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Table of Contents

| | |
|---|----|
| Power, Gender and Visibility: The Media Representation of “Drinking Culture” in Contemporary China | 3 |
| MPS Overview - Them versus/and Us: (Re)Construction of Others in the Post-Pandemic World | 5 |
| MPS Paper - This’s Us: Identity Construction and Discursive Struggle of Chinese International Students (CIS) in Their Vlogs on the Life with COVID | 7 |
| The news media’s role in fuelling the Female Fear Factory: A rhetorical criticism of South African television news reports on violence against women and children | 8 |
| MPS Paper - Vaccination: The discursive construction of Turkishness in the news texts about Turkey’s COVID-19 vaccine..... | 9 |
| Reducing Contingency in Digital Modernity: Strategic Communication as Promoter of Fashionable Narratives of Digitalization..... | 10 |
| MPS Paper - Constructing an “Incredible India” : How Chinese English Newspaper Framed India’s COVID-19 Pandemic..... | 11 |
| Can the Marginalized be Heard? | 12 |
| Agency, algorithms and hot takes: Active curation on social media for young Australian adults in an era of neo-globalisation | 13 |
| Information disorder in India: Tracing the emergence of fact-checking initiatives | 15 |
| YouTube ‘Quarantine Aesthetic’ : A Qualitative Comparative Content Analysis of creative Indian YouTube channels before and during Covid-19 Pandemic. | 16 |
| X-gram: Word-prediction AI, the climate crisis, and critical unmaking..... | 17 |
| Caste and Cinema: Analysis of Caste Representation of Bihar in the Cinema of Prakash Jha (1984-2016) | 19 |
| Computationality: The Computational Epistemology of Computational Social Science | 20 |
| Democratizing Development, Deprofessionalizing Alternative Media, and the Struggle for Sustainability: The Case of Appan Samachar in Bihar, India | 21 |
| “I am a Five”: How does COVID-19 revise the narrative identity of Chinese college students through structural anxiety—Participatory observation of the virtual community “98-Five Introduction Program” | 23 |
| Active online information engagement and individual’s subjective social class through social capital perspective:based on a national survey in China | 24 |
| Communication as a catalyst to sustainability: Rethinking the role of communication in agricultural innovation networks | 26 |
| MPS Paper - The most familiar strangers: A study on the identity of community workers in China under the COVID-19 pandemic | 27 |
| MPS Paper - Observing China as the other: The construction of China's country image in Ryo Takeuchi’s COVID-19 documentaries | 28 |

| | |
|---|----|
| Using ISIS’s rhetoric of terror to analyse South African Farmers’ rhetoric of the terrified: An analysis of selected television news reports about Farm attacks in South Africa .30 | 30 |
| “Being Yourself ...” Self-Expression in the Virtual and Material in the Production of Virtual YouTubers | 30 |
| Journalism Culture and Climate Change: A Comparative Analysis of COP26 in Chinese and US Newspapers..... | 31 |
| The Incredible China, Foreign Influencers and transcultural identity: a case study of Chinese Culture Documentary..... | 32 |
| Toward a Governance Model for the Caribbean Film Industry: An exploration of film policies in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago | 34 |
| Visual communication and photography praxis: Identifying bias in COVID-19 media imagery..... | 35 |
| Trivialization of truth in Infodemic: A Corona case study of Nepal | 36 |
| Communicating healing through ethnic music: An analysis of the Shona community’s indigenous approaches to psycho-social support for the bereaved as projected through selected songs by Oliver Mtukudzi. | 37 |
| Application Scenarios and Hazards of Artificial Intelligence in Family Communication: Based on the Perspective of Neo-Familism..... | 38 |
| Rethinking Methods: Representations of Gender in Television Commercials in South Africa and Germany..... | 39 |
| Las resistencias cotidianas en el contexto periodístico. Un acercamiento teórico..... | 40 |
| COMMUNICATION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL SPACES IN THE ERA OF NEO-GLOBALISATION: AN ANALYSIS OF HOW COVID-19 HAS CHANGED THEIR DYNAMICS..... | 41 |
| Consensual Voyeurism and Dis/Embodied Data: Interrogating Surveillance Through Multimodal Research..... | 43 |
| The state of climate journalism in South Africa: Are mainstream media organisations listening to activists?..... | 44 |
| Othering Others: Listening to Black Bodies in South African High Commissions | 45 |
| #Jerusalema Challenge and Covid 19 exemplifying a new media influenced neo-globalization..... | 47 |

Power, Gender and Visibility: The Media Representation of “Drinking Culture” in Contemporary China

Authors

Mr. Haoxuan Song - Beijing International Studies University

Abstract

In 2021, the social scandals related to Chinese Internet giant Alibaba and a well-known pop star Kris Wu are associated with contemporary Chinese “drinking culture” (i.e. jiu zhuo wenhua), which have sparked a heated discussion in the Chinese media. Unlike the “drinking culture” in ancient Chinese society, which embodies the host’s hospitality, the media representation of “drinking culture” in contemporary China has witnessed dramatic changes in the last decade, hiding more complex layers of meaning and various power struggles. What new narratives and imaginings of power and gender do these media representations construct? How does its media representation interact with the changing social context? How does it relate to the global #MeToo movement? Yet, little attention has been paid to the media representation of “drinking culture” in contemporary China so far.

In order to investigate how media represent “drinking culture” in contemporary China and thoroughly explore the power struggles behind it, critical discourse analysis and thematic analysis are applied to collected media content from 2016 to 2021. Findings suggest that the media representation of “drinking culture” in contemporary China has undergone a significant shift from a “health problem” to a focus on various power relations over the drinking table. First of all, the media representation reveals that the wine table is a power wrestling field in contemporary Chinese social life. Alcohol becomes a tool for reaffirming power relations. And the dissection of the micro-power operation at the drinking table is twofold, involving workplace and gender relations. Specifically, sexual harassment related to “drinking culture” has become the focus of media discussion. Media representations of “drinking culture” point to the deep-seated misogyny and objectification of women in the workplace of patriarchal societies. But these media representations are not without problems, echoing the stereotype of women in social situations in a patriarchal society, where Chinese women are portrayed as “snacks” or objects of male desire. Their agency is completely ignored.

At the same time, the analysis indicates that social media has more detailed exposure to the deep gender oppression contained in the micro-power field of the wine table and calls for women’s solidarity and resistance. The recent changes in media representation have complex intertextuality and interaction with the #MeToo movement in the Chinese media. The increased visibility of “drinking culture” raises gender awareness in society, calls for gender-friendly management systems in companies, and challenges the oppression of women at the dinner table in the patriarchal society.

Keywords: drinking culture, media representation, gender, power, visibility

Submission ID

353

MPS Overview - Them versus/and Us: (Re)Construction of Others in the Post-Pandemic World

Authors

Mr. Xudong Weng - Communication University of China

Abstract

With over two years of the global pandemic, COVID-19 has been posing unprecedentedly changing contexts for media and communication academia, in which the constant creation, construction, and struggles of cultural identities have become one of the most urgent issues on today's research agenda. The pandemic is not an equalizer in terms of infection risks as frequently touted before, but an amplifier of the imbalanced power structures (Mein, 2020). What's more important is, while the existing seeds of racial, ethnical, sexual, and political divisions keep growing (Berkhout & Richardson, 2020; Elias, Ben, Mansouri, & Paradies, 2021), a wide range of social groups/communities are relocated at the edge of dominant discourses in various ways and contexts through social media and global communication as a result/tool of political struggle, social isolation, generation and circulation of panic, and etc. Due to the perceived or even imagined links with the virus, they are watched and represented as others to be blamed, compared with, and treated separately via them-versus-us narratives. These emerging others are including but not limited to infected cases, anti/un-vaccinated individuals, volunteers on the front line, overseas migrants, and the third world countries in the global media predominantly controlled by western countries. Such problematic representations, dominated by the discursive hegemonies at the regional/global level, become the main sources of discrimination, stigma, cyberbullying, and hate crimes, posing new challenges for general understanding, cooperation, and cohesion in the era of neo-globalization. It also highlights the need for continuing development and (re)consideration of identity and media construction surrounding the aspects of media production, circulation, and participation.

To investigate these issues, this proposed multi-paper session (MPS) discusses cultural identities and identification processes in the era of post-pandemic. It does not only reveal and reflect media representation or construction of the identities, but also tries to observe and understand how digital technologies and platforms enable the marginalized groups/communities to get themselves unsilenced and generate counter-hegemonic discourses to defend their rights and interests. The panel theme is explored from multiple perspectives with a variety of approaches and cultural contexts. In this session, the presentations outlined briefly below illustrate the key issues and points that each author wishes to bring to the table for further discussion. Some presentations will be based on the observations of national identity construction and its competition on a global basis; others will look at the experience of certain social groups in China who has particular links with COVID.

Through contextual case studies, these papers will showcase the significance of today's media agenda, and serve as a starting point for the reflection on reorientations, challenges, and changing contexts in the era of neo-globalization, and for the general discussion where we hope others interested in this area will take part in.

Moreover, this MPS is initiated by the research community of emerging scholars and PhD students from Chinese IAMCR memberships, which is established under the framework of the IAMCR ambassador initiative. It aims to produce an overview of the state of emerging Chinese research in the field of identities/dis-identities and media participation, to initiate discussion about further development and intercultural collaboration to a wider academic audience.

Chair to facilitate the online commenting: Xudong Weng, Communication University of China, Beijing, China

Paper1: This's us: Identity construction and discursive struggle of Chinese international students (CIS) in their Vlogs on the life with COVID, Xudong Weng & Kexin Luo, Communication University of China, Beijing, China (#425)

Paper2: *Vacci-nation*: The discursive construction of Turkishness in the news texts about Turkey's COVID-19 vaccine, Mazlum Kemal Dağdelen, Charles University, Prague, Czech Republic (#556)

Paper3: Constructing an "incredible India": How Chinese English newspaper framed India's COVID-19 pandemic, Xiaoyu Zhang, Communication University of China, Beijing, China (#624)

Paper4: The most familiar strangers: A study on the identity of community workers in China under the COVID-19 pandemic, Linhao Zeng, Renmin University of China; Chen Zhang, Communication University of China, Beijing, China (#1237)

Paper5: Observing China as the other: The construction of China's country image in Ryo Takeuchi's COVID-19 documentaries, Zeyu Wang, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China (#1329)

Submission ID

390

MPS Paper - This's Us: Identity Construction and Discursive Struggle of Chinese International Students (CIS) in Their Vlogs on the Life with COVID

Authors

Mr. Xudong Weng - Communication University of China

Ms. Kexin Luo - Communication University of China

Abstract

As the Black Death devastated medieval Europe in the 14th century, Jews were identified as scapegoats and got viciously blamed and persecuted. Under the shadow of COVID-19, however, similar scenes are still happening. Through social media and global communication, while cultural identities continue to be created/changed, different social groups/communities are (kept) being marginalized and stigmatized in various ways and levels. In the context of China, Chinese international students (CIS) have surprisingly become an emerging case that is trapped in dilemma both materially and discursively. They find it difficult to return to China because of travel restrictions and most of them have to stay where they are. They do not only confront the direct discrimination, social exclusion, and even physical attacks in foreign societies externally, but are also not welcomed home on domestic social media. The grassroots discourse articulates them with individualism, privileged class, grown-up baby, etc. And their coming home is considered making trouble for motherland or poisoning from thousands of miles away. Although that's an issue that cannot be ignored, only a few pieces of literature investigate and discuss the construction and stigma of CIS (Li, 2021; Sun & Zhang, 2021). Neither little is empirically known about how this group constructs themselves and struggles to get unsilenced, leaving a gap for further research.

