



# **Community Communication and Alternative Media Section**

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# **Community Radio for Environmental Conscientization: A Case of Radio Kotagiri**

## **Authors**

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## **Abstract**

By foregrounding the concept of conscientization, this paper seeks to understand the ways in which Radio Kotagiri, a community radio situated in The Nilgiris of the southern Indian state of Tamil Nadu, engages in efforts to aid critical consciousness regarding the socio-ecological matters, which I refer to as environmental conscientization, through its communicative space. Conscientization proposed by Brazilian thinker Paulo Freire as part of his liberation pedagogy allows us to foreground the politics of knowledge that shapes communicative spaces and processes. This paper also draws its conceptual resources from decolonial scholarship to broaden the implications of conscientization in today's neoglobalized world order, where environmental questions are intrinsically linked to knowledge regimes and their politics. In doing so, this paper argues that community radio as a community-based grassroots space becomes a means for local communities to engage and act upon their environmental realities.

The Nilgiris, being a part of the Western Ghats, a mountain chain older than the Himalayas, is renowned for its ecological importance and fragility. Its complex ecosystem hosts diverse flora, fauna, and vegetation like the Sholas and grasslands. It is also home to multiple indigenous communities whom the Indian government categorized as Particularly Vulnerable Tribal Groups. This extremely fragile geography faces considerable threats due to excessive human intrusion that adversely affects all the entities in the ecosystem. Moreover, an increasing amount of Human-Wildlife interactions in the region raises concerns that need interventions. Considering this background, Radio Kotagiri is a suitable research site to investigate alternative media's potential to engage with ecological questions and how it unfolds in practice. Radio Kotagiri was launched in 2013 by Keystone Foundation, an NGO which describes itself as a group of eco-development initiatives works in the Nilgiri Biosphere Reserve that covers parts of southern Indian states of Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, and Kerala.

The paper draws from the ethnographic data, including participant observation and interviews that are part of my ongoing doctoral research.

## **Submission ID**

41

## **Local climate voices make a rising sea of noise**

### **Authors**

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### **Abstract**

*This article explores current discourse around climate justice and concludes that communication rights and media issues, despite being central to enabling those most affected by the climate crisis to have their voices heard, are mostly ignored by most authors and activists. This paper argues that unless the people leading the fight against the climate crisis on the ground, such as Indigenous people and other vulnerable communities, are able to have their stories heard and seen by the broader public, and unless they have the necessary communication tools and skills to organize, it will be very difficult to generate the political will at the national and international level that will result in swift action to tackle this crisis.*

### **Submission ID**

216

## **Disaster Communication and Community Radio: The Case of Cyclone Yaas in Odisha, India**

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### **Abstract**

The community is the initial responder to any disaster, and community-led collective action is important for developing a more robust disaster management mechanism to minimize risk. For garnering participation in any community-based disaster management processes that reduce vulnerabilities and provide creative solutions, disaster communication plays a crucial role in preparedness and risk reduction. Based on this premise, this chapter examines disaster communication as a process, and focuses on the ways in which community radio and the social relationships facilitated by it enhance the effectiveness of this process.

The chapter is based on a case study of disaster communication by community radio stations during the 'very severe cyclonic storm' Yaas, which made landfall in the eastern Indian state of Odisha on May 26, 2021. The chapter aims at analyzing that while disaster communication is primarily seen as the obligation of state agencies, community radios are increasingly getting involved in information exchange strategies during the pre-disaster period and effectively addressing the communication needs of impacted communities.

During a disaster, building local participation is vital since the context and realities may vary from region to region. Each area has a certain disaster culture based on implicit learning, accessible knowledge, and social relationships. Community radio offers the much-needed scope for disaster communication to spread awareness and promote disaster mitigation, preparedness, response, and recovery through building community solidarity for action and community resilience. Community radios, with their unique approach ensure and facilitate disaster communication at the grassroots level not only to keep the communities well-informed, but also and provide necessary ground-level information to the state disaster management units to address emergencies.

This chapter will draw from the existing scholarship on community radio and community-based disaster management to examine (through in-depth interviews and content reviews) the efforts and experiences of two community radio stations from Odisha – Radio Namaskar in Konark and Radio Bulbul in Bhadrak – in augmenting disaster communication endeavors during the Yaas cyclone. Through the case study, the chapter will build on the argument that community participation is the most essential element to achieving sustainability in planning and implementation of mitigation, preparedness, early warning, response, and revitalization measures dealing with natural and man-made disasters. It will further reiterate that community radio, with its distinctive community connect and deep local roots, has emerged as an important tool for bottom-up disaster communication that empowers local communities for collaborative information sharing, and a locally relevant disaster management culture. Community radio must, therefore, be incorporated as an important component in all plans that prioritize disaster communication as a means for strengthening of community capacities and enhancing community resilience.

## **Submission ID**

234

# Participatory media and community: Analysis of the film collective production praxis for short documentaries in India

## Authors

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## Abstract

Participatory media is a conscious assemblage of a community's intent to use medium as voice. Lately in India, film collectives and collaborative filmmaking has emerged as representation from the grassroots which is created by the concerned community with the presence of filmmakers who have chosen to segregate the medium from hegemonic formats. The documentary as a format in filmmaking was always endowed with spontaneity, sensitivity to its source environment and issues as also the potency to speak 'one possible truth.' Subjectivity of the filmmaker in constructing the argument of the documentary has been a long-drawn discussion. The proliferation of the participatory media style in which stakeholders of the community get involved in its storytelling though collective authorship in documentary style is a topic of relevance in a developing country like India. Through this paper the researcher intends to analyse short documentary praxis as 'the cinema of value' and discuss collective production ideology as a more democratic alternative; radically in opposition to the mainstream filmmaking practices. In a diverse nation, penetration of digital media and possibilities of using digital cameras has created a distinct space to etch local concerns with representational politics despite the limited penetration of digital technology in a large country. As spread of digital footfall combined with capacity building of communities' increase, participatory media will also evolve into a more potent vehicle of change. Converging on themes particularly about children and women, marginalised groups, agriculture and livelihood, social injustice, health, caste and gender allows communities to self-reflect and create their own means of cultural expression, news, information and dialogue. Community produced short documentaries, shift dialogue from the national to the local regions. Instead of the long format communication, participatory community media often uses the short form documentary to reinforce the message as modular rather than the unscalable conventional style which require more resources. The key aspect of collective production ideologies in empowering the masses as also mobilising the power of media will also be discussed in the paper. The research methodology adopted for this paper will be qualitative in nature, and will include interviews of community involved in content generation; narrative and textual analysis of short documentaries as well as secondary research. Selected case studies such as *Samaj Pragati Sahayog community media* (SPS), will also be included for the researcher to focus on the short documentary keeping in consideration the challenges faced by adopting such praxis.

**Key words:**

Collective, collaborative, participatory media, community media.

**Submission ID**

349

**Engaged Journalism and Local Media****Authors**

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**Abstract**

This article seeks to shed light and promote debate on innovative journalistic practices in a time of perceived crisis in journalism, increasingly blurred boundaries in the field, craft journalism, and the need to redefine the profession. The study began in 2021 in the local media of the province of San Luis, Argentina. It has sought to recognize committed journalism that can be characterized as a particular form of alternative journalism that is generally carried out by media professionals who express recurring criticism of government management, the regular performance of public officials and poor citizen practices. These journalists are motivated by strong media criticism (Medeiro, 2019).

At the intersection between challenges to journalism and local media activism, committed journalism makes a contribution to social development and citizen action, as alternative journalists put their knowledge and professional skills at the service of social causes and movements. This article investigates from qualitative frameworks, how committed journalists made themselves a visible place in the media system of the province of San Luis, displaying their criticism of authoritarian practices, lack of government management, loss of institutionalist, repression of police forces and lack of justice services.

We understand committed journalists as those who have the materials and skills to practice professional journalism, attributing a different meaning to their practices, challenging the standard of objectivity that marks traditional journalism (Medeiros, 2019).

Therefore, it is recognized that their media practices lead to media production that can compete with the quality standards of traditional media in terms of formats, but articulate discourses that traditional media tend to reject. These journalists assume a greater commitment to their communities, denouncing unfair situations or bad practices of public

officials. Therefore, this action also distances them from the government's advertising guidelines.

The precariousness of journalists is an emerging phenomenon of the last forty years in the Argentine context, and accentuated by the appearance of the Internet and highly connected devices. Local and digital media in San Luis often do not have a defined business model, they must look for it (Quiroga, 2020) and this significantly influences their survival or development. The precariousness of journalists is an emerging phenomenon of the last forty years in the Argentine context, despite the growth of small digital publications, often combined with radio programs on the web, the majority of journalists are not sufficiently recognized in their salaries (Quiroga, 2020). In this way, in general terms, the information quality is significantly affected.

## **Submission ID**

439

# **The Chinese Retired Worker's Utopia in Carport Gym: a case study of Tik Tok reconstructing own community identity**

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## **Abstract**

The marginalized groups are always considered as a disadvantaged position during media production (Jacobs, 2000). However, with the development of new media technologies in China, especially alternative media, a new phenomenon appeared among retired workers in Chinese government enterprises, which is a spontaneous non-governmental intervention collective image production behavior. Through using alternative media, retired workers changed their identity from the people always being reported and cannot speak by themselves to the unsuppressable media-users familiar with the alternative media.

Specifically, Retired workers of the state-run "Crrc Beijing Erqilocomotive Co., Ltd." in Fengtai District, Beijing, have made their own fitness equipment, renovated their carport to the gym, posted short videos on Tik Tok (China Version) and tried to seek outside attention. They want to ask for government authority admittance to the new identity instead of

simple retired workers. This means the retired workers group intentionally tries to change their identity as wonderful country contributors as 'collective expectations' (Zoettl, 2012).

Thus, our research question is: How can this kind of retired workers group in Chinese government enterprises construct their new identities through the emergence of the alternative media, thereby influencing the organization community of retired workers.

