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Un/smart Villages. Technological Resources and Human Obstacles for Rural Development Schemes

Authors

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Abstract

The smart village flourishes—at least in policy papers that envision rural areas being revitalized through networked media and telecommunications. Yet while such aspirations are widespread, there is scant systematic knowledge about digitally-driven development schemes beyond single case studies and pioneering communities.

To address the lack of insight into the realization of smart village conceptions, we present and discuss key findings of a comprehensive survey conducted in November and December 2020. We focus on Germany as a Western, highly industrialized country in order to examine the extent to which ICTs foster regional development processes. With this, we are able to better understand digitization's impact on people taking part in policymaking for rural areas, determine the factors shaping these processes, and offer advice for promoting digitally-driven participation. Our survey was distributed online to representatives of regions that have participated in rural development schemes, most notably the European LEADER framework (N=152). The 36 questions invited them to chart regional characteristics, overview the state of digitization and participatory offerings, identify core actors, assess barriers and opportunities, as well as prognosticate future developments.

Our results show that the regions take a similar approach to the design of digital participation and employ a palette of standard formats, especially when it comes to generating policy topics and mustering citizens' opinions via online tools. The assumed advantages of broader participation, spatial flexibility, and reduction of mobility costs and time are also present in the majority of replies. What differs between the regions are the perception of and the status ascribed to these instruments. In most of the responses, they are considered to be mere pilots, regardless of how well the digital services have been received by local people and despite the overall need to move online due to COVID-19 restrictions. In fact, when thinking about obstacles that would impede an enduring digital engagement, the officials usually refer to the citizens who are perceived to be innovation-averse and uninterested in embracing digital media for civic causes. With this, those tasked to promote digital participation reiterate a cliché of rural backwardness themselves. Technological connectivity is, however, rarely seen to encumber such efforts thus contradicting the common call for broadband expansion. Hence, unleashing digital participation for rural

development seems not a matter of technological capacity but of human deficiencies: the smart village is prevented by unsmart villagers.

In line with this, we too find that the use and success of digital formats are taken to be less restricted by material than by human resources. While the setup of a technical infrastructure is believed to involve manageable financial costs, maintaining a social infrastructure requires long-term investment in recruitment and training. Consequently, the ineffectiveness of instrumental approaches underscores the fallible nature of digitally-enhanced rural development and participation. They fundamentally hinge on how the capabilities of citizens become recognized, valued, and mobilized. This situation also opens up opportunities for low-tech approaches that do not require large monetary funds but personal commitment and engagement.

Submission ID

129

To adapt or not to adapt: analysing the communication dynamics in the context of the COVID19 Pandemic of sugarcane family farmers and extension agents in Batangas, Philippines

Authors

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Abstract

The communication dynamics between social actors in the agriculture value chain, specifically the sugarcane family farmers and extension agents from the Balayan Mill District in Batangas, Philippines, have been affected in recent years due to the SARS-Cov2 aptly known as the COVID-19 pandemic. The expected shift in the communication modality tends to add to the burden of these ageing family farmers due to their economic and educational background.

Due to the implications of the current communication dynamics to the family farmers' day-to-day activities and the innovations brought about by the social protocols implemented to mitigate the increase in the number of COVID19 cases, analysing the lived experiences of

selected members of the agricultural sector will help in understanding the plight of one of the core sectors of the nation. Moreover, considering the importance of gender in balancing their roles in decision-making and farm and off-farm activities aid in strengthening the core values of being family farmers.

The combination of technology-mediation and in-person communication helped address the need for the co-creation of knowledge between the social actors in the value chain. These modifications allowed the family farmers to adapt to the changing communication landscape during the pandemic. However, these modifications also highlighted the issues when identifying the strengths and weaknesses of specific communication innovation strategies since the majority of the farming sites are located in far-flung areas where internet connectivity is often seen as a challenge to most family farmers.

Through Bourdieu's Conceptualisation of Symbolic Capital as a theoretical underpinning, the study will utilise a qualitative methodology through a transcendental phenomenological approach in understanding the lived experiences of selected sugarcane block farmers in Balayan and Calaca, Batangas, Philippines. Through purposive sampling, 30 sugarcane family farmers and ten sugarcane block farm chairpersons participated in a series of semi-structured interviews in three months. Additionally, several key informant interviews with agencies that have closely interacted with the sugarcane farmers prior to and during the pandemic were also conducted to understand the lived experiences of the social actors in the sugarcane value chain. Data analysis will follow Creswell (2013) proposed methods through reading and meaning, coding and thematic description and classification, data interpretation, and data representation and visualisation.