The proposed research attempts to explore the construction of the CIS in the vlogs on the life with COVID produced by themselves, to keep a close eye on how they shape their own discourse to dislocate and combat the hegemonic representation. The theoretical backbone for this analysis is provided by Laclau and Mouffe's (2014) discourse theory, which is increasingly showing its unique insights and capabilities in interpreting various social representations and media cultures in recent years. Through the empirical analysis, two sub-questions will be discussed as follows:

1. What strategies do CISs apply in their vlogs to deconstruct the hegemonic articulation of their identity?
2. What nodal points can we see at work in their counter-hegemonic discourse?

The research attempts to take Bilibili, one of the most popular Chinese video-sharing websites, as a case. 30 CIS vloggers will be selected based on conventional signals and assessment signals (Donath, 2007). And their vlogs related to COVID and uploaded in the

latest 3 months (October 2021- December 2021) will be collected as research samples. The approach of Discourse Theoretical Analysis (DTA) (Carpentier & De Cleen, 2007) will be deployed in the analysis.

This research aims to reflect the process of (re)construction of the identities of CIS, serving as a starting point for further research in this field. Through the case study, it could help us to have a better understanding of how social media activate the discursive struggle of marginalized groups in the era of the (post) epidemic. From a broader perspective, moreover, it would also be relevant because it contributes to the localization and further development of the applied theoretical framework in the Chinese context.

Submission ID

425

The news media's role in fuelling the Female Fear Factory: A rhetorical criticism of South African television news reports on violence against women and children

Authors

Ms. Sisanda Nkoala - Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Abstract

This study undertakes a rhetorical criticism of South African television news reports on violent crimes against women and children, focusing on the 16 days of activism campaign. Drawing on Kenneth Burke's notion of language as symbolic action and Pumla Gqola's concept of the Female Fear Factory, the central issue is how South African television news report on the 16 days of activism for no violence against women and children use language and visuals to depict "reality, and whether this reality confirms or contradicts the actual reality of violence against women and children in this context. The data collected for this qualitative study was 32 English-language prime time news bulletins aired on SABC 3 and eTV between November 25, 2020, and December 10, 2020, both dates inclusive. The paper finds that the news reports considered were firstly inclined to use language that empowers men by affording them the status of agents in the stories, while women are prone to be depicted as subjects who are acted on. The study also found an inclination not directly name men as perpetrators of abuse, thus minimising their complicity in this societal issue. From this the conclusion is that these reports employ language to engage in the symbolic action of fueling the Female Fear Factory that causes women to live in fear due to the emphasis on the gruesome and pervasive violence they are at risk of on a daily.

Submission ID

433

MPS Paper - Vaccination: The discursive construction of Turkishness in the news texts about Turkey's COVID-19 vaccine

Authors

Mr. Mazlum Kemal Dağdelen - Charles University

Abstract

As a political project, vaccination presumes immunising individuals, communities, and societies against health crises. Vaccination, therefore, is a crucial element of a 'healthy' nation formation. Mass vaccination arouses sentiments of civic duty and shared solidarity in some by articulating individuals whose well-being is incorporated into the well-being of their nation. However, it also arouses anxiety in some others, like other pervasive expressions of state power such as taxing or conscripting. So, vaccines are regarded as essential tools of public health for some while as profitable commodities or indicators of power for others.

Like many other countries, Turkey began developing its 'domestic and national vaccine(s)' against COVID-19 in 2020. The development of the studies often captured the national headlines. In December 2021, one of the domestically developed COVID-19 vaccines, TURKOVAC was issued emergency-use authorisation. Although there have been heated debates over the reliability/effectiveness of the 'Turkish' vaccine, it has been made available for citizens and preferred by many in a short time. The primary goal of vaccine development studies is said to protect human health, the development of the vaccine also provided a field for the (re-)construction of the hegemonic discourse and the national identity.

This study analyses the discursive construction of Turkishness in the news reports about TURKOVAC in the Turkish press. Accordingly, the main research question is "How is Turkishness discursively constructed in the news texts about the COVID-19 vaccine TURKOVAC?". In order to better understand this construction, a theoretical model on the discourse of national identity is developed. To this end, Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory (DT) is used. DT mainly asserts that social phenomena gain their meanings through discourse, and meanings are never completed, fixed, or total, but they are discursive constructions.

Methodologically, this study utilises the Discourse Theoretical Analysis (DTA) elaborated by Carpentier and De Cleen (2007). DTA depends on the iterative relation between the theory and the empirical analysis, and it makes use of the sensitising concepts to guide the analysis. Discourse is the central sensitising concept along with the other discourse-theoretical concepts such as nodal points and floating signifiers.

Within this study, the news reports about TURKOVAC published between June and December 2021 in three national newspapers are analysed. The data selection period is limited between those dates because the vaccine started on phase III trials in June 2021, and the mass production of the vaccine started in December 2021. For the analysis, fifteen news reports have been selected from *Sabah*, *Hürriyet* and *Sözcü* – five from each newspaper. These newspapers have been selected because they have the largest circulation in the selected period and different political views.

As the paper marks a rare empirical examination of national identity in the news texts through DTA, it will constitute a good contribution to the body of knowledge in communication and media studies by providing theoretical development through analysing discursive construction of national identity. Also, the selected set of texts and the context make this paper livingly and timely related to the field.

Submission ID

556

Reducing Contingency in Digital Modernity: Strategic Communication as Promoter of Fashionable Narratives of Digitalization

Authors

Mr. Jannik Kretschmer - University of Salzburg

Abstract

Digital modernity, commonly associated as VUCA world (*“volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity”*) or *“era of neo-globalization”*, as this year's IAMCR theme appropriately describes it, is centrally characterized by the issue of contingency. This means, on the one hand, a surplus of possibilities for each actor, but on the other hand, an increasing uncertainty due to the multitude of decisions that have to be made ever more rapidly and flexibly. Drivers at the economic, socio-cultural, and digital-technological level underpin this process and in turn lead to a form of paralysis (Reckwitz, 2020). The research project argues for overcoming the issue of contingency in digital modernity at the social dimension of digitalization, more precise through the logic of fashion.

The digital is profoundly rooted in the dialectic of modernity (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1988 [1947]). This dialectic as a rational as well as romantic project is also reflected in the duality of the digital space: on the one hand, digitization, in the sense of a technological and rational dimension; on the other hand, digitalization, as an accompanying social expectation and its implications for society, organizations and actors (Brennen & Kreiss, 2016). This work suggests that digitalization follows the social logic of fashion and uses its cyclical processes of change as well as imitation and diffusion to neutralize contingency through future-oriented narratives of digitalization. Thus, fashion provides orientation and

meaning that a purely rational level of digitization cannot provide by transforming ambivalent tensions into productive actions (Esposito, 2011). The field of strategic communication plays a significant role in the dissemination of those fashions, more specific fashionable narratives, through its ambition to develop visions of the future that are both organizationally as well as publicly accessible and compatible in a digital era of neo-globalization. In this sense, actors of the field promote digitalization narratives at both research and practice levels.

On a conceptual level, this paper identifies various fashion approaches in the social sciences (e.g. Abrahamson, 1996; Czarniawska, 2009). These approaches examine the social logic of fashion at different levels – scientific theories, industry discourses, organizational practices – but share the assumption that fashions provide contingency reduction that cannot be accomplished purely rationally. This logic becomes observable in specific future-oriented narratives, which can henceforth be reconstructed methodologically on different levels: In a first step, with the help of a narrative analysis of the broad historical discourse of digitalization. Second, a narrative literature review of digitalization-oriented strategic communications research and practice-oriented industry magazines.

The overall aim of the paper is to outline and frame the theoretical basis of the research project and to present preliminary results, that is, five overarching narratives of digitalization (digitalization as cybernetics; ...networking; ...community; ...transhumanism; ...disruption) rooted in the historical visions and prospects of the 20th century that are central to the current debate on digitalization. Against the background of these five narratives, a narrative literature review was then conducted, in which more than 80 articles from 13 leading strategic communication journals were analyzed with regard to their digitalization narratives according to Labov's scheme of narrative interpretation.

Submission ID

578

MPS Paper - Constructing an “Incredible India” : How Chinese English Newspaper Framed India’s COVID-19 Pandemic

Authors

Ms. Xiaoyu Zhang - Communication University of China

Abstract

As two major emerging powers and the most populous countries in the world, China and India are severely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Chinese academic tradition, Chinese scholars have done much research on how Indian media construct the image of China, especially after the proposal of the Belt and Road Initiative. Chinese academia paid

rare attention to how the Chinese media frames the image of India (Ji, Hu, Muhammad, 2016). Based on the literature review, the two emerging giants have stereotypes of each other in news reporting and the main reasons behind stereotypes are political mistrust between the two countries. It should be noticed that political issues, including bilateral relations, border disputes and etc., dominate the reporting content for the long term. And there are rare occasions that issues relating to the health and public welfare of the two countries are reported. So, this research aims to explore whether the news reporting regarding India by Chinese media has any changes under the situation of the COVID-19 pandemic. And the research is done by selecting the news reports by the Chinese leading English Newspaper *Global Times* which is popular with Indian audiences. This paper aims to figure out how China's mainstream English newspaper *Global Times* and its social media accounts reported India's Covid-19 pandemic. The research is supported by data, statistics, and contents captured from news reporting from January 2020 to December 2020 by *Global Times*. It is argued that although the two countries have a long history of cultural communication, the representation of India in the pandemic in China's English newspaper remains "incredible", which means exotic and unfamiliar. Actually, the word "incredible" is used in the self-promotion of India. But there it is used to make a contrast to the widely circulated image of "competitor" or "rivalry" in the past news report. It is argued that the construction of India in Chinese English newspapers is influenced by the cultural tradition which can be reflected in the 20th Century. (Wang, 2020) It is also figured out that India's administrative measures were questioned the most and comparisons in governance between the countries were made frequently. Moreover, the paper analyzes the reasons behind the reporting frame from both historic, political and social perspectives.

Submission ID

624

Can the Marginalized be Heard?

Authors

Mr. Sreedhar Nemmani - Temple University Graduate Student

Abstract

In her influential work, *Can the Subalterns Speak?* (1988), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak concludes that owing to the control that academia holds over its representation, a subaltern subject can never speak and that its voice gets represented only after the subject is removed from the scene. Spivak's analysis sought to expose the logics through which western theorists, in their effort to problematize the subject (Spivak, 1988. p. 271), invariably slip the subaltern subject through the analytical cracks rendering it speechless and "invisible through assimilation" (Spivak, 1988. p. 294). While Spivak's emphasis was on alerting us to the ways in which the subaltern subject is silenced, this article flips the existing dialectical relationship between the academic traditions of meaning-making and the subaltern, and asks, can the subaltern, or in this case, the marginalized[1] indeed be

heard? Within academic discourses, marginalized groups are often at the center of academic research where the subjects are analyzed through existing analytical and research frameworks. Realizing the unequal power relationship inherent within the researcher-researched dyad, several scholars, particularly from the fields of critical, cultural, feminist, postcolonial, subaltern, and critical race studies, among others, have deliberated on providing a voice to the research subject. Arguing that these discourses are still always already rooted within the traditional, Western-centric research paradigms, this article shifts the analysis on to the academic knowledge generation practices and asks, what hinders a researcher from hearing the marginalized, and what can we do that would allow us in hearing them in the first place? Hearing, as in listening to the subject, has been articulated by several scholars as onto-epistemological interventions towards providing and capturing research subjects' voices. Breaking away from the prevailing articulations, this article shifts our attention to the axiological considerations we carry into the very process of hearing/listening to the subject, which in-turn, already frames our meaning-making process.