This study adopted the grassroots media theory framework of Chris Atton (2003), and conducted constant fieldwork from 2021 April. Through the fieldwork period, 25 retired workers of "Crrc Beijing Erqilocomotive Co., Ltd." were interviewed. As a result, this research described and analyzed the process of collective image production among retired workers of the state-run "Crrc Beijing Erqilocomotive Co., Ltd.". Finally, in our findings, this kind of retired workers group achieved the active self-digitization in their daily life, and developed a new special identity with working-class culture at its core. It is important to mention that this new incoming identity is different from the traditional resistance identity of workers, where there exists a limited compromise of resistance and acceptance.

This study extended the community communication and alternative media studies perspectives towards marginalized and underrepresented groups (Bailey et al., 2008). And through the case study, this research fills the existing gap that the retired workers group reconstructs their community identity through alternative media. The carport gym utopia made by retired workers also achieved the extension in the Chinese internet area, reflecting the dynamic interrelation between new media technology and social space (Lefebvre, 2016).

## **Submission ID**

464

# **Heterotopical Places of Island as Medium: An Alternative Practice of Social Space Between Mine, Coastline and Nuclear Plant**

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## Abstract

"...Hammering my silence of natural  
Cutting my humble yet puzzle  
Features become strange, fuzzy course  
Soul looking back again at the col

...

After the geography of mountain and river retreated into the fog  
Tomorrow is a complex roam..."

《采石》 (Quarry) , Omnipotent Youth Society (2020)

Hainan has been ascribed the role of an enclave by the mainland down the ages, yet has become an international free-trade port in 2020. With it involved in global geography's production systems and cultural structures, primitive villages have emerged an epistemological rupture in short of labor protection laws and energy regulations. To make it easier to understand the process of spatial transformation from the perspective of the island over recent years, the author utilizes "mountain" and "ocean" as the medium, to conduct observations of geological becoming and the interactive learning with local communities in the Autonomous Region of Li National Minority of Changhua River (昌江黎族自治區). This empirical inquiry document, however, should not only explore the alternative narratives beyond post-industrial urbanization's migration driven by neo-liberal economic policies, but also be examined under the issue of nuclear energy which radioactive waste included a deep-time cycle that impacts the sustainable development of natural environment profoundly.

This paper draws on Henri Lefebvre's 《The Production of Space》, first take primary documents on the themes of "Tourism," "Clean Energy," "Raw Materials" derived from the terms "Hainan Free Trade Port" as the main object of the historical research, to invoke the institutional discourse that given the region's spectacle and infrastructure reproduction during the past decade. Using second-hand off-road bicycles (tentatively called Buffalo Style), the author, intuitively, explores the routes that didn't record in the Baidu Map in the upstream and downstream of Changhua Basin with the practice of ethnography. Through the space in the communication tunneled with the daily life of marginal communities members—the mining village of Li minority located in the outskirts of the town after ecological relocation, the sea gate of grazing area transformed by mainland's industries (such as sand extraction—reclamation) or the fishing boats where the descendants of the coastal Tankas live, etc.—this paper argues that the production strategies for the heterotopical place's diagnostics make effectively understand for the deepwater inside the islands which had a colonial background, and this coding promotes to convey to the outside that the past experience and consciousness of the communities, but as reflection, support a possible

emancipation object in the future when economic and political relations objectively determine a social-psychological structure?

Same as the Internet, nuclear reactions development was commonly used for military purposes at an early stage. Over a half-century of nuclear energy commercialization after the advent of the Manhattan Project, the safety risks, accountability, and environmental issues brought by radioactive waste have received widespread attention. As the year of fate of the atomic fission creation, this paper conducts a preliminary empirical analysis of the Hainan Nuclear Power Plant of Changhua River located in Haiwei Town (海尾鎮) in the dimensions of production, geopolitics, environment, and technology through grounded theory. As a model base of the national clean energy industry, this grand project, the adjacent bay (32.2 kilometers in length), is surrounded by bleached coral fragments, which declare a significant ecosystem disturbance by a series of human activities. This paper compares energy policy developments in the island-type country, trying communication practices (such as designing and sending questionnaires) to increase the public perception of Democracy Energy and Energiewende, as an alternative cultural activity to the local extension of global experience.

## **Submission ID**

642

## **Media Activism and the Challenge of the Invested Ethnographer**

### **Authors**

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### **Abstract**

Knowledge production plays a critical function in engaging the public, building political movements and the networks that make them up. How might alternative political communication (or activist media) be studied to better understand the aims, practices, and values of such media endeavors? This paper explores approaches these topics, positioning ethnography as a tool for methodological intervention. As such it is guided by the following research questions: How does the researcher gain entrance to this particular 'local,' a space often requiring some level of anonymity and confidentiality? What knowledge can the researcher take with her from the literature to inform the methodology to navigate this field? What kind of issues might arise in trying to gain trust? What can improve alternative

political media research in the academic field? What of this research can serve not only the academy but also the movements and activists? Guided by the ethnography literature and specifically alternative media ethnography, I argue that the *invested* ethnographer is better equipped to understand the values of the political actors she studies and how those values shape the knowledge produced by activist media. Ethnographic research often upholds the norm of objectivity, even when it acknowledges the difficulty in attaining detachment. I highlight the usefulness of an approach that eschews disconnection and embraces political investment of the researcher in the activist media she is studying.

Social movements of today, termed “newest social movements” by Day (2005), practice prefigurative politics that necessitate living one’s values today (rather than as an ideal once a political goal is achieved). This prefigurativism equates to nonhierarchical leadership, decisions through consensus, and addressing perpetuated oppression even within the group. Researching media of the ‘newest’ kinds of social movements requires political investment of the researcher rather than detached objectivity. Investment in the political project implies that the researcher will already hold knowledge of the group’s values and can target specific areas of complexity. These newest kinds of social movements also often require some level of anonymity and confidentiality due to the radical nature of their politics, and their often-precarious subaltern status. An invested researcher is better situated to connect with the group’s philosophy and practices, collaborate with a shared interest in prefigurative goals, and be more likely to be trusted by the group.

This emic approach affords the researcher a Freirean-style ethnography that is not an attempt at othering or saving but of collaboration, as Marcus (1999) describes complicity. The uncertainty of the human condition in our current context “creates anxiety, wonder, and insecurity” (p. 99) that leaves both informant and researcher grappling for answers, ideas, and/or ways to make sense of or address it (p. 101). Complicity of researcher and participant generates ideas through combined epistemologies (of institution and of grassroots organizing, for example). Given that those who experience certain oppressions have a better view of potential solutions, this sharing of knowledge between researcher and participant is essential.

## **Submission ID**

677

# Las radios comunitarias como alternativa al acceso desigual a internet en las zonas rurales: aproximaciones entre Brasil y Mozambique

## Authors

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## Abstract

Diferentes investigaciones (ONU, 2020; UIT, 2020; A4AI, 2021) han alertado sobre las desigualdades en el acceso a internet y a las tecnologías digitales de la información y la comunicación, con la cuestión territorial - articulada con otros marcadores, como el ingreso, el género y la raza – uno de los factores determinantes sobre las condiciones de conectividad. Mientras que, a nivel mundial, el 72 % de los hogares urbanos tiene acceso a internet, en las zonas rurales la tasa es del 37 % (UIT, 2020).

Este escenario se agrava especialmente en América Latina, donde hay países con más del 90% de la población rural desconectada (CEPAL, 2020), y en África, donde, aunque el 70% de la población viven en zonas rurales, solo el 25,6% de la población que vive en zonas rurales población rural tienen acceso a internet (Gallup, 2019).

En los dos países que interesan en este trabajo, Brasil y Mozambique, los datos también son reveladores: menos del 3% de la población rural de Mozambique tienen acceso regular a la red; en Brasil, solo el 17% de los hogares de las áreas rurales tienen un ordenador y casi el 90% de las personas de estas áreas que usan internet acceden exclusivamente a través de dispositivos móviles.

Como respuesta a estas desigualdades, los territorios rurales han desarrollado iniciativas de comunicación comunitaria - en especial las radios comunitarias y, más recientemente, las redes comunitarias de internet - que contribuyen a la afirmación del derecho a la comunicación y a la articulación de las comunidades en la reivindicación de otros derechos, como la educación y la salud.

Ante este escenario, el *paper* que aquí se presenta de manera resumida tiene como principal objetivo discutir los desafíos para el desarrollo de la comunicación comunitaria en estos países, a partir del análisis de dos radios comunitarias en zonas rurales (una en cada país). Para ello, en términos metodológicos, se adoptarán los siguientes procedimientos: sistematización de marcos legales sobre radios comunitarias en Brasil y Mozambique; entrevistas semiestructuradas con integrantes de las dos radios comunitarias y

representantes de asociaciones nacionales del sector; investigación y análisis de documentos sobre el tema elaborados por organizaciones de la sociedad civil de ambos países.

Una primera nota preliminar es que, tanto en Brasil como en Mozambique, la comunicación comunitaria en general, y en especial las radios comunitarias, tiene como principales desafíos la superación de marcos regulatorios limitados y la falta de políticas públicas que incentiven la creación y sostenibilidad de estas iniciativas.

## **Submission ID**

907

# **Press cooperatives: main features and sustainability of a journalistic enterprise**

## **Authors**

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## **Abstract**

Press cooperatives have flourished worldwide in the last two decades, amidst the various crises that journalism and media face because of the Great Recession and ongoing trends like loss of readership and erosion of public trust (Boyle, 2012). This kind of journalistic organization increasingly attracts the attention of practitioners and academics, and thus a body of literature on the subject starts to emerge (Barranquero & Sánchez, 2018; Camps, 2021; Grohmann, 2020; Siapera & Papadopoulou, 2016; Price, 2017; Solari, 2019). However, the available research is mostly composed of single case studies, whether focusing solely on an outlet or a country. The lack of historical and comparative analyses limits the understanding of media cooperatives and their potentialities in the current media environment (Grohmann, 2019).

This paper aims at setting a point of departure to address the aforementioned limitations in the study of media cooperatives. Our first objective is to establish the main characteristics of this governance model in the press field regarding its context, content, workforce, and foundational goals. Our second objective is to determine whether media cooperatives are sustainable according to the main indicators of media sustainability.