Based on the initial data from selected sugarcane family farmers, the study aims to contribute to the growing body of knowledge on gender equality and innovation in rural communication in the Philippines.

Keywords: rural communication, gender, COVID19, sugarcane family farmers

Submission ID

331

Live Chat Room: the Publicization of Private Space in Chinese Rural Soundscape

Authors

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Abstract

The development of Chinese new media technology reconstructs the rural media and information environment (Liu, 2016). Due to the influence of network culture, especially short video and live-streaming culture, villagers built a daily routine to interact with other villagers by Live Chat Room using mobile phones in rural areas of the hilly region of southern Shandong Province. As a result, a special Chinese rural soundscape was constructed in the process of sound-based live streaming (Schafer, 2006). Specifically, the villagers interact in the internet area and extend this interaction to reality by replacing private space as the public live streaming area.

This study is aimed to explore the construction of the special rural soundscapes which then influence the process of publicization of private space in the rural area. We conducted a six-month fieldwork in YangShu Hang Village and interviewed 24 villagers for 60 hours. Finally, the findings were divided into sound listening patterns and acoustics, listeners, and social contexts (Truax, 1984).

With the building of a daily routine of sound-based live streaming, YangShu Hang Village became an "Influencer" (Wang Hong) village from a lesser-known marginal village. The changing chat way as the live chat room influences both physical and cognitive spaces. In coordination with this new media technology, villagers integrate private personal information and the ties of kinship into the public environment, thereby creating a harmonious new space.

Therefore, in conclusion, this study develops the soundscape studies perspectives towards rural soundscape. Through the case study of YangShu Hang Village, the research fills the gap in the case of soundscape influencing the publicization of rural private space. Also, this study highlights the impact of the rural live chat room as a soundscape and how it changed the villagers' daily lives. For example, villagers will discuss personal family things like agricultural production and sales in the public live chat room, and extend the public attributes of rural personal lives (James & Curtis, 2010). It is also important to mention that the innovative and new media technologies as the live chat room in rural areas have dynamic relevance to grassroots governance and agricultural extension services.

Submission ID

495

The return of audio media in the post-visual culture era—a case study on the community loudspeaker in rural China

Authors

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Abstract

“Fellow villagers, to contain the coronavirus outbreak, please stay at home and do not travel around. Parties and gatherings in any forms should be cancelled!” At the dawn of Spring Festival, the loudspeaker in Gegang Village, which had been silent for many years, began to broadcast again.

For people who have lived in China’s rural areas, the memory of listening to a loudspeaker cannot be bypassed. As a distinctive community media in China, loudspeaker had played a role in organizing production and conveying instructions for decades. But with the continuous popularization of the Internet and mobile phones, social media like WeChat began to sink from cities to grassroots country society. More and more rural grassroots organizations choose to build social media accounts and WeChat groups to convey messages. The role of community loudspeaker is gradually replaced.

But what’s surprising is that at the beginning of 2020, when the epidemic broke out and spreading emergency information became extremely important, compared with cities using new media platforms, villages coincidentally restarted using the previously neglected but the most direct mode of transmission——community loudspeaker.

Based on the results of earlier investigation, we are interested in the following subjects: Why community loudspeakers were widely used in rural areas during the epidemic; whether the community loudspeaker will come down again in post-epidemic era when there is less emergency information; between new media platforms and community loudspeaker, whose effect of communication quality and quantity is better in China's rural areas; for rural residents, which mode of communication can better meet their information needs and bring them “use and gratification”? According to Ji Lingxiao’s research, compared with vision, the role of hearing in the development of mass media has been

underestimated or even ignored (Ji, 2019). So as a medium that uses sound as communication symbol and acts on human auditory apparatus, does the revival of loudspeaker mean the return of the aesthetic appreciation of auditory culture?