This shift in focus is inadvertently a circuitous one as it entails unpacking the ways in which scholars engage with research methodologies in the process of meaning-making. While this article surveys and complicates the process of academic knowledge generation, its primary focus is on reevaluating the values, the 'metascientific worldviews' (Hill, 1984), that the researchers hold and which in turn subtly guide us in the process of knowledge generation. The article argues that for a researcher, to hear the marginalized, adding additional layers of being reflective, reflexive, or ethical within their research practices may not be enough and that they must reinvestigate and alter the axiological frameworks they inherit and carry into the field. The article also deliberates on the possibility of considering an alternative axiological framework(s).

[1] This article uses the identifiers like subaltern, marginalized, indigenous, native, and primitive – the words used to identify the people and societies who/that are inadvertently left behind or are categorized as yet-to-embrace (industrial) modernity – interchangeably.

Submission ID

688

Agency, algorithms and hot takes: Active curation on social media for young Australian adults in an era of neo-globalisation

Authors

Ms. Agata Stepnik - The University of Sydney

Abstract

As social media platforms have become a key source of news for younger generations of users (Newman et al., 2021), media plurality and news visibility have become focal areas for scholars concerned about the future of local content in an era of information globalisation (see esp. Dwyer et al., 2020) and algorithmic gatekeeping (Martin, 2021). Consequently, it is crucial to understand how young adults curate their social media feeds to access socially significant information and the impact that their curatorial design has on their news exposure and consumption. This paper presents the findings from a 12 month digital ethnographic study involving 13 young adult Australians and their use of social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and TikTok to highlight the role of individual agency in user experience of news and information.

The paper draws on practice theory to conceptualise what I term the 'active curation techniques' by which young adults personalise their feeds in response to algorithmic selection processes. It joins a growing body of literature which explores the role of user agency in these settings, asking to what extent users can curate and control the experiences that they have on social media, where platform affordances are scarce (Davis, 2017; Merten, 2021; Swart, 2021). In this paper I examine the nature of active curation techniques and how they allow young adults to exert local agency over algorithmic determination, offering valuable insight into emerging normative news produsage behaviours.

The paper also examines what users categorise as news on social media. It argues that 'cultural commentary' content such as memes, casual discussions between friends, and hot takes from cultural intermediaries have the potential to keep users up to date with what is happening in the world, hyper-locally and globally. The data demonstrates that a variety of platform users interact with cultural commentary content, including those who describe themselves as 'news avoidant'.

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Submission ID

824

Information disorder in India: Tracing the emergence of fact-checking initiatives

Authors

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Abstract

Information disorder, popularly called fake news, is a global concern. It poses challenges to democratic institutions and widens the "existing socio-cultural divisions using nationalistic, ethnic, racial and religious tensions" (Wardle & Derakhshan, 2017). Following the alleged social media manipulation and disinformation campaigns in the 2016 US presidential elections, "a wave of regulations emerged across countries" (Harcourt, 2021). These measures aim at addressing the problem of information disorder and include "hard and soft regulations" (Funke, 2021), ranging from penal actions to media literacy initiatives. A common feature among these regulations is how social media intermediaries are held accountable for the content on their platforms.

The research and regulations in the USA and European countries majorly address the political form of misinformation such as political advertising and polarization on social media. In contrast, in the Indian context, the fake news problem is more extensive and takes many forms, such as misinformation related to health, religion, gender, nationality, etc. The most recent example could be the 'infodemic' of false health information that pervaded the Indian social media during the Covid-19 pandemic.

If we look at the post-2013 period, India experienced a rapid penetration of smartphones and the availability of affordable internet (Kaka, et al., 2019). This change had also brought in increased incidents of misinformation. Several fact-checking initiatives have emerged in response to this phenomenon. The scope of fact-checking initiatives and their expertise spreads across a vast spectrum of information disorder and its types. At a structural level, the major challenge among fact-checking initiatives is their ability to address the problem in a multilingual context.

In the Indian context, the new Information Technology (IT) Rules, 2021, notified in February 2021, aims at regulating social media platforms. These IT Rules give agency to users by enabling them to report certain content they believe is misinformation on social media platforms. But this mechanism of labeling content must work in tandem with networks of innovative fact-checking initiatives. The fact-checking initiatives work to track misinformation in a timely manner and verify them through a journalistic process, to examine its authenticity. Social media platforms rely on varied fact-checking initiatives to label content on their platforms. The recent fact-checking movement cannot be ignored and is an integral part of the fight against disinformation in the Indian context.

This paper tries to understand the fact-checking ecosystem in India, including its emergence, types and current challenges. The study is exploratory in nature and employs a desk-review research method to trace the emergence of fact-checking initiatives and understand their context and distribution. The desk review seeks to track the evolution trajectory of fact-checking initiatives and their transformation from being independent initiatives at first to becoming in-house media departments in recent times. In terms of challenges, this paper tries to understand the extent to which fact-checking initiatives address the misinformation problem in regional languages. Mapping the fact-checking ecosystem and understanding the interdependence between social media platforms and the fact-checking initiatives is significant in the context of recent regulations in India.

Submission ID

843

YouTube ‘Quarantine Aesthetic’ : A Qualitative Comparative Content Analysis of creative Indian YouTube channels before and during Covid-19 Pandemic.

Authors

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Abstract

Internet Communication Technologies have taken India by storm ever since the boom of smartphone industry and decrease of mobile data prices with the introduction jio Infocomm in September 2016. With a population of 1.4 billion and most of them being youth, India is second to none either in the data consumption or the creation of user generated content.

The revenue distribution model of YouTube attracted many Indian youth to take up YouTubing as a profession and transformed the ordinary Indian youth in to a Social celebrity with their user generated content which has a direct impact on the number of

subscribers one has on YouTube and also has an effect on the number of followers one has on other social networking platforms such as Facebook, Instagram and twitter providing them with the desired social presence, the youth crave and a voice to their thoughts, opinions and believes.

The onset of pandemic in the late 2019 has forced governments to put restriction on the movement of individuals and forced them to stay indoors with either partial lockdowns or full lockdowns in parts of India as it is still not safe to move freely as there is a high risk of infection. The pandemic quarantine rules have forced these creative YouTube Vloggers to adapt to the changing conditions as it is the major source of income leading to the changes in aesthetics and narrative of their creative content.

The proposed research studies the aesthetics of the videos created for the channels on YouTube and compares them with the aesthetic of the videos created before the pandemic. I have chosen three Indian YouTube creative content Vloggers to analyze: Amit Bhadana, Ashish Chanchlani, Round2Hell. It is important for the study that the three Vloggers working on the same genre to compare the aesthetics. All the three vloggers belong to the creative comic storytelling having more than 20 million subscribers. To study the aesthetics five videos of each vlogger are randomly chosen before and after the pandemic and identified the elements of aesthetics by applying the applied aesthetic tools they are using to influence the audience. Further comparative content analysis is used to point out the differences in the aesthetics of their videos before and during the pandemic.

The study is helpful in understanding the postmodernist philosophy of the Indian YouTube content and identifies the aesthetic and cultural tools used to influence the audience and how the pandemic impacted the aesthetics of the video, leading to the quarantine aesthetic during the pandemic.

Key words

Quarantine Aesthetic, YouTube, Postmodernism, Media Aesthetics.

Submission ID

865

X-gram: Word-prediction AI, the climate crisis, and critical unmaking

Authors

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Abstract

In 2020, Timnit Gebru, former co-leader of Google's Ethical AI team, was fired for sounding the alarm on the environmental implications of large language models (LMs). Large LMs "refer to systems which are trained on string prediction tasks: that is, predicting the

likelihood of a token (character, word or string) given either its preceding context or (in bidirectional and masked LMs) its surrounding context” (Bender, Gebru, McMillan-Major, & Shmitchell, 2020, p. 611). Put another way, large LMs power word prediction. Users see large LMs at work in software such as Google Docs, Gmail, Microsoft Word, and Outlook, where word-prediction AI has appeared in the last four years. However, what users do not so readily see is the infrastructure on which they depend, or the carbon that they emit. Climate crisis is the thing that, like many digital technologies (Hogan, 2015; Diebert, 2020), word-prediction AI masks.

How can the connection between word-prediction AI and the climate crisis be made eminently clear? This question lies at the heart of this research-creation project. In response, I employ a method that Jacob Gaboury (2018) calls critical unmaking, which “[f]oregrounds queer techniques of refusal, misuse, and disruption that must nonetheless work with and through contemporary digital technologies” (p. 484). With coding skills and technical support provided by Felix Loftus, I create X-gram, a program that puts the climate crisis at the forefront of word-prediction technology (I use “X-gram” for its evocation of “N-gram,” a conventional word-prediction model). This program disrupts current hegemonic models of context-sensitive word prediction. In their place, it takes cues other than context as prompts for predicting climate-crisis-related words. These words are text-mined (thanks to the open-source digital humanities tool, Voyant) from myriad climate-crisis-related documents, such as reports published by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Part prototype and part web art, X-gram intends to be what Catherine D’Ignazio and Lauren Klein (2020) call a “data visceralization”—the transformation of data into affective experience. In this case, Gebru’s work provides the foundational data. Through critical unmaking, I create a program that I anticipate will frustrate and confound users insofar as it refuses to adhere to design imperatives characteristic of word-prediction AI: efficiency and speed. At the same time, X-gram engages users in thinking about writing technologies as both digital and environmental activism. Moreover, this project provokes thought into the opportunities in everyday life for changing how we think about technology and how—and when—we think about the environment. In this way, I, as many scholars before us (Noble, 2018; Eubanks, 2018; O’Neil, 2018; Connolly, 2020; D’Ignazio & Klein, 2020), advocate for the role of the humanities and the social sciences not only in conceptualizing new technologies but also in imagining alternative, sustainable futures.

Submission ID

1023

Caste and Cinema: Analysis of Caste Representation of Bihar in the Cinema of Prakash Jha (1984-2016)

Authors

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Abstract

Bihar, the second most populous state of India, is traditionally one of the most underdeveloped regions in the subcontinent. During the colonial period and even after independence Bihar remained one of the most badly governed states which led to rampant corruption, backwardness, criminalization of politics, and worst law-order situation which eventually coined the term 'jangle-raj' or 'law-of-the-wild', in special reference to it. Bihar has always been the fertile land to the revolutionary ideas, be it the Peasant Movement of Kishan Sabha (1927-1947), Backward Class Movement - Triveni Sangh (1933), Socialist Movement of Jai Prakash Narayan (1974), or the Naxalite Movement (the 1990s), but on the other hand, it remained the epitome of all the worst problem that India has faced like illiteracy, a stagnant economy, brutal caste violence, social exploitation and dismal agricultural production which led to large scale migration to other prosperous states.