To achieve the first of the research goals, a systematic review of literature is carried out, examining scholar and journalistic articles that focus on or provide information about

newspapers and magazines cooperatively owned by their workers, readers, or a combination of both. The review results in more than 120 cooperative titles, which can be found in the five continents, expanding from the early 20<sup>th</sup> century to the present day. Then we select a non-probabilistic, representative 5 case-sample of currently active newspaper cooperatives from 5 countries: *El Salto* (Spain), *EfSyn* (Greece), *Krautreporter* (Germany), *Tiempo Argentino* (Argentina), and *The Media Co-op* (Canada). Drawing on the existing literature on community and alternative media sustainability (Barranquero & Candón-Mena, 2021; Gumucio, 2005), we design a 10-item model to examine the degree of economic, organizational, communicational, and social sustainability achieved by the selected cases. The data are gathered and interpreted through content analysis of literature references, metajournalistic discourse and available documentation.

The results show that despite the wide variety of historical and geographical contexts in which they emerge, press cooperatives share some core characteristics: they often appear in times of crises or political transitions, their founders are critical of the state of the journalism and put a strong emphasis on editorial independence, and they are mostly local and regional papers. Regarding our second objective, press cooperatives arguably show a clear orientation towards sustainability, mostly in the economic and communicational terms, even though several challenges of contemporary news industries can pose a threat in the long term. Both results should be read as preliminary, given the exploratory nature of this investigation. However, they enhance the research on media cooperatives by providing a foundation for further analyses.

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## **Submission ID**

973

# **From social appropriation to social justice: new flows of contents production and distribution built by autonomous voices**

## **Authors**

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## **Abstract**

The digital technologies of communication allow different possibilities of articulation to socially vulnerable groups and potentiate new flows of production and circulation of audiovisual content, due to its easy structure and extension. This article will analyse two of these articulations in the State of Rio de Janeiro, which propose to connect and spread autonomous voices, able to appropriate digital media to express themselves, as well as to assert their general demands. (1) Voz das Comunidades, which emerged in 2005, through the initiative of a child who lives in the Morro do Adeus, Complexo do Alemão, city of Rio de Janeiro and (2) Voz da Baixada, which emerged in 2015, organised by young residents of Baixada Fluminense, focusing on news about the social issues of the region. Voz das

Comunidades reached a considerable part of the population with citations and/or broadcast contents in big Brazilian media groups, which made possible the involvement of broadly known people. However, it lacks greater local identity strengthening and participatory action from the groups they propose to represent in the socio-technical networks that distribute the audiovisual contents produced by them. On its turn, Voz da Baixada, through the collaboration and active participation of young volunteers, has been gaining visibility in Baixada Fluminense for disseminating news from the suburbs, for talking about the rights of the population, for promoting debate on violence and political neglect with the population on social media and for encouraging culture in the region through social media and online magazines.

The proposal of the article is to understand the capacity of reach and the involvement of the population with which they dialogue, enabling possibilities of legitimation of these spaces and of effective consolidation of reference voices, as they propose to be. It takes reference from perspectives of Communication for Development or Communication for Social Change to understand their limitations, given the need to affirm a participatory culture that depends on algorithms and is guided by external interferences disconnected from the daily life of their territories. Finally, it proposes the contribution of Communication for Social Justice as a perspective committed to transforming laws and regulation in a critical and systemic way, given the ability to deal with managers, programmers, producers and participants of these initiatives in different ways.

## **Submission ID**

1009

# **Opportunities, Challenges, and Professional Role Perception of County Newspapers in Kenya**

## **Authors**

Prof. Samuel Mwangi - Kansas State University

## **Abstract**

Kenya adopted a new constitution in 2010 that divided the country into 47 counties and devolved power and resources from the central government to the rural areas as a way of fast-tracking development and encouraging the growth of grassroots self-governance and self-determination (Commission for the Implementation of the Constitution, 2012).

This new constitutional framework has created room for the emergence of community newspapers in rural areas that have cropped up to serve the information needs of the counties. Published as weekly or monthly publications, they feature county news ranging from local politics to business, sports, lifestyle articles and economic issues. Many of them have a small staff and also rely on correspondents. They are owned by individuals with a variety of backgrounds including entrepreneurs, activists, journalists, and economists.

The purpose of this paper is to: (1) identify the opportunities and challenges facing the new county press and, (2) to understand how they perceive their professional role since journalists' role conceptions influence their work (van Dalen, de Vreese, and Albaek, 2012). Hanitzsch (2011) classified professional role conceptions of journalists into four major groups: populist disseminator, detached watchdog, critical change agent, and opportunist facilitator.

As a new development, the county press is under-researched and presents new scholarly opportunities to understand how they view their role as well as the challenges and opportunities in this new media landscape.

This study will be guided by the communication infrastructure theory which posits that every community is built on shared discourse about the identity, desires, issues, and experiences of its members. Without communication resources that allow citizens to construct and share such stories with others, it is impossible for communities to exist. The theory suggests that there are macro, meso and micro storytelling agents in any locality (Kim and Ball-Rokeach, 2006). Data will be collected through phone interviews.

## **Submission ID**

1020

## **Seeking 'Self-Determination' in Detroit: Advocacy, Race, and the Militarism of the West Central Organization, 1964-1971**

### **Authors**

Prof. Anna Lindner - Wayne State University

## **Abstract**

Contextualized within the shifting economic conditions and contentious racial relations in Detroit, the present study investigates the advocacy efforts of the West Central Organization (WCO) from 1964 to 1971. The WCO was formed from a motley assortment of local block clubs, school-based groups, congregations, and other community organizations, and was modeled on Chicago activist Saul Alinsky's locally-based, militant organizing. Led mostly by white liberals, the WCO initially endorsed a race-blind approach to amassing political power and achieving "self-determination" for some of Detroit's most vulnerable citizens. To do so, they implemented a series of controversial publicity tactics designed to attract both media and administrative attention to the housing crises caused by urban renewal policies, which often required bulldozing low-income neighborhoods.

The present study uses the literature and news stories both published by and about the WCO that were archived in the Walter P. Reuther Library of Labor and Urban Affairs in Detroit. These news clippings, meeting minutes, posters, and other documents are evidence of the political battles the WCO openly picked with Detroit Mayor Jerome P. Cavanagh, whom they held accountable to make policy changes, and Wayne State University, which was attempting to acquire and clear the land that made up the west and central neighborhoods the WCO strove to protect.

The WCO's inflammatory publicity stunts allowed it to quickly influence both local and state policies concerning urban renewal and housing. However, the controversy of those tactics, along with the WCO's race-blind approach to organizing, significantly shortened its life. Tensions in the WCO were exacerbated after the 1967 racially-charged uprisings, when black Detroiters' anger over decades of racial discrimination and inequitable living and working conditions boiled over. Like many civil rights organizations in large urban centers, the WCO embraced black militancy as the solution to poverty and inequality in majority-black Detroit neighborhoods after 1967, an ideology that was incompatible with the race-blind ideals upon which the WCO was founded. Its reputation tainted by its militant tactics and its leadership divided, the WCO folded in 1971.

Ultimately, the history of the WCO serves as a case study of the political power harnessed in a local, militant organization that boldly used their own publication, along with the Wayne State student newspaper and mainstream media channels, to raise awareness and agitate for change. That activism was constrained by decades of social and economic inequality, along with anti-black ideologies and policies, that continue to echo in Detroit today.

## **Submission ID**

1041

# Constructing Community and Building Identity through Indigenous Language Community Media: The Case of Radio Swayamshakti in Odisha, India

## Authors

Mr. Aniruddha Jena - University of Hyderabad

Prof. Vinod Pavarala - University of Hyderabad

Prof. Vasuki Belavadi - University of Hyderabad

## Abstract

This paper examines community radio as a form of indigenous language media for constructing community and building identity. This study is based on an ethnographic study of Radio Swayamshakti, an indigenous community radio station in the Nuapada District of the eastern Indian state of Odisha. This research aims at understanding the idea of indigenous language community media and how community radio can play an important role in consolidating and constructing indigenous community and building indigenous identity while safeguarding their ethnic cultural ingenuity. Being in a culturally, socially, and locationally disadvantaged space, *Kosli* community is vulnerable to the mainstreaming agendas and cultural hegemony of the majoritarian Odia community and identity in the state of Odisha. To tackle that challenge, Radio Swayamshakti offers an alternative to the *Kosli* community in Khariar, Nuapada to forge a greater and consolidated sense of community and reinvigorate *Kosli* identity by producing, circulating and consuming content in the *Kosli* dialect.

This work draws on the existing literature in the contexts of countries like Australia, New Zealand, Canada, North and Latin America by scholars who have argued about the potentialities of community media as a form of indigenous language 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; Viswanath & Arora, 2000). However, there are limited number of studies that deal with how indigenous language community media engage with local and indigenous communities and their cultures and identities in the Global South. Given the cultural and linguistic diversity of India, it is important to note that most of the community radios are located in remote rural areas, advocating and playing critical roles in strengthening, sustaining and reproducing marginalised cultures, identities, and linguistic communities (Pavarala & Malik, 2007; Malik & Pavarala, 2020; Pavarala & Jena, 2020). This study proposes to

add a more comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how indigenous language community radio transacts with the idea of community, culture, and identity.

The paper will further examine ways in which an indigenous language community radio station addresses questions related to the politics of identity. Moreover, this research also addresses the role indigenous language 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 Swayamshakti as the research site to understand the *Kosli* community and its cultural identities. An NGO called Society for Rural Upliftment & Socio-Technological Initiative (SRUSTI) established Radio Swayamshakti in the year 2016 to give the *Kosli* community of Khariar, Nuapada region a platform to express their voices and strengthen *Kosli* identity.

Methodologically, the paper will organise and analyse data from ethnographic observations, in-depth interviews, focus group discussions (FGDs), and ethnographic content analysis of selected programs of Radio Swayamshakti to understand the alternative ways and means of how Radio Swayamshakti constructs, frames, and represents *Kosli* community and their cultural identities while countering the majoritarian cultures and identities.

## **Submission ID**

1045

# **Disaster Communication Ecology in Multiethnic Communities in Inner Mongolia, China: Understanding Community Resilience from a Communication Infrastructure Approach**

## **Authors**

Ms. Lisi MAI - International Christian University Graduate School

## **Abstract**

Ethnic and racial disparities in communication resources and civic engagement have been a central focus in the communication area. Tremendous bodies of research have been conducted in the United States and parts of Asia. Yet research on Chinese ethnic disparities has received only a fraction of attention.