In order to explore those questions, we have already conducted a field investigation in a village in China's eastern province Shandong. We carried out questionnaires and semi-structured interviews in the village. And according to the results of the previous investigation, a series of experiments were conducted to evaluate the communication effect of WeChat group and community loudspeaker. The effect is evaluated from five dimensions of rural residents' cognition: awareness, enjoyment, interest, opinion-forming and understanding (Burns, O'Connor & Stockmayer, 2003).

The preliminary study finds that, compared with urban residents, rural residents, especially the elderly rural residents, have less awareness of actively seeking information and there are fewer channels for them to obtain information. Compared with WeChat and other new media platforms, community loudspeaker is authoritative, compulsory, repetitive and targeted, which is helpful to clear blind spots of information spreading and strengthen communication effect in rural China. For the masses who are excessively immersed in the image and video culture, the heterogeneity and closeness brought by audio media like loudspeaker can better satisfy their sensory balance and emotional needs. However, visual media and audio media are not opposed to each other. By integrating the two media into a dual system and analyzing the typical ecology of community communication in China's rural areas, the study also puts forward some suggestions on the construction of a modern information spreading service system in line with the current rural characteristics of China.

Submission ID

584

Study on the Effect of Anti-epidemic Persuasion Communication in Rural Areas of Central China. -Take Z Village as an example.

Authors

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Abstract

At the end of 2019, the spread of covid-19, a new type of coronavirus, has seriously threatened the life and health safety of people all over the world, and has a serious impact on the economic and social order. It has become the most serious public health emergency in the 21st century. How to make full use of all kinds of media to raise the public's attention to the information of new infectious diseases, and to take preventive measures such as wearing masks is a topic of concern to the media and scholars.

Because of the particularity of the communication environment in rural areas, the research on the persuasion effect of epidemic prevention and control information in rural areas also shows its own characteristics. Compared with cities, the network hardware equipment in rural areas is relatively backward, the information environment is relatively traditional and closed, and the villagers' information selection preferences and cognitive level are lagging behind, which also hinders the penetration of epidemic prevention information into rural areas after public health emergencies.

In this study, taking Z village in central China as an example, we investigated the persuasive effect, degree and intergenerational differences of traditional media, social media and interpersonal communication in the process of rural anti-epidemic during the COVID-19 epidemic. This paper focuses on what factors are related to the persuasion effect against epidemic in rural areas.

This study will systematically investigate the villagers' feedback on the three propaganda methods, explore the reasons for their behavior changes through empirical methods, and reveal the reasons why media information shapes villagers' acceptance of healthy behaviors after entering the work of epidemic prevention and control. At the same time, through the COVID-19 epidemic, the village used Tik Tok, WeChat group and other strategies to deal with network public opinion. By combing the situation of popular science knowledge, we can find out the persuasion situation and existing problems of social media against epidemic during the epidemic, and summarize the relevant reasons.

In a word, based on the communication ecology in rural areas, this study studies and analyzes the characteristics of rural communication of epidemic prevention and control information, and on this basis, summarizes the effective experience of information communication persuasion in the face of unexpected events in the current rural communication environment.

In this paper, the prevention and control of rural epidemic situation as the breakthrough, trying to explore the effect of persuasion through control experiments. In the study, this paper will simulate the scene of epidemic prevention and control in rural areas, and explore the influence of different types of information oriented and information demands on the persuasion effect of epidemic prevention and control. The results showed that, in the

propaganda of epidemic prevention and control in rural areas, the persuasive effect of two-sided hint is better than that of one-sided hint, and the persuasive effect of subjective perceptual information is better than that of objective and rational information. In addition, it also verified the influence mechanism of information oriented type and demand type on persuasion effect in rural epidemic prevention and control.

At present, improving the health level of rural villagers in China has become an urgent issue for the society to pay attention to and solve. Therefore, firstly, this study has a positive effect on how to better persuade villagers to participate in epidemic prevention and control through media in the future, and to transmit health information in public health emergencies, so as to achieve the goal of the whole people observing health rules. It has certain reference significance. Second, this study is also conducive to exploring the publicity value of new media platforms such as Tik Tok and WeChat in dealing with major epidemics, enhancing villagers' awareness and recognition of epidemic prevention and control, thus realizing effective publicity and mobilization, and providing a breakthrough direction for improving the basic governance ability in dealing with major epidemics in rural areas. Third, the research on persuasive communication in response to major public health events in rural China provides a good opportunity to promote the modernization of national governance system and governance capacity. By comprehensively combing the problems exposed during the anti-epidemic period in rural areas, finding out the reasons and summarizing them, it is of reference value for us to improve the effect of communication and persuasion and ensure the construction of rural security system.