Filmmaker Prakash Jha, a native of Bihar, has made 5 Hindi films, *Damul* (1984), *Mrityudand* (1997), *Gangaajal* (2003), *Apaharan* (2005), and *Jai Gangaajal* (2016), over the period of more than 20 years, to capture the changing socio-political identity of the state over the years. There are both direct and indirect indicators of prevalent caste structure in terms of surname and caste-specific occupation in these movies as they reflect on the changing dynamics of the society in terms of political empowerments of other backward castes, marginalized Dalit community gaining significant advantages due to their large numbers and active participation in democratic processes and once-dominant upper-caste ostracized in terms of power and influence. The period from 1984 to 2016 has seen 10 chief ministers and three times presidents rule in Bihar witnessing the transfer of power from upper cast to backward caste and consolidation of caste-based identity in Dalits.

This paper critically examines and correlates the narrative structure and semiotics of the said movies with the changing political reality of Bihar from 1984 to 2016 by doing an analysis of these movies in accordance with the 14 steps model developed by Mikos (cf. Mikos, 2008: 82–95). To analyze the structural function of the film text following five levels are proposed: Content and representation, Narration and dramaturgy, Characters and actors, Aesthetics and configuration, and Contexts. This paper is using Content and representation, and the Contexts component in the present study. The paper will also deliberate on a pertinent question of caste depiction in Hindi cinema that, is emphasizing caste realities on these movies, perpetuating existing stereotypes? Present-day Bihar is again in political turmoil due to its demand for the caste-based census to further the consolidation of the caste-based identity to gain subsequent political advantages. In this

context, the study will provide significant background for future research in the domain of caste and cinema.

Keywords: Bollywood, Caste system, Indian cinema, Dalit, Caste discrimination

Submission ID

1047

Computationality: The Computational Epistemology of Computational Social Science

Authors

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Prof. Naipeng Chao - Shenzhen university

Abstract

With the development of mathematics and computer technology, the concept of computation has shown more and more of its power in various fields. It has become a special way of thinking to survive in the digital age to look at the world from the perspective of computation. Computational social science inspired by computing and information technology has become an influential new trend of thought. In 2009, a group of social and computer scientists led by David Lazer published a paper in *Science* called 'Computational Social Science', which officially marked the birth of computational social science (Lazer, 2009). Computational social science is a product of the era of big data and is generally understood as an emerging field of social science using computational methods. In the past decade, computational social scientists have made continuous use of rich data resources and advanced data processing techniques, making the emerging interdisciplinary field begin to flourish. The progress of big data, computing and information technology has, to some extent, solved the research obstacles of humanities and social sciences in the digital era. The rapid rise of computing paradigm in social science has profoundly reshaped the methodological basis and research form of social science.

Under the disciplinary pedigree of computational social science, a number of new research fields with 'computation' as the core, such as computational linguistics, computational communication, computational journalism, computational law, and computational economics, have emerged. It can be said that the concept of computation has influenced the paradigm transformation and scientific consciousness of the whole social science, and driven the theoretical and methodological innovation of social science research. Although computational social science has produced a series of refreshing research achievements, the academic world have different views on its theories, methods and applications. David Lazer and other scientists once again published a paper jointly, reflecting on the current situation and problems of computational social science (Lazer et al., 2020). However, the previous research mainly focused on the computational methods, mathematical logic and

technical framework, while there was almost no philosophical understanding of the scientific basis and intrinsic nature of computational research. In the process of paradigm shift of disciplines, it is necessary not only to solve the problem of methods and tools, but also to have a deep understanding of its essence and actively carry out discourse innovation of scientific research. For a long time, 'computation' as a method and tool has been regarded as a statistical means of scientific research, but not enough attention has been paid to its role in discovering social laws and establishing scientific explanations, as well as the theoretical implications of 'computation' itself. Epistemological philosophy is the important foundation of scientific research. The shift of scientific paradigm with 'computation' as the core is fundamentally an epistemological change to the real world and academic problems. Based on this, we propose 'computationality' as an original new discourse, in order to provide a new epistemological tool for understanding computational social science in essence.

In the history of academic research, the emergence of new technologies and methods often leads to the emergence of new trend of thought, new theory and new paradigm. With the development of big data and computing science, social science has undergone new transformation of paradigm, and computing paradigm of computational social science has gradually become a new paradigm of social science, which innovates the traditional quantitative research paradigm and gradually becomes the dominant research paradigm of social science. Computing paradigm, with 'computation' as its core, has developed into 'computational methodology' of social science, while 'computationality' is a philosophical turn from computing methodology to computational epistemology. It is the combination of real society and computational society, and provides a new tool for us to deeply understand the nature of computational social science. Based on the in-depth discussion of computing paradigm, computability and computationism, this paper puts forward the epistemological concept of computationality as an original academic discourse innovation of computational social science, in order to provide a new understanding framework and promote its innovation in methods, theories and philosophical thoughts for computational social science. At the same time, the research work of this paper has close relationship with computational communication, and can be well applied to computational communication.

Submission ID

1060

Democratising Development, Deprofessionalizing Alternative Media, and the Struggle for Sustainability: The Case of Appan Samachar in Bihar, India

Authors

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Dr. Ram Awtar Yadav - Assistant Professor, Jagran School of Journalism and Communication

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Abstract

Community development at the margins using alternative media platforms helps disadvantaged and neglected communities address issues and politics of marginalization, voice poverty, and forges counter public spheres which effectively respond to other social change issues (Fraser, 1990; Lang, 2013; Rimmer, 2021). Based on the above premise, this paper examines the role of alternative media in advocating the democratization of development and how they address the issues and politics of a gendered public sphere. At the same time, the paper delves deeper into their struggles to survive, their zeal to fight back, and keeping the spirit of democratized, deprofessionalized and decentralized media up against all odds. The study takes a case study approach to engage with and learn from the decade long perseverance of *Appan Samachar* (Our News), an alternative media platform in the Muzzafarpur district of Bihar.

This research aims to recognize the women's endurance to make development and empowerment democratic and importantly, form a counter public sphere that is holistic and comprehensive. Being located in a socially and economically disadvantaged space, the women from marginalized communities, including Dalit, Other Backward Classes, Mushahar (rat eating community), and Muslims in Muzzafarpur, face issues like communication inequalities, child marriage, gender discrimination, female foeticide, etc. To understand and address the above mentioned social issues, *Appan Samachar*, an all-women alternative news network in Muzzafarpur district of Bihar, struggled for almost a decade to offer an opportunity to the marginalized and disadvantaged women to fight, reflect, and voice their experiences of everyday life by producing, circulating, and consuming contents packaged in a truly democratic and participatory way.

This research draws from the existing literature that focuses on how alternative, critical and emancipatory media promote and strengthen marginalized and neglected voices and identities to counter issues of voice poverty, development, empowerment, and social justice (Dash, 2015; Downing, 2008; Dutta, 2011; Malik and Pavarala, 2021; Ullah et. al., 2021; Thomas, 2016; Williams, 1980).

Furthermore, the paper also aims to develop a field-based bottom-up understanding around the questions of sustainability and the practicality of alternative media. Using the theoretical frameworks of politics of development and NGOization (Alvarez, 2009; Bernal & Grewal, 2014; Choudry & Kapoor, 2013; Kamat, 2004, 2013, 2018; Pavarala, 2020; Waghmore, 2012), deprofessionalizing alternative media (Atton, 2002; Vatikiotis, 2017; Williams, 1980) and democratizing development (Mohanty, 2018), this research focuses on understanding how *Appan Samachar* had to stand against the politics of NGOization to save the soul and spirit of democratic media.

Methodologically, the study takes a case study approach to organize and analyse data from digital ethnographic observations, in-depth interviews, and content analysis of selected programs of *Appan Samachar* to understand the alternativeness of the medium and how *Appan Samachar* constructed, framed, and represented community and helped to address the more significant issues encountered by women in the region.

Submission ID

1086

“I am a Five”: How does COVID-19 revise the narrative identity of Chinese college students through structural anxiety— Participatory observation of the virtual community “98-Five Introduction Program”

Authors

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Abstract

Since the outbreak of COVID-19, many psychological surveys have found that anxiety among Chinese college students is especially evident. In order to recover their sense of meaning under the stressful situation of quarantine, numerous Chinese college students flee into virtual communities and revise their narrative identities by means of meaning-making, resulting in various of revised identities represented as identity symbols, of which “Five” is the most popular. Understanding the meaning of “Five” is conducive to the understanding of how COVID-19 as a modern plague driven by structural violence has touched key values of Chinese college students by stimulating anxiety, and then to the understanding of structural defects of Chinese society exposed by COVID-19.

According to the four-month participatory observation on the virtual community “98-Five Introduction Program” with more than 120000 members which is the birthplace of “Five”, it is found that “Five” contains two types of signified: the first one refers to the Chinese word “废物 (good-for-nothing)” that has a similar pronunciation with “five”, which corresponds to the group’s self-made adjective “fiverable”, meaning “no sense of being alive, non-benign, and unattractive”; the second one seemingly refers to May 1998, the time when the “Project 985” for supporting Chinese higher education was launched, but it actually means the quasi-elite status that Chinese higher education promises to college students. “Five” puts “no sense of being alive, non-benign, and unattractive” together with “quasi-elite” in a contradictory way, revealing the anxiety of Chinese college students who are reluctant and vacant about their new narrative identities after losing the once-entrenched narrative identity as the quasi-elites.

Through the follow-up observation of the context-of-use of “Five”, it further indicates that the “pandemic anxiety” of Chinese college students is not a homogeneous emotion, but a hybrid of disease anxiety and structural anxiety. Among them, the structural anxiety, which is caused by the threat of structural violence contained in the modern plagues on the three key values of trust, efficiency and dignity, has a more significant impact; and it gradually causes Chinese college students to revise their narrative identities into a cynical text that gives rise to their more selfish tendency, drives them to prioritize short-term efficiency, and regard “稳(the sense of stability)” as the greatest dignity that can be enjoyed only by joining the Chinese bureaucracy rather than China’s private sector that is increasingly contemptuous of the dignity of labor.

In all, the emergence and prevalence of “Five” illustrates that although Chinese government’s iron-fisted prevention has effectively curbed the spread of COVID-19, it hasn’t properly alleviated the structural violence underlying the pandemic. Consequently, class rigidity, new alienation bred by “accelerationism” and labor-capital conflicts have been exacerbated by COVID-19, which has unprecedentedly dampened the value system of Chinese college students, who have been studying for the purpose of changing their destiny through diplomas. As reserves of China’s declining middle class, Chinese college students are suffering from structural anxiety that is more lasting than the damage caused by COVID-19 infection. While this phenomenon is directly related to COVID-19, it is rooted in the middle class crisis caused by China’s social structure, which has long been eroded by neoliberalism. To help Chinese college students to relieve structural anxiety, both short-term guidance strategy and structural justice should be adopted to eliminate structural violence.