China is a multiethnic country, with the majority Han ethnic group representing mainstream culture and the 55 officially recognized minority ethnic groups with their own unique cultures, languages, religions, and customs. Regarding Inner Mongolia, it is China's strategic frontier and one of the five ethnic autonomous regions. Of the total 49 ethnic groups in Inner Mongolia, Han Chinese account for 79% of the population. Mongolian Chinese are the second largest ethnic group, accounting for 17% of the population. The present paper mainly focuses on disparities in disaster communication ecology, civic engagement, and community resilience from the COVID-19 pandemic among Han Chinese and Mongolian Chinese from different locales in Inner Mongolia.

Since December 2019, the coronavirus has spread to nearly every country in the world thus far. It is not an overstatement to say that COVID-19 is the most severe international disaster, killing people, spreading anxiety and suffering, and upending human beings' lives from various aspects. Under the ongoing COVID-19 situation, grounded in communication infrastructure theory (CIT) (Ball-Rokeach et al., 2001; Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006a; Kim & Ball-Rokeach, 2006b), the paper first explores disaster communication ecology through peoples' connectedness to neighborhood storytelling network, consisting of interpersonal communication, community organizations, and local or ethnic media. Second, the paper investigates the relationship between connectedness to neighborhood storytelling network and civic engagement, including collective efficacy, neighborhood belonging, and participation in online and offline COVID-19 related activities. Third, the paper examines the relationship between disaster communication ecology, civic engagement, and perceived community resilience from the COVID-19 pandemic. The geo-ethnic approach (Kim et al., 2006; Kim et al., 2007) is applied to compare disparities between Han and Mongolian ethnic groups from different locales.

"Geo-ethnicity" is an ecological and dynamic conception that refers to ethnically articulated attitudes and behaviors grounded in a specific geographical, temporal, and cultural context (Kim et al., 2007). Due to the long span from east to west, Inner Mongolia is geographically divided into western and eastern divisions with different features, such as people's lifestyle, culture, and history. Therefore, the paper compares Han Chinese and Mongolian Chinese disparities into two contexts: western and eastern Inner Mongolia. A community-based survey of eight hundred residents in Inner Mongolia will be conducted. The paper uses quota sampling to set up geography and ethnicity quotes to ensure that different subgroups are represented in the data.

The paper contributes to the literature on multiethnic community communication and community resilience, which may bring a new idea of building a more efficient, engaged, and resilient community to cope with disaster in the future. In addition, the paper continues the CIT research, and at the same time, it is the first investigation on Chinese minority ethnic groups under the CIT framework, which can contribute to the theory building.

## **Submission ID**

1121

# **Facebook Memes as Criticism: A Semiotic Analysis of Education Related Memes Posted by University Students in Bangladesh**

## **Authors**

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Ms. Priyanka Kundu - Department of Mass Communication and Journalism, Bangladesh University of Professionals (BUP)

## **Abstract**

Internet memes are often seen as humorous posts; however, they can be used to mock and criticize events that the netizens find not favorable to them. As a result, globally internet memes evolved as a popular tool of social movement, protest, and criticism, especially among young netizens. During the COVID-19 pandemic, like the whole world, Bangladesh experienced an overwhelming flux in all sectors including education. Lack of proper planning from the government and authorities of the educational institutions led to turbulence in this sector including an 18-month closure of educational institutions, introducing an entirely new board examination and evaluation system, session jam in the universities. Also, online and distance learning was not completely successful due to poor infrastructural support. Since the students were the prime victims, they widely criticized the government and the concerned authorities' decisions, with social media memes playing a significant role. This study explored how the university students of different areas in the country were censuring the education-related decisions through the memes and what were the nature, issues, and pattern of those memes. Adopting quantitative content analysis and qualitative semiotic analysis methods, a total of 35 memes (posted from July to September 2021) were analyzed from four purposively selected student-run Facebook pages representing four public universities in the country. Semiotic theory by Ferdinand de Saussure was used as a theoretical framework here. The findings suggest that most of the issues of the meme contents that mock and criticize were institution-centric and based on current events that affected the students. Prior knowledge of connotative signs and knowing the social context were necessary to interpret the underlying meaning of the memes. Analogy and irony were also

identified which were indirectly and sometimes directly instrumental for generating debate among students. Social media memes appeared as a way to criticize or show non-violent protest regarding an issue, where the content maker can remain anonymous. However, the memes lack the possibility of initiating large-scale movements. Despite the study's limitations of relatively smaller sample size and not incorporating the perspectives of students in school and college, the study recommends using the case study method for specific situations, developing a dedicated set of elements to measure critical memes, and taking audiences' reactions to the memes into account.

Keywords: Internet memes, university students, semiology, education, Bangladesh.

## **Submission ID**

1241

# **Cartographies of resistance: Data imaginaries and space making in counter-mapping COVID-19 data**

## **Authors**

Dr. Sandra Jeppesen - Lakehead University

Dr. Paola Sartoretto - Jonkoping University

## **Abstract**

In the first pandemic of the datafied society, interactive COVID-19 data maps have entered citizen media diets, as governments and media communicate COVID-19 case counts through cartographic data visualizations. These are used by state and citizens alike to understand how contagion advances and retreats, assess mobility patterns, and monitor vaccination numbers. However, they are often based on non-comparable data types across countries, including varied reporting criteria and timeframes, leading to visual misrepresentations. Moreover, many pandemic data visualizations have had a negative impact on public debate and action, contributing to the infodemic of disinformation, stigmatizing marginalized groups, and detracting from social justice objectives. Counter to hegemonic maps, spatial representations developed through grassroots data appropriation have been redrawn by marginalized groups to reveal hidden inequalities and support calls for intersectional health justice. This paper investigates the counter-mapping imaginaries of community activists who use data to unveil realities and shape social meanings, focusing on three counter-mapping case studies—City Lab, Data4BlackLives, and Indigenous Emergency.

We find that counter-mapping data imaginaries are deeply embedded in notions of spatiality and relationality across four dimensions of analysis: objectives, uses, production, and ownership. These findings help us to better understand how counter-data maps construct new social realities, through not just the maps themselves but also the processes of creating them, with the potential to support self-determined communities through cartographies of resistance.

## **Submission ID**

1295

# **“If we had the chance to start over...”. Lessons learned and the way forward for Greece’s most long running media cooperative**

## **Authors**

Dr. Lambrini Papadopoulou - National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

## **Abstract**

This November Efimerida ton Syntakton (EfSyn), Greece’s first and most successful cooperative newspaper will celebrate ten years of continuous circulation. This achievement is quite unique considering the fact that EfSyn exists in a media ecosystem characterized by high levels of concentration, cross ownership and the domination of a powerful few (Leandros, 2011). What seemed to be a risky and futile experiment back in 2012, when the Greek media industry was facing an unprecedented crisis, has now evolved into one of the country’s leading newspapers.

Recent years have seen a renewed interest in the field of cooperative media, however there is a consensus that they deserve further exploration since these endeavors are often analysed with reference to either content or production practices (e.g. Couldry and Curran 2003; Fuchs 2010).

Bearing the above in mind, the aim of this study is to shed a light on the people who participate in this endeavor and record their own experiences as members of a media cooperative. Where do they attribute the success of EfSyn? What kind of obstacles did they have to face along the way? What mistakes did they do? What would they change if they could start over? What kind of changes did they notice to themselves during the course of ten years?

These are some of the questions that this study aims to answer. To do so it is based on semi-structured interviews with thirty (30) members of the EfSyn cooperative. These interviews are meant to offer an insight into EfSyn's business model and record the journalists own experiences and lessons learned after 10 years of participating in such an endeavor. Moreover, this study uses secondary data such as balance sheets circulation data, material collected from the 'about' page of the newspaper and also segments from the paper's statute. Ultimately, this study aims to offer an insight into Greece's most successful media cooperative, allow the participants to this unique case study narrate their own experiences, and even, possibly, constitute a road map for the future media cooperatives.

## **Submission ID**

1352

# **Reinterpret EL Seed's Calligraffiti: An Unconventional Approach to Alternative Media**

## **Authors**

Ms. Yingyin Chen - Northwestern University in Qatar

Ms. Xingyu Qin - Northwestern University in Qatar

## **Abstract**

The Arab Uprisings of 2010 has introduced a range of creative activities that reflect and embody young people's activism. Many of these activities included developing music, particularly rap, visual elements, YouTube videos, and Facebook memes. While some practices faded with the uprisings, graffiti continues to capture the imagination of young people across the region. One of these enduring practices is eL Seed's calligraffiti, which integrates Arabic calligraphy and graffiti. EL Seed is a French-Tunisian artist whose projects are emerging across the Middle East region. The value of his calligraffiti projects lies not only in the forms and messages but also in their methodology, which challenges and extends the conventions of alternative media.

This paper focuses on two representative pieces by eL Seed: Perception in Egypt and The Journey in Lebanon. With limited theorization and scholarship on Arabic graffiti, this paper evaluates these two pieces by employing Bailey et al.'s (2008) framework of alternative media as serving the community, as an alternative to the mainstream, as part of civil society, and as rhizome. Methodologically, we analyzed the development and impact of these

two case studies using documents, images, videos and conducted two in-depth interviews with eL Seed and Ouahid Berrehouma, a core member of the artist's team. With calligraphy, eL Seed actively engages with the marginalized communities to form a unified voice that represents both the communities and his experiences. EL Seed also uses self-funding to be independent of the barriers and interventions from the state and the market, which establish a counter-hegemonic space. It is different from the commercial environment of the mainstream graffiti in Lebanon, and it also challenges the Egyptian government's repression that views graffiti as vandalism. Meanwhile, the fluidity of the development process, including eL Seed's team organization, the production structure, and his open-mindedness for partnerships, empower the artist a certain level of control over the rhizomatic development of his works. Therefore, we argue that Perception and The Journey exhibit a unique and sustainable approach to alternative media that emphasizes social engagement, independent development, and fluid organization. The high level of participation, independence, and fluidity qualifies Perception and The Journey as alternative media and enriches the realm of alternative media in the Middle East.