Submission ID

1110

‘Smart too’: Regional and rural consumer understandings of smart technologies in North West New South Wales

Authors

Dr. Holly Randell-Moon - Charles Sturt University

Abstract

Smart infrastructure is positioned as central to the liveability and viability of rural and regional towns in Australia. And yet regional and rural communities are typically excluded from the evidence base for smart technologies and services. This presentation draws on a project which provides an evidence base for a consumer and stakeholder segment

excluded from current research and under-served in current policy agendas. The case studies for this project are located in North West New South Wales and include Dubbo, Wellington, Narromine, Gilgandra, and Peak Hill. The data includes over 130 survey responses and interviews with shire councillors, land councillors, and consumers on smart development and internet infrastructure in the region. While small in scale, this project provided an opportunity to ascertain regional and rural consumer literacy of smart technologies and applications and add a regional and rural focus to smart policy. Results from this project indicate relatively high awareness of smart technologies and applications in regional and rural areas but little usage. There was also consumer confusion regarding rights in relation to remote data monitoring and appropriate complaint bodies. Results also indicate that people in their 30s and 40s are more likely to have greater reported levels of digital literacy and smart tech usage and that ongoing smart tech use correlates with digital literacy across age groups. Respondents overall put a high level of trust in smart tech and desired smart solutions to business, council, and leisure that 'just work' and 'do their job'. Recent literature which advocates for participatory definitions of smart and participatory smart policy may not align with regional and rural consumer experiences of smart technologies and telecommunications' capacity. The project demonstrates the importance of a diversity of consumer understandings and experiences of smart technology to add to existing literature and policy. Without this diversity, assumptions of smart literacy and capability may exclude significant consumer stakeholders from regional development.

Submission ID

1113

Social Media Use and Collective Identity among the HIV/AIDS-affected Adolescents: Evidence from a Chinese “AIDS Village”

Authors

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Abstract

The HIV/AIDS-affected adolescents, especially in rural areas, are an under-studied community. Adolescents affected by HIV/AIDS are those adolescents who are infected with HIV/AIDS themselves, or have lost one or both parents due to HIV/AIDS. In 2019, 1,740,000 children and adolescents aged 10-19 years lived with HIV/AIDS and 13,800,000 aged 0-17 years have lost one or both parents due to HIV/AIDS globally (UNAIDS, 2020).

In China, there are 260,000 HIV/AIDS-affected children nationwide in 2010 (Wang, 2011) and the proportion of reported cases aged 15–19 has increased from 15.7% in 2010 to 24% in 2019 (Hao et al., 2020). Therefore, this disadvantaged group deserves more scholarly attention. Prior research has suggested social media use play an important role in forming collective identity among marginalized groups (Fan et al., 2012; Dong et al., 2014; Gerbaudo & Trere, 2015; Khazraee & Novak, 2018). How social media use and online support predict the collective identity of the HIV/AIDS-affected adolescents? As an initial step, we chose a typical Chinese AIDS village as an example.

Wen Lou village, used to be the most densely infected area in China with 70% villagers infected with HIV/AIDS due to the illegal plasma collection from the villagers in the 1990s, making it a well-known “AIDS village.” (Wu, 2017) Top Chinese officials such as Premier ministers Li Keqiang and Wen Jiabao have visited the village multiple times. The label “AIDS Village” has brought great harms of discrimination and exclusion to local children, including healthy children. Over the past decade, the children affected with HIV/AIDS have grown into adolescents. Some of them have left the village to study or work somewhere else concealing their identities. However, the label “AIDS Village children” goes with them from their childhood to adolescence, even to their future life. Instead of emphasizing on “localization,” the label “AIDS Village adolescent” builds a psychological collective identity wherever they go.

