruption initiatives.

The paper contributes to the literature on social movements and alternative media considering anti-corruption technologies to fight corruption a peculiar type of alternative media, which brings extreme the very idea of prefigurative politics, blending alternative media with (contentious) collective actions to address the social problem of corruption. It also explores the relationship between the local and the global dimension in the creation of alternative media, the imaginaries linked to them, and the related activists' media practices.

Submission ID

1926

Digital migrations: understanding the rise of federated social media in the era of platform-based censorship

Authors

Dr. Ksenia Ermoshina - Centre for Internet and Society, CNRS

Abstract

Donald Trump's Twitter ban has become a bifurcation point unveiling the unprecedented economic and political power of social media platforms, but also showing the limits of their design and infrastructural architecture. However, while this spectacular ban concerned mostly Trump supporters and right-wing audiences, other communities of users have started their "exodus" from Twitter, Facebook and other centralized social media much earlier, in reaction to several events (from Snowden revelations to Cambridge Analytica controversy). The trust in centralized and global social media platforms is eroding, boosting a revival of local, community-hosted and community-moderated alternatives.

In our research on usage and development of secure messaging (Ermoshina, Halpin, Musiani : 2017) we have documented users' growing mistrust towards centralized unencrypted software and proprietary social media. This echoes in an interesting way with the well-documented mistrust towards



representative democracies and critique of traditional forms of political participation (Rosanvallon, 2006 ; Blondiaux, 2008 ; Bainocchi, 2013). Indeed, users of social media become more skeptical about delegating their data to centralized platforms that maintain monopoly on re-usage of this data. Activists, marginalized populations and journalists have started to switch from Twitter to a newer open source and decentralized micro-blogging alternative called Mastodon. Now counting 2.2 million active users, this platform proposes a federated infrastructure that offers new ways of organizing online communities, sharing and moderating content, dealing with « truth » and « fake », online harassment and other technical and social aspects of micro-blogging.

Based on ethnographic research of more than 5 years, including interviews with activist user groups, developers, system administrators and moderators, as well as through web-ethnography, our presentation focuses on the phenomenon of “digital migrations” and proposing a framework to analyze various user groups that abandon centralized social media in favour of decentralized and open-source tools. We will talk about alternative social media platforms such as the microblogging platforms Mastodon and Pleroma based on the ActivityPub protocol, that have become “asylum” for new “digital migrants”, paying particular attention to their interfaces and the underlying protocols and architectures of these tools.

Understanding information architectures in an STS perspective (Star, 1999 ; Fuller, 2008), we analyze software as producing specific ways of communication and specific forms of citizenship (Ermoshina, 2017). We will show how certain protocol and interface properties of these alternative platforms mitigate risks of hate speech, disinformation and online harassment, as opposed to Twitter and Facebook. Finally, questioning the limits of reputation management and content moderation in federated networks, we will address actual challenges faced by Mastodon instance administrators receiving waves of new users in the context of the recent “right-wing exodus” from Twitter.

Submission ID

1942



Decolonial Lessons from Historical African American Grassroots Leaders: Reconstructing identity

Authors

Ms. Rhejean King-Johnson - California State University of San Bernardino

Abstract

Grassroots leaders have been an important factor for pushing African American (AA) communities to liberation from coloniality using various decolonial communication strategies. Mass communication strategies such as public speeches, autobiographies, and books were used to describe the different characteristics of AA Identity with the intentions of freeing them from Eurocentric (white-centric) dehumanization and manipulation. Grassroots leaders dedicate their time to empower and liberate their communities from the ground up by focusing on empowering them to stand up. According to Van et al. (2010), “Grassroots leaders serve as sources of meaning, invigoration, and the building of a better society” (p. 373). I will analyze aspects of grassroots communication strategies propagated through verbal and non-verbal media channels which address institutionalized power and the oppression of African Americans in the United States as implemented by four of the most impactful and groundbreaking historical AA grassroots leaders: Frederick Douglas, Ida B Wells, W.E.B Du Bois, and Malcom X. I will analyze Frederick Douglass’s speech, “What the Black Man Wants” (1865), W.E.B. Du Bois’s book, *The Souls of Black Folk* (1903), Malcom X’s “The Black Man’s History” speech (1962) and Ida B. Wells’s book, *Crusade for Justice* (1999).