*Keywords: alternative media, street art, graffiti, MENA, activism, social change, marginalized communities*

## **Submission ID**

1397

## **Superar dicotomías en la relación comunicación-movimientos sociales: viejos y nuevos medios comunitarios.**

### **Authors**

Mr. José Agustín Castellanos Rodríguez - Univerisad Veracruzana

### **Abstract**

Con constancia, el tránsito hacia nuevos tiempos históricos ha estado acompañado de mitologías renovadas por el advenimiento de las más recientes inversiones técnicas, en tanto procesos modernizadores materializados en dispositivos tecnológicos, como detonantes absolutos de la metamorfosis histórica (Mattelart, 2002; Treré y Barranquero, 2013); una secuencia lineal que pretende establecer fronteras que se agotan en las narrativas de emergencia, predominancia y extinción de los medios (Scolari, 2013).

Sin duda, el espacio académico no ha estado exento del «tecno-determinismo» respecto a las derivaciones de las tecnologías en las masas (Mattoni, 2017; Treré y Mattoni, 2015), agudizadas en el contexto de aceleradas transformaciones instrumentales. De esta forma, en un esfuerzo por generar un análisis sustancial sobre los procesos de movilización social, algunos estudios han obviado los ecosistemas mediáticos a través de los cuales las comunidades visibilizan sus identidades y objetivos, y coordinado acciones colectivas (Mattoni, 2017; Milan, 2013; Treré, 2012; Treré y Mattoni, 2015). En este documento, se analizan las capacidades sociales para apropiarse de tecnologías de comunicación y reconfigurarlas como «contra espacios públicos» (Fraser, 1999), desde donde mediar las representaciones hegemónicas y hacer contrapeso al control absoluto del Estado y el mercado (Lievrouw, 2011).

Por consiguiente, se dialoga con las determinaciones que han reducido los procesos sociales de organización y movilización a espontaneidades de las Tecnologías de la Información y la Comunicación (TIC) y, por lo tanto, obvian el componente evolutivo de las plataformas mediáticas en relación con las apropiaciones sociales (Constanza-Chock, 2014; Treré y Barranquero, 2013). Reducir las insurgencias a explicaciones instrumentalistas privilegia la novedad de una plataforma sobre otras y descuida los complejos elementos históricos, sociales, políticos y económicos en los que los movimientos sociales se gestan; así como minimiza los complejos repertorios de prácticas comunicativas con los que las comunidades interactúan (Couldry, 2004; Treré, 2013; Treré y Mattoni, 2015).

A partir de Radio Teocelo se extiende una lectura, a la luz de la ecología de medios, que pretende superar dicotomías y evidenciar interacciones entre viejas y nuevas tecnologías. Desde una dimensión «intermediática» se analizan las transformaciones entre medios, como especies que interactúan en un ecosistema que involucra negociaciones en los procesos de supervivencia, evolución y extinción (Scolari, 2012; 2013). Evidencia de que, la emergencia de nuevas tecnologías no significa la extinción de medios, lenguajes, prácticas y sistemas de significación anteriores (Carlón y Scolari, 2009). Por lo tanto, se incorporan las prácticas mediáticas comunitarias a través de plataformas que interactúan en un ambiente de «organización transmedia» (Constanza-Chock, 2014).

El objeto, Radio Teocelo, ha sido seleccionado debido a los procesos de apropiación y reconfiguración que la han atravesado, protagonizados por diversas comunidades con diferentes objetivos, frente a múltiples circunstancias. Ubicada en la cabecera del municipio de Teocelo, es la primera emisora comunitaria constituida en México. Sin embargo, como apropiación tecnológica es producto de la evolución de formas anteriores de interacción sobre redes de identidad, correspondencia y solidaridad, afianzadas en la vida cotidiana: una caja de ahorro popular, una biblioteca pública, la Revista Teocelo y una cooperativa de vinos de naranja.

En la comunidad, los sistemas de significación han transitado a través de prácticas y tecnologías que han generado diversas formas de organización y comunicación dentro de un horizonte simbólico. Radio Teocelo, el periódico *Altavoz* y Teocelo TeVe son medios que han interactuado y compartido contenidos; a pesar de la extinción de *Altavoz*, sus productos transitaron a otros sistemas.

Por consiguiente, desde un enfoque ecologista se incorpora el ecosistema mediático en el cual los actores han desplegado acciones simbólicas a través de múltiples dispositivos de comunicación. No obstante, dichos medios interactúan en un proceso que supera la mera yuxtaposición de tecnologías.

En general, Radio Teocelo permite observar la convergencia entre tecnologías, técnicas y formatos de comunicación, y su evolución a través de múltiples dispositivos, en un ambiente condicionado por elementos políticos, sociales y económicos que han negociado las capacidades de supervivencia y extinción de los medios. Dentro de un amplio ecosistema de relaciones y medios, Radio Teocelo es una tecnología apropiada por las comunidades que han reconfigurado los dispositivos que se encuentran en su campo de posibilidades, para enfrentar las tensiones que disturban el equilibrio estructural de su entorno (Melucci, 1999),.

Por lo tanto, al explorar la multiplicidad de medios se ofrece un amplio panorama respecto a la diversidad de tecnologías involucradas en el desarrollo de organizaciones y movimientos comunitarios. La adopción de una perspectiva diacrónica permite analizar los movimientos sociales y los medios comunitarios como elementos dinámicos con transformaciones a nivel tecnológico, social y discursivo (Treré y Mattoni, 2015).

## **Submission ID**

1432

## **Anti-Caste Techno-Activism: chronicling online reform and resistance narratives in the Indian Cyberspace**

### **Authors**

Dr. Piyush Kant - Tata Institute of Social Sciences

### **Abstract**

Online anti-caste communities built around SNS (Social Networking Service) platforms have come to significantly challenge the predominance of established socially privileged

castes/classes by giving voice to the unheard and marginalized sections within the Indian society. The given marginalized voices have rarely had such opportunities presented to them in the hierarchical class setup of the Hindu society, which has distinguished itself over centuries by relative degrees of ritualistic purity or pollution and of social status.

With the advent of SNS platforms, new age anti-caste groups have risen as a counter point not just to the homogenizing political discourses put forth by 'right-wing *Hindutva*' (right wing nationalist/neo-nationalist forces) forces that are an off shoot of the same old hegemonic caste-based variants. But are also paving forth an alternative to the Leftist-liberal discourses within the Indian socio-cultural & political landscape. The proposed paper will stand to argue that the anti-caste discourses propelled through SNS websites/pages like RTI (Round Table India), JST (Just Savarna Things), Baudhkaro, amongst a few others have been able to create a potent counter public discourse that tends to remain sidelined in the mainstream as well as alternative online media discourses. By standing up to the hegemonic and restrictive ideological binary of 'Right' versus 'Left', which has remained a central faultline of the mainstream media narratives across different geo-political regions, these different groups are developing an alternative voice of resistance in the Indian mediascape.

The proposed paper therefore will attempt to bring forth re-interpretative exercises being indulged by the marginalised identities via their adaptation to new media. Through an in-depth study of the textual discourses been generated and circulated over the aforementioned SNS websites/pages via their posts. Ranging from academic articles to socio-political commentaries as well as viral videos and memes. The group administrators of the given websites/pages have also been personally interviewed, as well as made to submit their responses to a standard questionnaire thereby grounding the research firmly in these activist endeavors. Views of scholars like Evgeny Morozov, Veronica Barassi, Christian Fuchs amongst others, who have probed the theme of society-technology interface has been incorporated in the paper to give it the necessary theoretical grounding.

## **Submission ID**

1454

# **Tecnopolítica, imaginarios sociotécnicos y prácticas de resistencia. El legado del pensamiento crítico latinoamericano en tecnología e información**

## **Authors**

Dr. Juan Ramos - Pontificia Universidad Javeriana

## **Abstract**

La implementación de macrodatos (big data) y la inteligencia artificial que avanzan hoy en el Sur Global dentro de la agenda de “datos para el desarrollo”, específicamente en culturas como las latinoamericanas, son procesos caracterizados por grandes asimetrías sociales y una corrupción estructural –herederas del proceso de colonización– que evidencia graves problemas en la consecución de elementos para la equidad digital y la justicia de datos. A fin de poder reconocer formas propias de análisis y resistencia frente a los actuales mecanismos de datificación en Latinoamérica, este trabajo busca localizar y sistematizar el desarrollo teórico-histórico de la teoría crítica latinoamericana de la tecnología y la información, en sus múltiples formas, centrado en la crítica y análisis de los procesos de informatización de los Estados y en la manera en como estos podrían derivar –en caso de asumir estrategias corporativistas de importación directa y transferencia– en valores e imaginarios directamente tributarios del imperialismo cultural. Privilegiando las perspectivas centradas en la capacidad de resistencia por parte de las comunidades sociales que confrontan dichos esquemas, este rastreo servirá para profundizar en el análisis de las problemáticas sociales y políticas asociadas a la pérdida de soberanía y autonomía por parte de las instituciones públicas y la ciudadanía en favor de capitales transnacionales en torno a los procesos de datificación en el Sur Global para, finalmente, evidenciar los problemas de automatización en sistemas alimentados por datos que han sido históricamente objeto de manipulación o corrupción. Finalmente, la reconstrucción de dicho legado responde a los llamados a cuestionar el supuesto universalismo de los datos y transgredir las miradas tecnocéntricas sobre el funcionamiento de estas tecnologías, desplazando el foco de atención a la mirada tecnopolítica, a los imaginarios sociotécnicos locales y a la agencia política de aquellos que se resisten a su control normativo.

## **Submission ID**

1455

# 'Endulzar la palabra'. Justicia epistémica y gobernanza en los Pueblos del Centro del Amazonas (Colombia)

## Authors

Dr. Juan Ramos - Pontificia Universidad Javeriana Cali

## Abstract

En la región de La Chorrera (Amazonas, Colombia) habitan cuatro pueblos indígenas: uitoto (*mtntka*), okaina (*tbuza*), bora y muinane (*gaigomfjo*). Entre ellos se conocen como los Pueblos del Centro: hijos del tabaco, la coca y la yuca dulce. En los últimos años, estos pueblos han construido su Plan de Vida alrededor del proceso de tejer el canasto de la abundancia, a partir de la sabiduría del tabaco y la palabra de la coca, tratando de mantener su soberanía como pueblos y de revitalizar y comunicar sus formas de conocimiento.