In order to explore the relationship between social media use and collective identity of the HIV/AIDS-affected adolescents, an interview survey was conducted in Wen Lou village and sixty-three HIV/AIDS-affected adolescents were interviewed. Overall, most respondents did not show negative emotions for being a member of the “AIDS Village adolescents”, nor show hatred to people outside the “AIDS Village.” The results show that preference for social media use and online social support positively predict their collective identity; but social media use intensity negatively predicts their collective identity. The reason why social media use intensity negatively was related to the collective identity of the respondents was discussed from boundaries, consciousness, and negotiation levels. Their collective identity is formed through the intergroup interaction among those adolescents by forming a “we” in cyberspace. Moreover, there were no significant differences in the levels of social media use intensity, preference for social media use, online social support, and collective identity between different genders of HIV/AIDS-affected adolescents.

To sum, to fill the gap regarding the role that social media play in building a collective identity of specific population groups, this study investigated how social media use and online support predict the collective identity of the HIV/AIDS-affected adolescents, especially from the online social support perspective. The findings contribute to literature by extending the investigation into an under-studied community, HIV/AIDS-affected adolescents in rural areas. Future research may depart from here by investigating how online social

media platforms be better utilized to improve the social inclusion and sustainable development of the community.

Submission ID

1150

Looking from the outside in: Using Chinese theory to reflect on Canadian rural-national discursive challenges in communicating public health measures and engaging opposition

Authors

Dr. Byron Hauck - Okanagan College

Abstract

Covid 19 has highlighted the concern over social unity at a time when our communication systems have been amplifying the social discord between us. As part of an effort to advance the de-westernization of communication studies, this research moves from calling for a push for theory development outside of the west. While histories of power and oppression have made it so that the application of western theories on others has only enabled the incorporation of those people into the ideological and social spheres of influence of the west, there is a lack of such history of colonization and oppression coming from the other side enabling the application of theory to be done within the spirit of looking further. In particular, I use theories of China's mass line to investigate the appeal of protests against public health measures to confront Covid-19 in rural Canada. In emphasizing community-focused discursive work on behalf of government leaders to realize and evaluate national policies the mass line presents a system for political communication that is aimed at helping individuals identify with collective interests. The mass line was also contextually designed to address the concerns of rural voices in national policy-making and elicit the active participation of individuals opposed or otherwise apathetic. Through the perspective of the mass line where humanity is recognized in the need for ongoing discursive engagement, this research addresses the abstract rational individual at the root of public health messaging in Canada. From this base three communication concerns are raised: the predominance of oppositional voices in public meetings, the move to private groups on digital communication platforms to organize resistance, and protestors' desire to attain more publicly orientated platforms such as community radio stations. Analysis of the publicly available communication around events at these three levels indicates the frustration of people

unable to find paths for engagement. Where much academic and journalistic attention to date has focused on villainizing those who become involved in these protests or specifically targeting the reactionary elements of society as violent extremists, this investigation ultimately sheds light on the culpability of the state. Namely, how the settler-colonial formation, and the ongoing liberal and capitalist mechanisms supported by the Canadian state have created the context where our citizens talk past one another as opposed to working collectively to confront the untimeliness of the present.

Submission ID

1420

"Living in an urban-rural heterotopia": blue-collar family communication and career impartation in Rust Belt China

Authors

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Abstract

This ethnographic research explores how *"children of the oilfield"* communicate their careers in families, breaking through the dilemma of the media centralism in the classical ethnography of communication. During an interview in Daqing, an oil town in Northeast China, the following was recorded,

"Now, Daqing is a town with depleted resources. Maybe in 10, 20, or 30 years, the oil will disappear, then this town will disappear. Moving to the south is good, and that city is good, but what do others' cities do with me? I do not belong to that city. My thought maybe a little outdated. I don't want to leave. I have a duty to my family. Maybe I have already lost impetus. I'm able only to see the little patch of sky above."

This was a conversation about what it means to live as *"children of the oilfield"*. When asked whether to stay "local" or move away from the town, an unexpected reply was received: "Why not?" Similar dialogues were encountered many times. This phenomenon seems to contradict neoliberal logic. How can such conversations be explained? As such, this research aims to better understand how working-class individuals living in an oil town, with the model of "industrialization without urbanization", communicate their identity and what it means to be *"children of the oilfield"*.