According to Nahigian Strategies (2020), grassroots communication strategies can reach and persuade people to take action and are the oldest and most effective form of communication. The goal of this study is to document a genealogy of communication strategies employed by the four African American grassroots leaders mentioned and how they were used to foment decolonial (anti-colonial) resistance for the purposes of Black liberation. I will take an analytical approach when examining the ways they are empowering and decolonizing the masses transmedia—with an African American perspective extended beyond multiple media forms across time and space—and how they counteract white-centered and supremacist ideology with their communication styles which are centered around pushing forth decolonial praxis and decoding of supremacist rhetoric for the purpose of liberation.



Submission ID

2107

Feminist frictions: The failed expansion of activist newspaper off our backs

Authors

Ms. Kate Yanchulis - Philip Merrill College of Journalism, University of Maryland, College Park

Abstract

“Let me hang for it.” So wrote Frances Chapman in the January-February 1976 issue of feminist newspaper *off our backs*.

off our backs, subtitled “a women’s news journal,” was published by a radical feminist collective in Washington, D.C., from 1970 until 2008, and strived to be the front page for the feminist movement. At the time of Chapman’s declaration, the news journal had developed a national circulation, and collective members had spent the last 14 months attempting to establish a sister collective in Chicago with the goal of expanding its reach. A member of the D.C. collective, Chapman proposed the development of a new but linked collective upon her move to Chicago. The idea inspired a buoyant letter in the October 1974 issue of the newspaper calling on Chicago feminists to join the cause and “to share the responsibility and privilege inherent in our attempt to be a force for creating change in the lives of women through putting out a newspaper.” Yet by the the January-February 1976 issue, the experiment of two collectives producing one newspaper in collaboration had not only failed but spawned so much strife and vitriol that Chapman sarcastically offered to “hang” for her crime.

How did the attempted expansion of *off our backs* fall apart within 16 months? “I would explain step-by-step, but surely it is all so inconsequential in a year plagued by splits and controversies,” Chapman wrote in her 1976 postmortem. Yet with hindsight, the event appears far from “inconsequential” despite its brief duration within the 39-year history of *off our backs*. The fractured relationship between the D.C. collective and the short-lived Chicago collective demonstrate a fundamental split between the feminist ideals upon which *off our backs* was built and the practicalities of running a newspaper, a split members of the D.C. collective recognized and discussed but could not fully mend, a split that exemplified a rift between idealism and practicality within the feminist movement at large, a split that still exists in activist media and movements.



In an August 1975 letter from the D.C. collective to the Chicago collective, the D.C. collective outlined three facets of the relationship the two should work to improve: “collective process,” “mutual communication” and “power differential.” These three facets not only provide a breakdown of the problems faced by these two groups but could provide a window into problems faced by activist media at large. This paper will delve into these problems through interviews with off our backs staff members and unprocessed archival material from the periodicals’ offices.

Submission ID

2144

Sundarbans Beyond Borders: Media Production as Media Research

Authors

Ms. Elja Roy - University of Minnesota

Abstract

In an increasingly mediated and mediatized world, it is hard to escape the fact that the once dictating media producer-distributor-consumer dichotomy has been blurred. Every teenager now has the means to become a TikTok star and potentially influence millions. Scholars such as Lowgren and Reimer (2013) used two overlapping terms: “prosumption” (production and consumption) and “produsage” (production and usage) to describe the growing integration of collective media-making, community formation, and media consumption practices. With the advent of fast internet, cheap and accessible production technologies, such collective participation in media making has also opened opportunities for the marginalized groups to voice their stories as well (Deger, 2013). However, one’s ability to access and participate in a meaningful way remains circumscribed by digital literacy, access to technology, language skills, and the dominant social, political, cultural, and economic environment (Fuchs, 2010). Thus, this paper proposes the media scholars to practice media-making as a method to study media. While the linear model of production-distribution-consumption becomes indistinct, the scholars are faced with the challenges of finding a new method to engage with the changing landscape of media. Practicing mediamaking in order to understand the community-based media production is one such opportunity for the scholars to not only understand collective media making but also bringing the marginalized voices to the center.



This abstract showcases one such case study from the forests of Sundarbans (India-Bangladesh), the world's largest single stretch mangrove forest. Co-producing with the community partners, the author made a documentary film, *Musical Mangrove* (2020). The film is about a musical and artistic movement that has separately emerged in India and Bangladesh to save the transboundary forest. As with transnational water bodies and forests, Sundarbans is also circumscribed by international regulatory pitfalls. Through the interviews of activists, artists, and academicians and their performances, the film showcases the short and long-term threats. The author, and filmmaker, used community-based co-productions to learn more about media studies while working with the native communities. The filmmaking process revealed a tacit understanding of international tensions and relationships which would be otherwise overlooked by the traditional methods of media research.