En este contexto, el proceso de tejer el canasto de la abundancia a partir del respeto a la Ley de Vida (noción propia del conocido 'buen vivir'[i]), está relacionado con dejar atrás el canasto del sufrimiento y constituir un presente y un futuro de autodeterminación, soberanía y dignidad. Estos pueblos hablan de 'endulzar la palabra' para referirse al diálogo en condiciones de serenidad y de disposición a la escucha.

Resultado de un proceso de formulación conjunta con la asociación zonal de cabildos 'AZICATCH' y tomando en cuenta el Plan de Vida de los Hijos del Tabaco, la Coca y la Yuca Dulce, por el cual se pretende construir colectiva e interdisciplinariamente, a través de la investigación colaborativa, esta investigación parte de la reflexión teórica en torno a las condiciones de gobernanza y justicia epistémica a través de prácticas letradas otras.

Con base en herramientas de investigación colaborativa, la investigación busca reconocer cuáles son los principales valores para la soberanía y la autodeterminación epistémica, cultura y política del conocimiento 'otro', con el fin de construir una propuesta conceptual de 'gobernanza' desde la perspectiva propia de los Pueblos del Centro (Colombia). Dicha propuesta tiene como objetivo facilitar los procesos de revalorización de la cultura, los saberes y la historia de los Pueblos del Centro, así como apoyar el proceso de construcción de formas de gobierno propio en un escenario interseccional en el que co-existen diferentes cosmologías.

## Submission ID

1459

# **Global climate protest demonstrations: common cause and cosmopolitics**

## **Authors**

Prof. Isabel Babo - Lusófona University, CICANT

Prof. Manuel Bogalheiro - Lusófona University, CICANT

## **Abstract**

The global climate protest demonstrations that have been taking place since 2019 – such as the “Global Climate Strike” and the student movement on climate change “Fridays for Future” – have led to the participation of millions of young people, and also adults, in street mobilizations around the world. Connected in constellation (Twitter, Instagram, Facebook), the Global Climate Strike has its website (<https://pt.globalclimatestrike.net/>), as does Fridays for Future (<https://fridaysforfuture.org>). /), from which they mobilize, inform about activities, spread news, messages, speeches and images, convene global issues and constitute a global environmental common cause to defend the planet and the coexisting human and non-human conceptions of life. In September 2019, the largest globally coordinated climate protest to date took place.

Being specific to the CMC [computer mediated communication] the possibility of unlimited exchange, these movements on climate problems mobilize on a planetary scale, combine network activism with manifestations in physical space, composing a common agenda and demand. Around the same problems and protests, there is the emergence of a new sense of the common and a global (political) project.

This proposal is organized around two lines of analysis. In a first line, the concepts of “common” and “topic common space” (Taylor, 2006) are applied to examine how environmental claims activated in networks and on the street operate in the constitution of a “common attention” and generate joint and concerted actions capable of forming a global common cause. To that extent, a (new) sense of the common – the same common condition – and a (new) “common space” have emerged and are gaining a new expression that is played out in digital and interpersonal planetary relationships. However, from the point of view of equal recognition (Taylor, 2009), many claims highlight the difference, as the existence of a common cause does not extinguish the plurality and heterogeneity of interests, complaints or cultural and political claims associated with local (environmental) problems or others), at the level of the various events in different cities or countries. Thus, in a second line, and referring to some study cases, it is important to discuss how the construction of a common cause does not necessarily imply unified and universal views on the ideas of

climate, nature or sustainability, that generate and perpetuate those that the western imaginary delimited, according to a cultural construction with ethnocentric and anthropomorphic particularities (Soper, 1995; Latour, 2004). In the reticular possibilities of the political ecology that articulate these movements, even if under a common cause, the specificity and difference of singular planetary geographic cultures are also revealed, challenging universal convergences and, on the contrary, giving visibility to multiple cosmopolitics (Stengers, 2005) that induce the same through the different, instead of deducing the different from the same (Hui, 2020).

## **Submission ID**

1479

# **Exercising Communication Rights in Lebanon: A view from the Migrant Community Newsroom**

## **Authors**

Dr. Gretchen King - Lebanese American University

Ms. Farah Saati - Lebanese American University

Ms. Zayna Ayyad - Lebanese American University

Ms. Laure Makarem - Anti-Racist Movement

## **Abstract**

Lebanon is a small country with nearly 7 million residents. Since the 1970s, Lebanon has facilitated the employment of migrant workers under the Kafala or “sponsorship” system. Prior to the 2020 economic crisis in Lebanon, there were over 400,000 migrant workers whose employment in Lebanon is structured by the Kafala system, and more than half of those workers are migrant domestic workers who are mostly women from different parts of Africa and Southeast Asia. Today, the number of migrants is estimated at over 200,000 with the majority of migrant workers coming from Ethiopia, Bangladesh, Egypt, Sri Lanka, and Sudan. In addition, the Kafala system also applies to thousands of displaced Syrian workers also residing in Lebanon, who need a sponsor to work informal jobs (e.g. delivery, construction, grocery stores, etc.), whether or not they have refugee status (including Syrians who have been in Lebanon before 2011).

Workers under the Kafala system are underrepresented and misrepresented in the Lebanese news media. News reports representing migrant workers or their issues in Lebanon are dominated by officials (government or police), citizen-employers (i.e. sponsors), recruitment agencies, and NGOs who speak about or for migrant workers, which propagates their narrow and stereotypical image in the media of the host society. This leads to these entities and the media framing the plight of migrant workers as an individual or isolated problem caused by a few "bad" employers or agencies who abuse migrant workers and do not represent the majority experience under the Kafala system.

In 2020, the Anti-Racist Movement (ARM) in Lebanon and the Institute of Media Research and Training, with funding from WACC, facilitated a project on migrant communication rights in Lebanon. The project worked to prepare a Migrant Community Newsroom for migrants in Lebanon and a media monitoring report that investigated the coverage of migrants in Lebanese news media. The establishment of the Migrant Community Newsroom resulted in a fully equipped newsroom that hosted a series of capacity-building workshops and launched a blog to archive migrant-produced media content. The research findings of the report informed nine practical recommendations for journalists to improve the representation of migrant workers in Lebanese news media. The media monitoring report demonstrated that better news media practices are needed, whereas the report's recommendations and the content from the Migrant Community Newsroom provided a path forward for promoting and achieving the communication rights of migrants in Lebanon.

This paper will first give a short overview of the social, economic, legal, and political contexts motivating the Migrant Community Newsroom project. Then this paper will briefly detail the findings of the media monitoring report that analyzes how migrants under the Kafala system are underrepresented and misrepresented in the Lebanese news media. Finally, the paper will focus on presenting multimedia content from the blog of the Migrant Community Newsroom to demonstrate how migrants are overcoming marginalization in Lebanese media by appropriating media and communication technologies to produce their own media content.

## **Submission ID**

1596

# **Building Community Museums: Transmedia Storytelling and Audience Engagement**

## **Authors**

Dr. Filippo Gilardi - University of Nottingham Ningbo China Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Ms. yi song - University of Nottingham Ningbo China Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

## **Abstract**

This paper will explore how transmedia storytelling can help community museum engage citizens and develop. It will do that by discuss the role of museums as storytellers, and how transmedia strategies could be applied to enhance the construction of community museums by applying three characteristics of transmedia storytelling: participation, collaboration, and processes.

Transmedia storytelling, a method used to spread narratives through multiple media platforms, can help to engage museum visitors effectively (Kidd, 2014; Selvadurai, 2019). The core characteristic of transmedia exhibitions is the decentered authorship that enables people to actively participate in exhibitions and collaborate with the curators (Kidd, 2019). While the empowerment of audiences is of great significance for any museums, this becomes central for local community museums since it allows communities to take control of their own narratives and contribute to the collective memory by direct participation (Kidd, 2014; Giaccardi, 2012).

The primary concern of these institutions is to achieve civic engagement, local development, and community empowerment without being controlled and represented by authorities who are outside of the local history.

Community museums can consider how to make full use of the possibilities of transmedia strategies to engage people and exert their power. This dynamic relationship between museums and communities challenge the authorized, privileged, and canonical museum discourse and open up to grassroots activities.

In conclusion, museums have experienced a transformation from focusing on collecting and preserving objects to valuing audiences' engagement. As storytellers, museums use narratives to help visitors interpret the meaning of objects and build a sentimental relationship with the institution.

However, to meet the expectation of contemporary visitors, museums seek new ways to replace their traditional linear stories. Transmedia storytelling is a possible choice for

satisfying the needs of museum audiences as it can provide context for the objects, arouse people's curiosity to explore the meaning of artefacts, and offer both physical and virtual visiting experiences.

In spite of the power of enhancing individual experiences, transmedia strategies are effective methods for developing a community museum. Constructing community museums is a growing trend among local places as it is beneficial for deepening communal knowledge, affirming community identities and stimulating participation through cultural heritage practice.

## **Submission ID**

1715

# **Reflection on meta-cosmic Ethics based on new Alienation Theory**

## **Authors**

Ms. Yunxiao Gong - 13840978107

## **Abstract**

In 2021, the concept of the metaverse has received a certain amount of heated discussion in all walks of life, and the innovation of its technology and the development of human living space have shown the value of the metaverse in the current dualistic world. With the emergence of new media and the advent of accelerated society, alienation represented by estrangement of human relations also appeared.

However, in this new virtual world, will human beings further face new ethical issues, thus creating a new alienation? The new alienation theory proposed by Rosa illustrates the troubles caused by the intelligent age and the emerging media to human beings from the perspectives of time, space and self-alienation. This paper will address the ethical issues posed by the metaverse to humans and media from the perspective of the new alienation theory.