Submission ID

1162

Active online information engagement and individual’s subjective social class through social capital perspective:based on a national survey in China

Authors

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Abstract

Background:

Subjective social class refers to ‘the individual’s perception of his/her position in the status hierarchy’. An individual’s sense of social class is not only a result of objective social position, like income and education level, but also shaped by media exposure and use behavior. Previous studies suggest that the adoption of internet and mobile phone, viewed as economic and cultural capital, has independent impact on individuals’ subjective social

class. However, the influence of internet use patterns on individual's subjective social class through social capital perspective has been rarely studied.

Objective:

Drawing from media use effect and integrated with social capital theory, this study intends to test whether and how active online information engagement (e.g. forwarding, commenting and sharing behavior) influences individual's social capital and subjective social class in China. Another purpose is to identify whether social capital mediates the effect of active online information engagement on subjective social class.

Methods:

This study analyzed data from a national sample survey conducted in China . After excluding the invalid and incomplete questionnaires, a valid sample of 1366 respondents was obtained.

We measured active online information engagement by asking participants' frequency of forwarding, commenting and sharing online information. Three dimensions of social capital were taken into consideration, including social network size, social network diversity and social relationship closeness respectively. Subjective social class was measured using The MacArthur Scale of Subjective Social Status. Other demographic factors were controlled.

With regard to analytical approach, Hayes' PROCES macro Model 4 in SPSS was used to test hypothesis. PROCESS provides coefficients using ordinary least squares (OLS) regression, which presents direct effects as well as indirect effects through bootstrapping techniques.

Results:

Active online information engagement was positive associated with social network size, social network diversity, and social relationship closeness, meaning that active engagement with online information is beneficial for boosting relationship with close family members and friend as well as for expanding social circles.

In addition, the hypothesis that social capital positively influenced subjective social class were partly supported. The results showed that social network size and diversity were positively related to subjective social class. However, there was no significant direct relationship between social relationship closeness and subjective social class. This demonstrates that by connecting with more people and those with diverse backgrounds, individuals are prone to perceive themselves higher in societies.

More importantly, this study suggested an indirect effect mechanism by which active online information engagement was associated with subjective social class through social capital. Results indicated that there was a significant indirect effect between active online information engagement and subjective social class through social network size and diversity. However, there was no significant indirect effect of social relationship closeness between active online information engagement and subjective social class. Active

information engagement via internet enables people to strengthen their existing relationship and to expand weak social relationship, which is becoming new resources of subjective social class.

The outcomes of this research are promising for examining how people's internet use, specifically active online information engagement, influences or reproduces subjective social class through social capital in contemporary China.

Submission ID

1175

Communication as a catalyst to sustainability: Rethinking the role of communication in agricultural innovation networks

Authors

Ms. Sarah Munyao Ndonge - Daystar University

Abstract

Climate change, political and economic instability, the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic have intensified the effects of food insecurity. Innovations in the agriculture sector are key to achieving the transformation of food systems to ensure food security globally (Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2019). Diverse initiatives exist to deal with the perceived underuse of research findings and innovation to promote sustainability. However, these strategies use a linear model of communication where information is transferred from the researcher to the end-user (farmer or policymaker). Research further shows that the transformation of scientific knowledge into usable agricultural innovations is not an automatic and straightforward process (Young et al., 2014; Vogel, Moser, Kasperson, & Dabelko, 2007).

Agricultural innovations are developed and implemented through the effort and interactions of different actors and institutions (Kim, Lee, & Kim, 2016). Traditional approaches to innovation are based on the assumption that innovation is best achieved by a centralised research and development team in an organisation. However, with the advancement of technology, this assumption is proving to be outdated as innovative ideas and products are increasingly brought to the market by a network of actors, each with unique capabilities and expertise. The key elements of sustainable agricultural innovation platform focus on partnerships, knowledge exchange, co-learning, and co-creation among stakeholders for agricultural productivity. (Food and Agriculture Organisation, 2019; FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP, & WHO, 2020). Effective communication, knowledge management and regular collaboration among diverse stakeholders are key contributors to successful innovation development and implementation.

The thinking about innovation, and the role of communication in facilitating this process, has evolved over time facilitated by advances in technology, globalisation and other local

and international dynamics. The initial linear model of innovation, largely promoted by scientists and researchers where the innovation would be developed by scientists then disseminated to the users through intermediaries. This is the main idea in the diffusion of innovation theory. Research has further shown that, these innovations were poorly adopted and that successfully adopted innovations were usually based on the integration of ideas from diverse stakeholders who includes the researchers, the innovation users, policy environment; the private sector and other intermediaries (Leeuwis & Aarts, 2011).

This paper, will therefore discuss the evolution of the role of communication in the development and implementation of agricultural innovations in the quest for sustainability. In addition, put forward a case for the adoption of a system based, two-way, relational, non-linear form of communication and collaboration that is cognisant of the social, political and cultural contexts of the diverse stakeholders (Harvey, Carlile, Ensor, Garside and Patterson ,2012; Young et al. 2014) among diverse stakeholders in the sustainability agenda.

This discussion is based on the assemblage theory (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; DeLanda, 2006) where the processes by which elements become parts of emergent network are culturally and socially constituted and must be studied within a specific context (Bacevic, 2018; Bacevic, 2019). The agricultural innovations space comprises of independent and heterogenous elements (organisations, policy, individuals and non-human entities change over time due to internal and external factors.

Submission ID

1193

MPS Paper - The most familiar strangers: A study on the identity of community workers in China under the COVID-19 pandemic

Authors

Mr. Linhao Zeng - Renmin University of China

Ms. Chen Zhang - Communication University of China

Abstract

Different from community volunteers, Community workers in China refer to those who are ubiquitous in grassroots communities in China and are engaged in specific social services and management. They are regarded as a key link in China's bureaucratic system and provide a guarantee for grassroots epidemic prevention and community governance in China. Because of this, as the subject of action, community workers' identification of their own identity depends on the social construction under the multiple power games. They can be objectified as the object of discourse and practice, and can also rebel as the subject. At

the same time, with the increasing digitalization of grassroots governance, a kind of "digital labor" hidden in grassroots prevention and control is gradually coming to the front. Different from the "digital labor" driven by the logic of the commodity economy, this series of "digital labor" carried out for grassroots prevention and control policies enables community workers to go beyond explicitly pointing to economic goals under the guidance of tool rationality. In other words, a new characteristic between paid and unpaid, emotional and rational appears in the digital media use of this group. The new form of digital labor has shaken the coherent identity of community workers, who have to experience the disconnection, connection, and re-disconnection between virtual identity and real identity, political identity and emotional identity, consumption identity and production identity, conventional identity and temporary identity. Multiple "digital identities" force them to re-start the work of identity construction, defining themselves, establishing connections and demarcating boundaries. Specifically, through in-depth interviews with 15 community workers, this paper analyzes how community workers use media for information acquisition, epidemic prevention and control, and grassroots governance, how to transform "digital technology" into a connection mechanism, and how this mechanism is related to community residents, higher-level governments, and social organizations in the form of "digital labor". In the process of identity construction, how does community workers' digital labor influence their identity, and how does identity construction reflect their digital labor practice? At the theoretical level, this paper takes "digital labor" as a relational variable in identity research, tries to place it in the context of digital society, and focuses on how it affects the relationship and structure of individual labor as a variable in the process.

Submission ID

1237

MPS Paper - Observing China as the other: The construction of China's country image in Ryo Takeuchi's COVID-19 documentaries

Authors

Mr. Zeyu Wang - Shanghai Jiao Tong University

Abstract

Since the worldwide outbreak of COVID-19 has given rise to the process of "othering" across countries, the images of foreign countries are constructed as Others to strengthen national self-identity, consequently fostering xenophobia. As for China, the Pew Research Center surveys show that negative views of China have reached historic highs across many advanced economies over the past two years. China's international image has deteriorated since the pandemic.

Although some scholars have analyzed the change in country images of China during the pandemic, research subjects are limited to images in news outlets' coverage, and few studies have explained the images building under a generalizable construction. Most previous research treated textual messages as the primary analysis unit and failed to investigate the roles of audio-visual and video material.

This study aims to investigate a special group of participants in the construction of China's image, namely, expat video content creators, and the construction of China's images in their videos. Expat creators are not foreign correspondents, nor employees of the Chinese government and official media. They recorded their life experiences in China during the pandemic through the lens of the Other, and posted videos on digital platforms. Both Chinese and foreign audiences' perceptions of China were affected by watching videos. Thus, a national image of China that is different from China itself and foreign media is constructed.

To be specific, this study uses Ryo Takeuchi and his documentaries as a case study. Takeuchi is a Japanese expatriate who labels himself as an independent expat director. Since 2020, Takeuchi has made five documentaries on how China is dealing with the pandemic. The videos have notched up millions of views and have earned Takeuchi over 8 million followers on his YouTube channel and other Chinese digital platforms. Some of the videos were shown on the mainstream media in Japan and won praise from Chinese officials.

By combining content analysis and multimodal discourse analysis, this research seeks to examine what country images of China were constructed from Takeuchi's five COVID-19 documentaries. Drawing on Ingenhoff's (2017) 5-dimensional model of country images, this study develops a methodological framework to conceptualize China's country images in multimodal texts. Moreover, this study strives to explore how the videos affect audiences' perceptions of China. The comments of the five documentaries on YouTube and Bilibili (Chinese version of YouTube) are grabbed and analyzed. To further understand the perceptions of Chinese audiences, this study introduced a popular form of real-time commentary: Danmu (the bullet screen) on Bilibili, as a key analysis object. Another key question is how Chinese officials view the construction of images in expatriates' videos. 17 articles on the topic of Takeuchi's documentaries are collected from Chinese official media. Qualitative textual analysis is applied to interpret the official discourse.

Based on a thorough case study of Takeuchi's documentaries, this article tries to provide insights into the construction of the country image during the COVID-19 pandemic from a different perspective. It also contributes to effective strategies to build a country's international reputation and favorable country image.

Submission ID

1329

Using ISIS's rhetoric of terror to analyse South African Farmers' rhetoric of the terrified: An analysis of selected television news reports about Farm attacks in South Africa

Authors

Ms. Sisanda Nkoala - Cape Peninsula University of Technology

Abstract

This paper draws on Philippe-Joseph Salazar's work, in *Words are Weapons: Inside ISIS's Rhetoric of Terror* (2017), on ISIS's persuasive self-presentation on social and traditional media, to consider the rhetoric of the terrified Farmers used in selected South African television news reports on Farm attacks. Scholars who study ISIS's use of media have noted the efficacy with which this group has been able to harness the capabilities of media platforms to speak directly to audiences and construct its image. Likewise, the communicative strategies employed in South African social and traditional media around the victimhood of Farmers have been effective and spread to audiences worldwide.

This study considered English news reports broadcast on two of South Africa's most widely viewed free-to-air channels: SABC 3 and eTV. The news reports considered were those about a case where a 21-year-old Farm manager, Brendin Horner, was murdered on October 1 2020. Using Salazar's examination of ISIS's rhetoric, expressed through its use of words and images in media for self-presentation, this paper discusses similarities between ISIS's self-presentation in audio-visual media and Farmers' self-othering on these platforms.