After taking part in relatively small-scale community co-productions—productions (such as documentary films and musical videos) that are somewhere between inexpensive social media and big-budget studio projects—the author argues the need for the media scholar to move beyond the existing method and embrace new ideas. The method of researching media through making media reveals the tacit realities of media practices and cultural understanding, which can be easily omitted by textual analysis. It is a highly participatory form of participant observation with a tinge of experimentation. As the new generations of scholars grew up in the world of social media and participatory media making, these approaches are likely to gain more popularity. However, the need to remain self-reflexive and critical will continue to dominate. It can be predicted that the idea of making media for the sake of research will gradually become both conceptually and technically more commonplace.

Musical Mangrove (2020) link: https://youtu.be/ui4Uits_3KY

Submission ID

2165

Telling Our Stories: A Case Study with BIPOC Community Media Makers

Authors

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Abstract

This study explores relationships Black, Indigenous, and People of Color (BIPOC) media makers have with urban community media centers in the United States. Ample studies have shown how BIPOC groups use social media platforms to resist media marginalization and stereotypes, activate counter-publics and social movements, and distribute blackness and joy. However, little attention has focused on understanding how BIPOC communities currently use a combination of digital platforms, low-power radio, and public access television to build social capital locally and abroad.

This study joins scholarship that has shown media centers anchored by community access television infrastructures remain relevant in the digital age (Ali, 2014; Fuentes-Bautista 2014; Chen et al. 2013). Building on previous case studies (e.g., Ali 2014; Crittenden and Haywood 2020), the author returns to Philadelphia Community Access Media (PhillyCAM) as a research site. Since opening its doors in 2009, PhillyCAM has framed itself as a hybrid media center and carved a niche out for itself in Philadelphia's media ecosystem (Ali 2014). PhillyCAM has created its distinct position in the local media landscape by—in addition to its public access television capacity—operating a low-power radio station, facilitating participatory journalism programs, distributing community-made content via digital platforms, and offering media training for youth and adults.

Ethnographic methods (e.g., participant observation, cultural material analysis, and open-ended interviews) employed in this study gather insights about BIPOC media making in an urban setting. To understand current BIPOC community-led media practices, the author asks: What types of hybrid communication methods and tools do BIPOC media makers use at PhillyCAM? Why do BIPOC communities prefer to use community media as a base for building social networks? How have social networks been forged locally and abroad? What types of virtual experiments have producers engaged in during the Covid-19 pandemic? Furthermore, what type of barriers have been problematic before and during the pandemic? This study gains insights from youth, ages 14 – 21, and adult PhillyCAM members who have varied technical skills, lived experiences, and aspirations.

This study also calls on Katherine McKittrick's notion of a "black sense of space" (2001) and the *Media 2070* essay (2020) to frame a critical perspective of how spatialized violence in modern media ecosystems targets BIPOC communities. McKittrick indicates the plantation notably stands at the center of modernity and has provided an ever-present blueprint for racial entanglement sites. Alongside McKittrick's analysis, *Media 2070* traces the role American media organizations have played in slave profiteering, which set the stage for violent entanglements still maintained by white-dominated media systems. These two perspectives frame this study's critical discussion about how fragmented and racially violent media landscapes in the U.S. could be re-imagined. Incorporating Rodriguez's (2001)



citizens' media concept enables this analysis to ultimately conceive how BIPOC communities in the U.S. could use community media to liberate themselves from colonizing mediascapes.

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2249

Mobile Phone Appropriation and Social Inclusion Among Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines

Authors

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Abstract

Mobile phones are considered as a ubiquitous transformative technology for development. Guided by Wirth *et al.*'s (2008) integrative model of Mobile Phone Appropriation (MPA), the study looked into how Persons with Disabilities (PWDs), a socially excluded group, appropriated their mobile phones to improve their active participation in the society, thus, enhancing their social inclusion. In the context of PWDs in Los Baños, Laguna, Philippines, results showed a strong association and highly significant correlation between mobile phone appropriation and social inclusion, particularly on its functional or pragmatic uses. However, access, availability, and affordability of mobile phones together with other facilitating factors should be taken into consideration, or else it will further widen the gap and open more barriers to inclusion. This study also proposed an enhancement of the framework of Wirth *et al.*'s integrative model of MPA with a premise that as a communication behavior, mobile phone appropriated could influence other social behaviors such as social inclusion.

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2372