Firstly, spatial alienation leads to the weakening of emotional connections. The metaverse opens up virtual landmarks and virtual locations with virtual spaces, human emotions linked by geographical locations will no longer exist, and the concepts such as geography and vernacular in reality are gradually replaced in people's hearts, which may lead to the reduction of social identity. Secondly, time alienation increases human survival anxiety,

and digital immortality becomes a new memory method for human beings, which leads to the disappearance of the traditional way of self-construction, and may also lead to new class antagonism because of the differences between rich and poor. Finally, self-alienation leads to a decrease in social responsibility. The identities in the metaverse are definable, which changes the differences of the “origin” of human beings themselves. Therefore, human beings do not need to work hard and improve themselves. The virtual existence eliminates people’s sense of responsibility in society and reduces human desire for knowledge and learning ability, and even change the universal values formed over thousands of years.

To sum up, from the perspective of new alienation, whether the metaverse can be a new space for human survival requires not only the government's management and technical support, but also the establishment of new social rules under the current values, so as to achieve group identity.

## **Submission ID**

2038

# **Communication as cosmogony for self-determination of Indigenous Peoples**

## **Authors**

Dr. Claudia Magallanes Blanco - Universidad Iberoamericana Puebla

## **Abstract**

In this paper I discuss manifestations of Indigenous communication in Latin America from a decolonial perspective and the Epistemologies of the South. I argue that Indigenous Peoples use communication for decolonization and emancipation in the face of the continuous domination they have experienced within the colonial, capitalist and patriarchal matrix.

Communication, understood from the perspective of Indigenous Peoples, is not a mechanism for transmitting information, much less a media input. Communication is a substantive part of community life based on the cosmogony of each peoples. Communication has an internal dimension, proper to each community, and an external one, which enables dialogues, negotiations, resistances and re-existences.

Communication is a key aspect in the ongoing struggles of the Indigenous Peoples of Latin America for self-determination and autonomy. The ways in which they understand and use communication embody both ancestral knowledge and technological appropriations.

I have characterized five dimensions of communication from a Latin American Indigenous perspective: 1) Communication as cosmogony, 2) Communication for community self-reflexivity, 3) Communication as a political strategy, 4) Communication as a right, and 5) Communication as a medium. In this paper I focus on the first dimension and discuss, through concrete examples, how communication reproduces cosmogonies deeply rooted in identity, territoriality, languages, spirituality, autonomy and sovereignty to strengthen, preserve and evidence one's own culture and contribute to the struggle for self-determination and autonomy of Indigenous peoples.

## **Submission ID**

2102

## **Foregrounding vaccine equity conversations: a case study of the Local**

### **Authors**

Ms. Shirley Roburn - Department of Communication and Media Studies, York University

### **Abstract**

This paper discusses the challenges of assessing the impact of online publication the Local's efforts to foreground questions of vaccine equity in local media coverage in the greater Toronto area, as Twitter, a key platform the Local used to circulate its messages, became an increasing toxic environment for health equity advocates in general, and for racialized and/or women advocates in particular. Where alternative media such as the Local work across social media platforms that have not adequately addressed rising harassment and hate speech, it is crucial to expand methodologies beyond study of the social media platforms themselves, to better understand how messages circulate in communities that may mute their activity on these platforms.

In March of 2021, the not for profit online magazine the Local began tweeting links to a series of its maps and articles that highlighted disparities in covid-19 health outcomes in the Greater Toronto Area in relation to inequities in social determinants of health. Data

journalism graphics made clear the substantive differences in vaccination rates between high and low income neighbourhoods, and tracked progress in vaccination rates across the city.

The Local maps closely onto Callison and Young's (2019) categorization of new journalism start-ups that respond to the crisis in Canada's newsrooms of a lack of representation of marginalized communities: it has a Code of Ethics emphasizing transparency, editorial independence, fairness and accuracy, as well as a race, representation, and equity commitment which takes a structural approach to equity in the newsroom. Its mandate to use data journalism and community based storytelling to highlight urban health and social justice concerns aligns with Hermida and Young's (2019) characterization of how the "messiness" of new data journalism practices opens up possibilities to realign relationships between established and new journalism players, and to transform journalism practices and therefore journalism itself.

Over the course of 2021, targeted online attacks on health care workers and advocates escalated over Twitter and other platforms to the point that the Canadian Medical Association began to advocate both to government and directly to social media companies that changes be made. Anecdotally, it was obvious that some health justice advocates, especially women and/or those from racialized communities, were focusing their communication work on other forms of media such as podcasting, rather than engaging over Twitter. While a network analysis, using Communalytics software to track how tweets from Local affiliated accounts circulated among networks of journalists and health justice advocates, gave some sense of the impact of the Local's work, a purely metrics based focusing on re-tweets, quote tweets, and likes, invisibilized the work of advocates who were present but relatively mute over Twitter, instead spreading the Local's analysis into their communities through other means. This paper will discuss efforts to supplement the network analysis through a series of other qualitative and quantitative methods, in order to compensate for the biases in social network analysis, and give voice to the perspectives of those whose communities were most impacted by inequities in access to vaccination.

## **Submission ID**

2130

# **Research on the media convergence practice of Chinese community media—Based on the investigation of Beijing Youth Daily Community Media**

## **Authors**

Ms. Xinyu Li - Communication University of China

## **Abstract**

Ferdinand Tonnies, in his book "Community and Society", defined community as the social association of a group formed by kinship, but over time, our understanding of community has gradually changed from kinship relationships to regional, emotional connections. Community media has been developing in China for more than 20 years. With economic development and changes in community forms, community media in various places have carried out media convergence practices in recent years to adapt to the new situation. The research selects 29 community newspapers as the research objects. These community newspapers were founded by Beijing Youth Daily Community Media, a subsidiary of Beijing Youth Daily. The research conducts field investigation in-depth interviews, and questionnaire surveys to analyze the media convergence practice of Chinese community media. Furthermore, the research summarizes the experience in media convergence to find out its current problems and tries to make effective suggestions. The result shows that the most important convergence and innovation practice of Chinese community media is: Multiple communication channels centered on self-built platforms; Positioning changes from information dissemination to community service; Carrying out cross-industry cooperation and expanding new profit channels for converged media. The convergence practice of community media has played the following roles in the community: creating a "strong relationship platform" to effectively empower community residents; Serving community life and community governance and maintaining community ecology; Promoting community communication and information dissemination, and participating in community governance for residents provide channels.

However, the results of interviews and questionnaires with community residents show that the convergence practice of community media has the following problems: Difficulties in improving the quality of content; Limited media convergence and less use of social media platforms; Lack of advertising and professional talent.

Based on the analysis and social state, this research provides three pieces of advice in the following aspects: Firstly, improve professionalism and strengthen the training of community media people. Secondly, integrate community journalism with citizen journalism to

broaden content channels. Thirdly, cooperate with government enterprises to further expand profit channels.

## **Submission ID**

2164

# **Research on Relationship Structure and Support in Immigrant Virtual Communities of Chinese Xinhua Printing Industry**

## **Authors**

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Mx. Xi Zhuang - School of Journalism and Communication, Nanjing University

## **Abstract**

Xinhua immigrants are urban new immigrants derived from the proliferation of the printing industry. Due to the model of "Fellow Townsman", their connection and interaction with the place of origin are more prominent than other new urban migrants. At present, this kind of connection and interaction relies more on the two dimensions of offline connection and virtual community connection.

Existing studies of Xinhua Phenomenon have paid less attention to the immigration issues associated with the proliferation of the printing industry. Few studies have explored immigrant social networks from the perspective of communication. Through preliminary research, it is found that the support network mediated by social media groups is important for Xinhua immigrants.

This study focuses on how the resources in the rural social network impact the process of Xinhua migrants establishing a foothold in the city. After obtaining the consent of group owners, administrators, and other group members, this study selects a one-month chat record in a Xinhua immigrant QQ group as an analysis sample for social network analysis. The research analyzes the overall network characteristics of the group's information exchange network and social support network mediated by social media groups, and the degree of group members' sense of virtual community. The study also conducted a correlation analysis on the relationship between the members' virtual community feelings and the types of support topics initiated, as well as the members' virtual community feelings and the achievement of support topics. In addition, this study also conducted in-depth interviews with 21 Xinhua immigrants.

The study found that: (1) The inter-group relationship between employment and home-place-bonded has become the basis for supporting the flow of information in immigrant social media groups. Differences in the sense of virtual community among members will have an impact on the type and achievement of support topics. (2) In the interaction between online and offline social support, the weak ties and temporal and spatial asynchrony of information dissemination facilitate the aggregation and transmission of offline social support resources in virtual communities. The online-to-offline transmission of social support is mainly constrained by the immigrant's sense of virtual community and the disclosure of identity clues. (3) Informal social support is mainly delivered in virtual communities. It can not only help immigrants deal with difficulties in employment, but also alleviate the negative emotions of immigrants and provide companionship.

The social support transmitted between online and offline networks helps migrants adapt to urban life. However, the virtual community has not fundamentally changed the social network structure that is closed outside and looses inside. The positive role this can play in the integration process of immigrant cities is limited.

**Keywords:** Social Support, Chinese fellow-townsmen, New Urban Migrants, Virtual Community, Social Capital

## **Submission ID**

2176

## **Sustainability, dependence and power: five models of media in marginalised communities**

### **Authors**

Dr. Franz Kruger - University of the Witwatersrand

### **Abstract**

The challenge of sustainability has generated extensive study and commentary as a key issue for local and community media, particularly radio, around the world. While the literature is mainly concerned with the issue as it emerges for non-profit community media, a parallel discussion has arisen from concern at the impact of platform power on local media, particularly newspapers, in the US and other parts of the Global North. Many similar issues emerge, and the proposed paper argues that the two scholarly traditions have much to learn from each other. At the same time, the impact of poverty and

marginalisation on sustainability needs to be brought much more sharply into focus. The paper develops a taxonomy of five “models” available to local and community media – describing the relationships that arise around different dominant sources of revenue. The first model is commercial, where radio stations rely on advertising income. The second involves patronage, where a single entity or person provides the bulk of the resources. These could include churches, universities, local politicians and others. Though they are different in many ways, they all involve nearly total dependence by the radio station on a single sponsor. The third model involves state support, either through direct grants or the deployment of advertising budgets. In some cases, governments have attempted to set up radio stations or networks directly. The fourth model involves donor funding, which has been a major factor in the growth of community radio in many developing countries. The final model is where communities themselves support their radio station. Though often held out as the ideal, implementation faces many difficulties in poor communities where there is little capacity to provide material support, though volunteers represent an important form of sweat equity. Competition over scarce resources may also lead to conflict and clientilism. The models are described as they emerge in contexts of marginalisation, drawing mainly on literature from Africa and other parts of the Global South. A broadly political economy approach is used to analyse each for implications of dependence and power. Local and community radio forms an important part of information ecosystems, particularly in marginalised communities. The suggested approach enables better understanding of the dynamics around sustainability and funding, enabling more effective support.