Submission ID

1374

“Being Yourself ...” Self-Expression in the Virtual and Material in the Production of Virtual YouTubers

Authors

Ms. Yun Kiu Lo - Temple University Graduate Student

Abstract

The term VTubers (ブイチューバー) originally comes from the expression 'virtual YouTuber' (バーチャルユーチューバー), a term suggested by Kizuna Ai, the first known VTuber herself with over 3 million subscribers on YouTube. She has defined VTubers as "YouTubers that come from nijigen", a Japanese concept that literally means a two-dimensional world, but generally refers to a broader sense of Japanese anime and game culture with visually and contextually kawaii characteristics. Despite its origin, I consider

the industry of VTubers as a global phenomenon due to its worldwide production approaches from the virtual world without any actual geographical boundaries.

Behind the characters and the nijigen 'skins' living in the virtual world, *nakanohito* (the person inside) controls the immediate body movements, voices, and facial expressions in the material world through the emerging motion capture technology. Meanwhile, the true identities of *nakanohito* are kept anonymous from fans, and such discussions are kept at a minimal level—a well-known taboo in the community. My research scrutinizes the translation between the virtual and material worlds by questioning how VTubers express and perceive themselves continuously across the strict border reinforced by anonymity.

Looking into the connection between online and offline fields and contextualizing VTubers as virtual idols, this study is grounded in celebrity studies, digital ethnography, and multi-sited ethnography. Apart from framing VTubers as an emerging worldwide popular culture and industry, my research discerns the composition and sociological meaning of 'skin' for VTubers. In Walther's hyperpersonal model (1996), he suggested that computer-mediated communication (CMC) surpassed the level of affection and emotion with face-to-face interaction with the sender's autonomy. However, the model is challenged by the discrepancy between self-expressions in the virtual and material world in the case of VTubers, that the perception of self-expression as "authentic selves" are indeed heavily influenced by the narratives from the audience and companies. Through my research, I argue that the phenomenon challenges the traditional binary roles and agencies of sender and receiver, and discloses the precarious sender behind the screen through the complex interplay of the VTubers industry

Keywords: VTuber, Virtual World, Self-Expression, Virtual Idols, Celebrity Studies

Submission ID

1386

Journalism Culture and Climate Change: A Comparative Analysis of COP26 in Chinese and US Newspapers

Authors

Ms. Yao Yao - University of Southern California

Abstract

News coverage plays a crucial role in the identification and interpretation of climate change issues, which has been explored by scholars focusing primarily on English-language media in Western countries (Schäfer & Schlichting, 2014; Zamith et al., 2013). However, in recent years, news media in non-Western countries have shown increasing interest in climate change issues due to the frequent occurrence of natural disasters around the world, which demands more attention to news coverage of climate change issues in non-Western countries (Anderson, 2009) and in a comparative context (Zamith et

al., 2013). Meanwhile, the past several years have witnessed the focus of climate change issues from defining and diagnosing to a global governance issue, highlighting national climate efforts and solutions (Pan et al., 2019). As the current two largest greenhouse gas emitters in the world, China and the United States have been actively making commitments to environmental mitigation and seeking effective multilateral negotiations (Yang, 2021). Yet there has been little research concentrating on the comparison of climate change news coverage between the two countries, especially in the context of climate solutions after the Paris Agreement was adopted in 2015 (Jang et al., 2021; Xie, 2015).

Based on a content analysis of 887 news articles from two Chinese newspapers and two American newspapers in 2021, this study systematically examined news coverage of COP26 in China and the United States, which was a landmark in global climate change negotiations, and the first conference showing parties' efforts and accomplishments since the Paris Agreement (Fedson, 2021). The focus was on the comparison of two nations' reporting angles towards the same event and the potential factors functioning behind the storytelling. Through cross-analysis of coding variables such as time, themes, genres, frames, and attitudes, this study demonstrated that Chinese news coverage portrayed a rising power with ambitious commitments in need of world recognition, and American media manifested the cognition of Western-led order.

Under the theoretical framework of journalism culture, the study further analyzed the results through the lens of the three domains of journalism culture - institutional roles, epistemologies, and ethical ideologies - to provide a deeper understanding of the effect of journalism culture on climate change coverage. The empirical evidence suggested that the differences of the two nations in news coverage of climate change issues were a result of different journalism cultures across nations, reflecting political interests and social values. This study not only contributed to the literature of journalism culture with an innovative perspective on the latest communication of climate solutions, but also deepened our understanding of climate change coverage in China and the United States through culturally and politically informed interpretations.

Submission ID

1437

The Incredible China, Foreign Influencers and transcultural identity: a case study of Chinese Culture Documentary

Authors

Ms. Yue Yuan - School of International Journalism and Communication Studies, Beijing Foreign Studies University

Abstract

As one of the mainstream media in China, China Daily New Media Center is constantly making new attempts to launch works that combine tradition and modernity of Chinese culture. The documentary *The Incredible China* is one of them. The documentary is hosted by three foreign students studying in China, leading the audience to travel through China's Qiang Village, Suzhou and Wudang in three different episodes.

In the past, documentaries of the same type used either English-speaking foreign hosts or Chinese-speaking Chinese hosts. The reason why *The Incredible China* is considered a new product lies in its three speakers who have foreign faces but speak fluent Chinese. This is unprecedented, and it also has a strong new attraction to audience. The researchers have developed a keen interest in this new form of otherness narrative, and conducted a narrative analysis of the documentary. In addition, in order to understand the role of foreign influencers in the communication of Chinese culture documentaries, and to conduct a more in-depth analysis of the identities of foreign influencers, the researcher also conducted in-depth interviews with the three hosts of the documentary.

Through interviews, the researchers learned that the host of the Episode 3, Liu Zhengxi, is an Egyptian student who came to China for four years and studied Chinese for seven years. He is studying for a Master of Arts in Broadcasting and Hosting at Communication University of China. He married a Chinese girl in China. He used to work for Tianjin Radio and Television Station, and is currently the host of China Central Radio and Television International Online Channel and a Chinese lecturer at the Language Exchange and Cooperation Center. He has participated in the 18th Chinese Bridge Competition and will be the host of the 20th Chinese Bridge Competition in 2021. He positioned himself as a media worker. By January 2022, Liu Zhengxi's personal Facebook account has 21,022 fans; his personal account at Station B (the Egyptian guy Liu Zhengxi) has 40,000 fans.

When asked what is the most gain does Liu Zhengxi got through the filming process, he said, **"During the filming of the documentary, the biggest gain I got is: understand the real Kung Fu culture of China. 'See for oneself is a hundred times better than hearing from others'—which is President Xi wrote in his reply letter to international students. It's true. I have always seen Chinese Kung Fu from movies or TV series, but it was the first time I experienced this thing myself, and then I discovered the real thing. Kungfu is not how many people you have won, but how many people you have influenced"**.

When Liu Zhengxi expresses his true understanding of Chinese Kungfu culture is highly consistent with what the Daozhang wants to teach. The sentence "Kungfu is not how many people you have won, but how many people you have influenced" are really aptly expresses the values of Chinese Kong Fu. To some extent, Liu Zhengxi is a person who is half-me and half-other. Sometimes, this type of people is called "China Tong", they can speak fluent Chinese, communicating with Chinese people without barriers and they could understand Chinese cultural values. As Wangxin said in his paper, "Other' is not a rigid

concept, but a fluid 'subject', constantly constructed by history and reality" (Wang Xin, 2018). It's time to divide these particular "other" into different types, at least, those who speak Chinese fluently cannot be simply regarded as totally outsiders from Chinese culture. Those foreigners who are more Chinese than Chinese should be worthy of more attention. In fact, there are many this type others like Liu Zhengxi. For example, in the documentary, Jack, an American who studied kung fu in Wudang for 11 years. These people have developed a transcultural identity in the process of interacting with Chinese culture over time, which enables them to better evaluate themselves as lovers of Chinese culture, foreign faces but Chinese hearts.

The good point of this documentary is the three foreign influencers are all come from mainstream media so that their contents can correctly express the real cultural values of China, which is avoiding the harm caused by the flood of foreign celebrities, particularly these own themselves social media account but will spread some rumors so as to mislead the audience (Du Guodong,2019). But it deserves further investigation that these foreign Influencers appearing in the camera can realize the globalization of documentary and traditional Chinese cultural story's well-telling.

Submission ID

1500

Toward a Governance Model for the Caribbean Film Industry: An exploration of film policies in Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago

Authors

Dr. Alpha Obika - University of the West Indies Mona

Abstract

ABSTRACT

The Caribbean film industry has experienced slow but steady growth over the past century to become one of the important sectors of the regional creative industry. Although still relatively underdeveloped, there are many positives that can be observed, particularly as it relates to the abundance of talented creatives, filmmakers, story tellers, and actors. Greater sustained investment by the public and private entities are needed to develop the Caribbean film industry beyond its current trajectory. This paper will examine the film policies of Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago, as two of the most important and largest markets in the Anglophone Caribbean. The legislative and regulatory mandates in each country will be critiqued, in addition to the level of public sector investment and the impact on the growth and development of the respective industries.

A critical discourse analysis of policies relevant to the film industries of both countries will be complemented by an assessment of the regulatory bodies and the implementation of their respective legislative agendas. This study will seek to highlight the gaps in legislative and regulatory approaches with the goal of sharing best practices toward the development of a regional governance model for the Caribbean film sector. The work of Caribbean and global film scholars will guide the theoretical analysis of regional film policies and locate them as critical components of the regional cultural and creative industries.

Key Words: Caribbean Film industry, Media and Cultural Policy, Globalization, Cultural Imperialism, Caribbean Cultural Identity.

Submission ID

1536

Visual communication and photography praxis: Identifying bias in COVID-19 media imagery

Authors

Ms. Miranda McKee - Lakehead University

Abstract

The digital revolution has significantly enhanced our ability to communicate through photographs and imagery of all kinds, including memes, illustrations, and graphics. The rapid development of high-quality smartphone cameras combined with social media's instant publishing affordances allow people to capture and disseminate images with relative ease, and we have only just begun to seriously examine the influence of these new technologies on contemporary visual culture. At the site of dissemination, photojournalists, citizen photojournalists, and others engaged in image-making must be made aware of the repercussions of circulating visual representations that perpetuate the misrepresentation of race, gender, class, and nationality in addition to concerns regarding misinformation and disinformation.

Building upon ten years of experience as a curator of photography while working primarily in the United Arab Emirates, as well as Canada, my research examines the role of photography within the context of the digital revolution and contemporary visual culture. The assumption we can gain knowledge by investigating how others interpret the world around them - inspired by hermeneutic phenomenology - shapes my theoretical framework. Using a semiotic methodology, I have analyzed visual representations of COVID-19 coverage in English language mainstream media, identifying visual codes that emerge, focusing on the signs and symbols that perpetuate the misrepresentation of marginalized communities. I reviewed over 400 images from various publications and agencies including The New York Times, Time Magazine, The Guardian, The BBC, Canadian Broadcast Corporation, Hindustan Times, Reuters, and Getty Images. The

themes which emerged from the COVID-19 imagery include visual manifestations of misplaced blame, racism and xenophobia, among numerous additional concerns.

My research engages with the IAMCR central theme and, more specifically, with the sub-themes “Global” Media Ethics and Principles in the Digital Age as well as Media, Communication, and the Construction of Global Public Health by contributing to the burgeoning domain of data storytelling while focusing on the influence of imagery in the context of a pandemic. Within the broader scope of critical media literacy, my research emphasizes the importance of visual literacy education which must continue to evolve with technological developments, especially during a pandemic, as the public relies heavily on regular updates from media to determine social behaviours. My work contributes to the ongoing discourse which examines the role of photography as public pedagogy, emphasizing the importance of visual literacy education and the need for ethical image publishing practices, particularly following the digital revolution.

Submission ID

1607

Trivialization of truth in Infodemic: A Corona case study of Nepal

Authors

Mr. Sudarshan Khatiwada - Shepherd College

Abstract

Information plays a vital role in identifying, managing, and solving any form of crisis. However, if the media misleads, intentionally or unknowingly through misinformation, the situation becomes worse. Consequently, the reality about the ongoing problem gets inflated to an extent that people view falsehood as the ultimate reality. This research explores the relationship between infodemic and trivialization of truth in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic in Nepal. This study collected data using different tools including a questionnaire survey, expert interview, media coverage content analysis, and social media analysis. In addition, police action against rumours, suicide cases, and psychiatric patient statistics in connection to the COVID-19 pandemic was also reviewed.

This study shows that Nepal has faced two-pronged crises. The first crisis is the COVID-19 pandemic itself and the second one is an unprecedented flood of information during the pandemic. The findings show that people of Nepal perceive the information on pandemics mostly from social media and online news portals. They have been changing the source of information during the pandemic. Due to the lower level of media literacy in Nepal, very few people cross-check what they read/or watch in the media. As a result, people have fallen victim to intentionally disseminated news. Reality is being replaced by perception made by the media and the infodemic has been causing trivialization of truth. Fake news

during the national health crisis did not only ruin the credibility of the media but also adversely affected the mental health of the citizens and aggravated the crisis.

This study is also a testimony to the fact that infodemic is continuously undermining the truth regarding coronavirus. Similarly, the terror and horror created by fake news are no less fatal than that of the pandemic. Despite the positive value of social media and online news portals in spreading the news, they have contributed to disseminating the fake information and thereby to the trivialization of truth. This is an undeniable reality of our time. However, it does not mean we embrace it as it stands. Considering the current situation of infodemic and its adverse consequences to the citizens, this study urges for the increasing state investment in the promotion of media literacy to regulate and minimize infodemic. So false stuff won't get a chance to rule us instead of the truth.

Submission ID

1750

Communicating healing through ethnic music: An analysis of the Shona community's indigenous approaches to psycho-social support for the bereaved as projected through selected songs by Oliver Mtukudzi.

Authors

Mr. Shadreck Nembaware - PhD student (CCMS, UKZN)

Prof. Lauren Dyll - Associate Professor (CCMS, UKZN)

Abstract

This paper explores the cultural moorings of death, loss and bereavement as depicted through selected songs by the Zimbabwean musician, Oliver Mtukudzi. The study from which this paper emanates sets out to dialogue with Indigenous Knowledge Systems (IKS)-driven pathways to psycho-social support and coping mechanisms in the wake of loss. In this endeavour, the research taps into the resourcefulness of ethnic music as an ideational, emotive and performative means of communication that also serves as a reservoir of a community's cultural values (Chikowero, 2008). The major conceptual departure point is that death and loss are context-specific, hence the need to map the cultural margins for efficacious closure and coping mechanisms in the wake of bereavement. Music in its cultural-situatedness provides a nuanced portal into the anthropological configurations of the community that produces it. In analysing the music of Oliver Mtukudzi, the researchers endeavour to establish the Shona community's concept of death as a culturally-codified rite of passage that is inextricably linked to a people's practices as well their self-contained understanding of being and becoming. Presenting Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) as the first phase of the broader data collection

approach and analysis, this paper is part of a PhD thesis whose wider discursive scope engages key informant interviews and a set of 'makgotla' (African indigenous colloquia) in a broad-based qualitative data gathering process. Riding on the merits of interpretive phenomenology, the research mobilises the tenets of the Culture Centred Approach (CCA) whilst deploying the Post-colonial Indigenous (PCI) theory. Therefore, the theoretical framework adopted for this study denotes the affordances of scholarship grounded in the cultural image and historical experiences of African people; one that pays attention to their aesthetic and philosophical traditions (Walker, 1998). Escorted by an aspirational forecast, the paper hopes to yield (through epic and emic analyses of Mtukudzi's culture-centred music) a nuanced understanding of the Shona community's knowledge-system and how it finds expression in indigenous approaches to wellness in general, and psycho-social support in particular.

Key terms: ethnic music, communication, psycho-social support, indigenous knowledge systems, critical discourse analysis

Submission ID

1926

Application Scenarios and Hazards of Artificial Intelligence in Family Communication: Based on the Perspective of Neo-Familism

Authors

Mr. Pengcheng ZHOU - Hong Kong Baptist University

Abstract

Family changes in East Asia under the support of modernization are interpreted by the theory of neo-familism, which means the intimacy of intergenerational relation and family life, the descending characteristic of family material and spiritual supply focus, and the rebalancing of family interests and individual interests. East Asia is one of the centers of AI development and application, which makes East Asian families become testing scenarios of AI applications in the world. This study proposed that the mediating and non-mediating aspects of artificial intelligence technology are different in establishing new scenarios of family communication. As an intermediary, artificial intelligence provides technical convenience for the communication between families, while as an independent individual, it provides hurdles for the communication between family members: When the AI's "voice" is requisite, all family members may fall into collective silence to ensure the AI can make a "meaningful" voice. In addition, this research analyzed the risk brought by artificial intelligence to family communication based on the theoretical framework of neo-familism. The recognition of the conflict between the interests of the individual and the family by neo-familism makes us have to think about the property right of artificial intelligence in the

family. At the same time, the need to distinguish between increasingly anthropomorphic AI and real family was also explored in this paper. Since neo-familism does not involve celibacy, whether the family established by celibacy and artificial intelligence is suitable for the above necessity is also discussed in this study. In addition, based on the theory of family communication pattern, the study further pointed out the application scenarios of artificial intelligence in different families and provide sufficient theoretical discussion for further quantitative research. All in all, this investigation comprehensively recognized that neo-familism will provide a sufficient ethical premise for the intervention of AI technology in East Asian families, while neo-familism still effectively inhibits the combination of individualism and artificial intelligence.

Submission ID

1972

Rethinking Methods: Representations of Gender in Television Commercials in South Africa and Germany

Authors

Ms. Johanna Hoess - University of Cape Town

Abstract

This study explores the relationship between gender and media by examining how gender is portrayed in TV commercials in South Africa and Germany. The research is grounded in Gender Studies and thus concerned with how perceptions of gender are created and reinforced culturally, and how gender, besides other identity categories, influences social structures. I address this subject by framing research questions about stereotypes, representation and roles, and use content analysis to answer them. While most of the previous research has been conducted in the United States, there are probably around 100 studies researching gender portrayal in TV advertising on almost every continent (Furnham & Lay, 2019). Yet, this study is the first to compare South Africa and Germany and further makes important contributions to the field by introducing original, culture-specific methods.

A mixed-methods approach is used to examine gender portrayals in television commercials. The sampling units of the study are television advertisements, which are recorded from all free-to-air channels available in South Africa. In Germany, advertisements on the channels with the biggest market share are captured, all the main TV channels are free-to-air. Although widely used coding categories were developed in Western countries, they are frequently applied in a variety of cultural contexts to measure the degree of gender stereotyping without assessing their relevance or meaning for the specific cultural setting. This is what Mohanty (2003) refers to as “methodological universalisms” (p. 33), which she deems problematic because they result in the neglect of historical and cultural specifics. It can therefore be argued that established measures lack

validity within the South African cultural context because of a conceptual overreliance on existing Western coding categories.

Thus, the first research phase comprises a qualitative content analysis, which aids the iterative inductive-deductive development of a new codebook. The coding scheme is currently being developed and is partly informed by established coding categories from McArthur & Resko (1975), Furnham and Spencer-Bowdage (2002) and Matthes, Prieler and Adam (2016). Moreover, culture-specific theoretical frameworks are taken into account, more specifically Gqola's concept (2016) of the New South African Woman, the "types of women" found in German television commercials as defined by Vennemann and Holtz-Bacha (2011) as well as Luyt's (2005) South African "masculinity norms".

For the second part of the research, a quantitative approach is employed, where the newly developed codebook is applied in order to assess which constructions of gender are the most prevalent, whether stereotyping occurs and how representations of gender differ across countries. This is especially important as there are only very few quantitative assessments of gender portrayals in South Africa due to what seems to be an inclination towards qualitative research. Hence, as an overarching aim, this study does not only produce original work but is also significant and timely as it potentially contributes to decolonizing theory by adding a South African perspective to a "Western" concept that, as such, remains largely unquestioned.

Submission ID

1987

Las resistencias cotidianas en el contexto periodístico. Un acercamiento teórico.

Authors

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Abstract

La presente propuesta constituye un acercamiento teórico a las resistencias específicamente en el ámbito periodístico. A partir de una revisión teórica y conceptual, se explora hasta qué punto los postulados del politólogo y antropólogo norteamericano James C. Scott sobre las resistencias cotidianas podrían servir de punto de partida y sustentar una investigación sobre las resistencias de las y los periodistas en su producción, prácticas y rutinas.

Esta propuesta se desprende de un trabajo en curso de tesis doctoral en el que se muestra cómo las y los periodistas de medios oficiales cubanos encuentran maneras sutiles de no seguir las reglas al pie de la letra, o incluso de oponerse casi

imperceptiblemente a algún orden, con el fin de armonizar la tensión entre lo que deben hacer y lo que pensaron que harían como periodistas.

Para esta propuesta, se parte de entender que la capacidad de resistir puede ser considerada una característica inherente al individuo; de allí que las y los periodistas, como cualquier sujeto social, pueden oponerse, resistir, enfrentar, encarar, evadir, cuestionar las relaciones de poder o situaciones de conflicto que se generan en sus espacios cotidianos y laborales.

Este estudio sostiene que las resistencias en el ámbito periodístico tienen puntos en común con las nociones aportadas por Scott (1985) sobre las resistencias cotidianas, dado que las resistencias de los periodistas muy pocas veces pueden darse en términos de “insurrección”, sino más bien como micro resistencias cotidianas, comportamientos y actitudes diarios, algunos más visibles que otros, pero que en esencia mantienen ese principio del rechazo, inconformidad, desacuerdo, evasión, la no aceptación o la ausencia de consentimiento.

Varias de las formas de resistencias enunciadas por Scott (2000), pueden encontrarse en los escenarios periodísticos, además de otras muy específicas de este contexto.

Estrategias de anonimato como el rumor, el chisme y las amenazas, los eufemismos, el murmurar o refunfuñar y formas de discurso oculto manifiestas en la práctica periodística como la autocensura, el no cubrir ciertos temas o el excluir determinadas fuentes, escribir en blogs o redes sociales sobre temas censurados en sus medios, podrían constituir algunos de los mecanismos empleados por los periodistas para resistir.

Igualmente, en esta propuesta teórica se discuten otras dimensiones de las resistencias cotidianas sistematizadas por Vinthagen y Johansson (2013 y 2014) como las tipologías de resistencias cotidianas, las relaciones de agentes, espacialización y temporalización de las resistencias, entre otras.