## **Submission ID**

2237

# **DIGITAL AND MEDIA ACTIVISM AND COVID 19: PROTESTS OF THE CULTURAL SECTOR IN SPAIN USING SOCIAL MEDIA DURING THE COVID MANDATORY LOCKDOWN**

## **Authors**

Dr. JENNIFER GARCIA CARRIZO - Rey Juan Carlos University

## **Abstract**

The aim of this research is to analyse new and innovative ways of digital and media activism arising during the COVID mandatory lockdown in Spain that took place from March to June 2020. It is specially focused on cultural actors and examines the dynamics in their

use of digital tools and how they have managed to migrate the activities developed in the physical world to the virtual one. To achieve this, cultural activities and socio-cultural and political protests are considered.

This research transversally explores the fields of communication and new technologies, citizen participation, public protests and activism. Methodologically, it consists of an analysis performed on the different cultural and artistic manifestations developed in Twitter and Instagram during the lockdown. Non-participant observation incursions have been made in the aforesaid social media paying special attention to the hashtags and virtual events happening in them between March and June 2020 in the Spanish community.

This research evidences the fact that the pandemic caused by the COVID-19 virus has accentuated the virtualization of social spaces, “in the sense of transferring socializing interactions to virtual environments” (Sandu, 2020, p. 115). The lockdown and its measures have forced not only cultural and creative actors but also artists to continue with their activity from home. The context of the crisis and the lockdown meant the staging of virtual events between March and June 2020 and, within these events, virtual protests arose too. Purposefully designed and well-rehearsed, these so-called “virtual marches through the living rooms” (Volk, 2021, p. 10) were developed across the entire world. These protests not only arose for replacing the originally planned demonstrations on the streets and squares but also to propel new movements despite the difficult conditions. In this sense, the COVID-19 pandemic offered Spanish culture lobbies a new opportunity to claim the importance of culture in our daily lives and criticize the lack of support and investment coming from the State and official resources.

This proposal explores how digital tools act as a facilitator to connect citizens or protesters with actions, and how new media activism strategies have been developed through social media in Spain. As a result of the analysis, two clear ideas can be extracted. First, COVID-19 has been a catalyst for the virtualization of social spaces and their activities, such as sports, cultural acts and other ways of entertainment. In this sense, “the virtualization of the social space (...) will continue in the horizon of the next 10 - 20 years, when we will have most of the social interactions mediated by technology” (Sandu, 2020, p. 136). Second, these virtual interactions are seen to be less intense at an emotional level, “especially interpersonal ones, accompanied by a deconstruction of the idea of belonging group because even within these groups we already have - [and we will have] more and more- virtual relationships” (Sandu, 2020, p. 136).

## **Submission ID**

2265

## **#BukeleDictador en El Salvador: tecnopolítica, discurso de resistencia y acción colectiva**

### **Authors**

Ms. Alexia Ávalos - Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana (Xochimilco)

### **Abstract**

Esta investigación analizó la dimensión política del hashtag #BukeleDictador que surgió a raíz de los acontecimientos del llamado 9F y cómo éste llegó a consolidarse en una serie de hashtags hasta llegar a #El15Marchamos, que desencadenó una marcha masiva por las calles de San Salvador, El Salvador. El activismo digital que surgió con #BukeleDictador se fue consolidando en una serie de hashtags más: #DespiertaElSalvador #ProhibidoOlvidarSv #DonCeroteDictador. El análisis aquí propuesto tiene dos grandes enfoques. El primero es subrayar las críticas que se desprendieron hacia el ámbito gubernamental por parte de una fracción de la población salvadoreña a manera de un discurso y, el segundo, es mostrar cómo surge una comunidad virtual con prácticas comunes que alimentaron un activismo político que también se movió hacia el terreno *off line*, poniendo de manifiesto las transformaciones de las prácticas cotidianas en lo que se ha entendido como lo *onlife*. El análisis toma el concepto de Tecnopolítica (Toret, 2013) Multitud conectada (Rovira, 2016) Discurso de resistencia (Scoot, 2000). Esto se contrastó con una metodología de tipo cualitativa en la que se creó un corpus a través de una serie de categorías para analizar tuits con el hashtag #BukeleDictador, desde un paradigma interpretativo que propone Vasilachis (2009) para construir una interpretación del mundo.

### **Submission ID**

2313

## **Informal Activist Infrastructures: Comm Tech for Grassroots Organizing and Movement Building**

### **Authors**

Mr. Brad Limov - The University of Texas at Austin

## Abstract

How do activists organize at actionable scales, and what role do communication technologies play in shaping their strategies and tactics? To answer this question, I participated in the digitally mediated organizing of a local grassroots organization and their campaign against a police funding ballot initiative in Austin, Texas. Based on six months of participant observation across on- and offline spaces, I theorize the technologies used as constituting informal activist infrastructures and show how, through their use, affordances of visibility, traceability, legibility, and participation emerged as “possibilities for action” (Evans, Pearce, Vitak, & Treem, 2017, p. 36). I then discuss how these affordances shaped campaign efforts in engagement, messaging, mobilization, and data collection for movement building purposes.

In order to conduct this research, I needed to “enter” the field. I first became aware of the social movement organization studied during the racial justice protests of 2020, at which time I began to learn more about local organizations in the Austin area by liking social media accounts and signing up for mailing lists. The subsequent step from “follower” to “member” meant access to Slack workspaces and general body meetings. Further involvement led me to virtual participation in an organizing committee on a weekly basis for the majority of the six-month period, as well as offline attendance at rallies, canvasses, and socials. In my analysis, I take a grounded theory approach (Charmaz & Mitchell, 2001) to allow themes and insights to emerge organically from the ethnographic record produced by my field notes and media traces compiled over the study period.

I contend that research into the organizing that happens before and after headline-grabbing media events can make visible the labor, dynamics, and social bonds—in other words, the “capacities” (Tufekci, 2017)—that produce the conditions for the appearance of social movements in the first place. It can illuminate the strategies and tactics, or “repertoires of contention” (Tilly, 1986), that direct them once they do appear. It can challenge accounts promulgated by “the protest paradigm” in news coverage of social movements as spontaneous spectacles, riots, or conflicts (Chan & Lee, 1984).

Beyond the “work” of the campaign studied and its mediation, there were real people volunteering their time, a commitment that depended upon trust, friendship, and camaraderie. These bonds formed as activists moved from becoming aware of an organization (visibility) to learning (traceability), understanding (legibility), and ultimately attending actions themselves (participation). While I could not objectively observe all activities of all groups on both sides of the issue, I was able to see how the efforts of one group extended beyond itself into a broader network of coalition organizations, volunteers, journalists, and politicians, and how such work simultaneously aimed to build a local movement—with data collected on all those who participated for use in future mobilizations. Communication technologies and the affordances identified were all the more important during the COVID-19

pandemic, making possible community and action when offline interactions were limited or nonexistent.

## **Submission ID**

2456

# **Pandemic as critical juncture: exploring prospects for inclusion, sustainability, and radical change for community media in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic**

## **Authors**

Dr. Andrew Ó Baoill - National University of Ireland Galway

## **Abstract**

Robert McChesney has argued that we can view media history through the lens of critical junctures – moments when a conflux of political instability, technological change, and crises of legitimation for media content, offer an opportunity for radical structural changes. Naomi Klein has documented the manner in which right-wing politicians have drawn inspiration from Milton Friedman’s maxim that “only a crisis – real or perceived – produces real change”, as part of what she terms ‘disaster capitalism’. From another perspective, Zeynep Tufekci has explored the manner in which loosely organised grassroots political activists have leveraged nascent social media and digital tools to foment and drive uprisings and protest movements.

The COVID pandemic has undoubtedly been a period of crisis, with very real concerns about an invisible, deadly, threat, upending all manner of socialisation and cultural ritual. With little advance notice, radio studios and community spaces were shut to most volunteers and staff; the pandemic cast a shadow over all aspects of operations. The pandemic has seen the adoption of ‘new’ technologies and tools. There has been an intensification of existing conflicts over truth, trustworthiness, expertise, and echo chambers. And governments have engaged in delicate balancing acts as they have overseen expansive public health efforts, amidst duelling public concerns regarding the risks posed by a novel virus, and suspicions regarding possible abuse of the significant powers wielded by government.

It is in light of this broader context that this study examines the experience of community media outlets during the pandemic. Drawing on interviews with staff and activists, across

several countries adhering to what Hallin & Mancini term the 'liberal North Atlantic' model this ongoing research explores three major questions:

- What impact did the pandemic have on the operations of community media organisations? Building on previous study of issues of sustainability in community media, this strand explores challenges (and some opportunities) for production, management, and financing of community media organisations.
- What impact did the pandemic have on issues of participation and access? How did organisations – particularly organisations, such as radio stations, that had previously defaulted to a model of physical presence – manage the pragmatic aspects of pivoting to adhere to social distancing protocols? Were there any ways in which new practices opened up new avenues for participation?
- As agents of content creation and dissemination, often associated with oppositional movements and sceptical of institutional power, how did community media outlets understand (and implement) their role within the context of the COVID pandemic?

This research study sheds light on the short-term responses to the pandemic by some of those operating within the community media sector. Further, it offers an opportunity to consider the prospects for longer-term structural changes following on from the immediate events of the pandemic, specifically as they relate to community media. In what ways has the pandemic weakened the situation of community media within the broader media ecosystem? What avenues are there for the sector to leverage the opportunities of a possible 'critical juncture' to secure some positive legacy from the pandemic?

## **Submission ID**

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