Palabras claves: resistencias cotidianas, James C. Scott, periodistas de medios oficiales cubanos

Submission ID

2203

COMMUNICATION AND CITIZEN PARTICIPATION IN CULTURAL SPACES IN THE ERA OF NEO-GLOBALISATION: AN ANALYSIS OF HOW COVID-19 HAS CHANGED THEIR DYNAMICS.

Authors

Dr. JENNIFER GARCIA CARRIZO - Universitat Oberta Catalunya

Abstract

Given the COVID-19 health crisis that has been taking place since the beginning of 2020 throughout the world, and, especially since the end of March in the United Kingdom, different cultural spaces, such as cultural and creative districts, have been forced to physically close their doors and migrate their activity to the digital world.

Although these spaces have traditionally made use of new technologies and social networks, most of their activities used to take place in the physical and “real” world. In this sense, it is worth considering Lazzeretti's definition of cultural and creative districts: cultural and creative districts are places of high cultural and artistic level in which "a set of economic, non-economic and institutional actors decide to use some of the shared idiosyncratic resources (artistic, cultural, social, environmental), in order to develop a common project, which is simultaneously an economic project and a life project" (Lazzeretti, 2008, p. 328).

Having this definition in mind, the main objective of this work is to identify the new emerging communication and management guidelines for cultural activities in cultural and creative districts in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. To achieve this main objective, other secondary ones are established, such as understanding the dynamics of the use of digital tools in these districts and how they have managed to migrate the activities carried out in the physical world to the virtual one.

This research is framed transversally in the field of communication and new technologies, branding and cultural studies. The starting hypothesis is that, although many of the aforesaid cultural and creative spaces have been forced to close their physical doors, a large part of them have continued their activity in the virtual world. To determine how this migration has occurred and achieve the objectives described, an analysis of three case studies of cultural and creative districts in the United Kingdom has been carried out: Digbeth (Birmingham), Ouseburn Valley (Newcastle Upon Tyne) and the St. George's Cultural Quarter (Leicester). A methodological triangulation has been achieved by applying data collection tools such as the in-depth interview, the observation and the bibliographic review as well as the analysis of primary and secondary information sources.

Through the analysis of the different cases of study in the United Kingdom, a taxonomy of the communication and citizen participation strategies developed to virtualize the activities in these cultural and creative spaces is established. Such strategies can be classified in the following fields: 1) fundraising, 2) virtualization of the experience, 3) making the experience tangible and 4) creating a connected community.

Submission ID

2263

Consensual Voyeurism and Dis/Embodied Data: Interrogating Surveillance Through Multimodal Research

Authors

Mx. Rory Bledsoe - University of Colorado Boulder

Abstract

This paper examines how, when, and why online surveillance practices can be addressed through a multimodal research lens. Drawing on my work *Consensual Voyeurism*, comprising two installations and a performance, I show how expressive culture can shed light on often invisible and amorphous masses of surveillance data and its effects. In doing so, I argue that multimodal approaches help make the seemingly disembodied online data more tangible and embodied, facilitating affective responses to the persuasive yet invisible manifestations of online surveillance and its potential harms. As a result, this multimodal research lens can be of critical importance to social justice efforts because online surveillance continues to disproportionately affect already marginalized identities.

My paper proceeds in four parts. First, I discuss *From URL To IRL* (2017), an installation of an archive of my entire Facebook history. #thearchive categorized and presented thousands of pages of my FB data, including a box devoted to my digital record of all content I have ever “liked” (2004-2017). The data was embodied as an interactive visual display, inviting viewers to play with the images. Second, I discuss the accompanying interactive performance, *Search Me*, in which participants could “search me” using a keyword while I served as an embodied search engine for my private Facebook messages. I read back snippets of conversations containing the chosen keyword, improvising the start and end points and vocalizing the rich data that resulted (e.g., acting out FB conversations with friends, lovers, acquaintances, and partners that ranged from dramatic to perfunctory). The results were polarizing: some people chose banal words, but others chose invasive words like, “medication” and “depression”, which revealed a habituation to constant access to intimate data and how privacy harms differ based on identity (e.g., disability). Third, I discuss *Consensual Listening* (2019), which urged people to consider what the NSA hears if or when the agency were to listen in on their day-to-day activities. I made several intimate audio collages, such as field recordings, self-surveillance, reenactments of surveillance, and recordings of performance work. The data was embodied as a series of tapes that people could listen to via a handheld cassette player. Lastly, I discuss other multimodal expressions of work about surveillance.

Overall, *Consensual Voyeurism* seeks to disrupt the normalized silencing of explicit consent to personal data online and to generate an emotive call to action through the viewers’ uncanny experiences. Multimodal approaches to questions about surveillance and its effects help reimagine personal data as a physicalized body through visual, sound, and touch, underscoring that the body remains central to online data harvest. Yet, it is the physical body that is often absent in privacy and data laws guiding social media use.

Multimodality thus offers a more expressive lens through which to consider why legal notions of online harm and consent need to foreground the human body and to address its vulnerability.

Submission ID

2320

The state of climate journalism in South Africa: Are mainstream media organisations listening to activists?

Authors

Ms. Thandi Bombi - Rhodes University

Abstract

The Shell Seismic Survey on the South African Wild Coast was scheduled to begin on 01 December 2021. After multiple court proceedings, a failed interdict, countrywide protest action and then a successful interdict, the seismic survey was stopped. Although activism around the survey was available on blogs, social media, and activist sites, only a few media organisations in South Africa picked up the story before December 2021. This study aims to interrogate the state of climate journalism in South Africa by analysing the reportage of the Shell Seismic Survey in 2021. The ongoing study uses the seven canons of organisational listening (Macnamara, 2015) to answer two central questions: what was said (on public platforms) by climate activists in 2021 about the Shell Seismic Survey? And did mainstream media organisations listen to the activists? The proposed sample of the study includes in-depth (longform) news articles written by mainstream news organisations between November 2021 and January 2022 in South Africa about the seismic survey. The sample includes newspaper articles and activist communication, freely available in the public domain. The study aims to conduct an in-depth media content analysis (Macnamara, 2005) to determine whether organisational listening is taking place and understand who mainstream media organisations in South African are listening to with regards matters of the climate emergency. Climate knowledge and understanding is crucial, it's complex, scientific, and difficult to grasp and therefore activists who expend time and energy coming to grips with climate issues are key partners in the kind of journalism that is clear and gives understanding about situations that need addressing. This research aims to interrogate the role and function that the media organisations play in eradicating climate disinformation through climate journalism and understand the relationship these organisations have with local climate activists. The research aims to do this by firmly grounding its theoretical emphasis on Organisational Listening (Macnamara, 2015), which emphasises recognition, acknowledgement, attention, interpretation, understanding, consideration, and response to stakeholders. Although the study is on-going, preliminary findings indicate that only a few news organisations actually listen to local climate activists and provide an appropriate response through their journalism.

Key Words: *Organisational listening, climate journalism, communication for sustainability, climate change, climate activism*

Submission ID

2325

Othering Others: Listening to Black Bodies in South African High Commissions

Authors

Mr. Mwaona Nyirongo - Rhodes University

Abstract

Approximately 3-7 per cent of South Africa's population is foreign-born (Keller and Manicom, 2019). However, these official figures can be disputed because many migrants enter or stay in South Africa illegally, implying that the population might be slightly higher. South Africa is a popular destination for education, employment, and enterprises, unavailable in most African countries. Securing a permit to stay in South Africa can be problematic in that the South African High Commissions in other African countries are notoriously difficult to deal with for immigrants (Muvhuti, 2018; Muvhuti 2019). In addition to a hostile attitude, the regulations and procedures for the permits are opaque and mystifying (Muvhuti 2018; Nyirongo, 2019).

According to preliminary interviews conducted in Malawi to frame this research, interviewees believe that their treatment by High Commission officials is influenced by the attitude within the South African Department of Home Affairs, which views Black bodies as if they were "born a crime" (Noah, 2016). On the other hand, European and North American immigrants are treated differently and hence do not face the same challenges as their Black counterparts.

This study investigates how Black immigrants from Malawi, Nigeria, Zimbabwe and Ghana seeking to study in South Africa have experienced processing their applications by the South African High Commissions in their countries. Interviews will be conducted with Malawians, Nigerians, Zimbabweans, and Ghanaians who have filed for a study permit in South Africa. I'll look into their experiences of taking both legal and illegal means to get into the country.

Critical race theory from law and listening theory from communication studies are used in the study. Critical race theory is a racial justice theory that contends that societies are rooted in laws and regulations that treat Black bodies as the Other, subjecting them to institutional and structural racism that makes it difficult for them to access services, goods, and opportunities (Modiri, 2012). This theory helps to unpack the complexities of why South Africa, now a majority Black country with a Black government, continues to treat

Africans with suspicion, an attitude that is embedded in bureaucratic processes at the high commissions.

Listening theory proposes that society places bodies on a power hierarchy, such that those in positions of power find it difficult to listen to those in less powerful positions unless they set their power aside and put themselves in the shoes of the Other (Bickford, 1996; Husband, 2009). This study aids in understanding how behaviours and attitudes within the high commissions might push migrants into seeking out illegal routes into the country. It also connects the experiences of migrants approaching these commissions with a climate of xenophobia within the country and probes their experiences both within and without South Africa.

The study adds to understandings of South Africa's complex relationship as an African country with other African countries and its unresolved sense of how "African" South Africa is.

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#Jerusalema Challenge and Covid 19 exemplifying a new media influenced neo-globalization

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Abstract

In response to the Covid-19 pandemic the South African government enforced a series of country wide lockdowns. During the most stringent all South Africans were required to stay at home unless performing an essential service, getting an essential good or receiving an essential service or seeking emergency, life-saving or chronic medical attention.

For a country with a social culture as prevalent as ours in South Africa, the sense of agitation was palpable. Fortunately, an outlet was found in the form of new media platforms such as TikTok, Instagram, Twitter, and Facebook, where a myriad of social interactions such as dance challenges took place. Most of these utilized locally produced dance music. The result of the above was the internationalization of South African dance culture as exemplified by the #Jerusalema Dance Challenge, which will be utilized as my case study. This is a decision motivated by the belief that the song and subsequent dance challenge present an opportunity to examine both the local nuances as well as some of the intricacies associated with neo-globalization. It is my hope that this will add to our understanding of how this globalizing capital enables the global south to try and work towards an understanding of itself - how the accumulation of capital works.

Neo-globalization is a concept that challenges a lot of the supposed perks of globalisation - which includes a realization of the limits of the free market, an identification of failures of many an international organization, recognition of serious capital market flaws, a recognition of pitfalls in economic development and the dilution of the harsh nature of contemporary politics. It also accommodates technological disruptions and integrates them within the normal flow of productive events. It also touches on the binary nature of globalization where there is pride around one's culture being celebrated globally coupled with a desire to preserve it and keep it as "ours" or for it to be experienced on our terms.

I will track the life of the song Jerusalema over a 12-month period from December 2019 to December 2020. This kind of tracking of a particular form of media allows us to see the networks and connections of globalization and how once something sits in the global north a certain level of credence is attained. An occurrence which speaks to the idea of global social capital. Some South Africans engaged with the song during the 2019 festive season, while other members of society only became aware of the song when it became popular because of the global challenge. This is very relevant for a country that still experiences most things along racial lines.

Keywords: Neo-globalisation, Covid 19, social capital

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