“Children of the oilfield” are individuals who spent their developmental years in the oilfields and inherited careers from their parents. Since the 1960s, oilfield families had constant livelihoods, following the footsteps of their forefathers. However, privatization of state-owned enterprises (SOEs) has led to changes for workers in China’s rustbelt (Lee, 2007). Through this monocultural experience, the identity of internal culture (family’s stability) and external culture (societal changes) is negotiated as *“children of the oilfield”*. This compelled me to seek answers to the questions of this research:

RQ1: What patterns, routines and life stories are used to construct the meaning of “children of the oilfield” during family communication?

RQ2: How do the oilfield families maintain their stability when societal changes are external to the system (e.g. the SOE reform)?

Theoretically, the communication theory of identity (Hecht, 1993, 2015; Jung & Hecht, 2004) conceptualizes identity as a collective or group quality stored within four layers of identities—personal, enacted, relational, and communal—that interact with and are influenced by each other. From this perspective, communication helps build, sustain, and modify one’s identity (Hecht & Choi, 2012). Based on the empirical evidence, *“children of the oilfield”* are more tied to their image as relational sons/daughters and unit memberships. Thus, the CTI framework, particularly the relational and communal layered nature of the identities, helps clarify the patterns, routines, and rules of how their identities are expressed and negotiated.

Methodologically, the ethnography (Hymes, 1964; Geertz, 1973) provides insights into action-centered communicative practices to family communication studies. Duck(1990) reminds us about the importance of everyday conversation and the mundane, day-to-day pragmatics of life. It requires information about the enacted frame through ethnographic descriptions of naturally occurring conversation and observation. Between July and August 2021, I got back to my hometown and did two months of fieldwork, including interviewing oilfield families and participant observation at family events. The interview covered several topics, including how they communicate and interact with family, friends, and other workers, what their plans for the future are, and whether they intend to leave home.

Based on two-month fieldwork, the theme about ‘youthful compromise’ in oilfields can be identified with the model of “industrialization without urbanization”. This theme is not only different from the working-ties on American rural families (Lucas, 2011; 2013; 2016) but also obedience in traditional Confucian families. Instead, the ‘compromise’ is a dialectic dangling from both the passive acceptance of rural moral codes and the active pursuit of notions of urban choices. In a sense, it suggests that communication may be launched and organized by the action, instead of the acknowledgment of text. It reveals the mechanism of rural-urban communication and points out a reverse invasion from tradition to modernity.

The findings have practical and theoretical implications. First, it intends to shed rich dynamics on the “family-state” in the reform era, particularly those industrialization regions with ruralization. Second, it illustrates how the combined analysis of actions and ethnographic becomes a path for studying relational identities, which confirms that identity is enacted in a form called everyday interaction or everyday talk (Hecht, 1993). Finally, based on thick description, it serves as a microcosm of an industrial community with “socialism with Chinese characteristics” in the urban-rural area.

Submission ID

1544

Translation in International Rural Communication Research: Methodological Implications of a Functional Necessity

Authors

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Abstract

After more than seven decades in development and development studies, both practitioners and scholars now acknowledge that a deep understanding of cultures “on the ground” is a valuable entry point for engaging in mutual learning and dialogue to facilitate meaningful change among communities in developing regions. This is especially important when trying to learn about, and learn from those in remote locations, at the edge of infrastructure, grids, services, the labor market, and various opportunity structures – the very populations that are often unable to have more and better access to the main hubs for health, education, livelihood, and their overall quality of life. In this paper, I focus on what understanding and learning from rural cultures in development communication research entails, specifically from a linguistic standpoint since language becomes the lynchpin for gathering vital information that could influence the help that these communities often seek.

Conducting rural communication research in many countries requires encountering and engaging with peoples of different languages and dialects. The act of “gathering data,” that is, learning about rural communities that are often highly marginalized, from their members, involves conversations with them either directly or through intermediaries. Typically, as practitioners and scholars working at the intersection of development studies and translation studies point out, such engagement requires working with translators and

interpreters who are often added on to projects as available, and are seen as a means to the end, or, for “getting the job done.” Studies have critiqued the inadequate attention given to languages and translators in development projects (Heywood & Harding, 2020), noted the skewed emphasis on one (development or translation) at the expense of the other (for example, Marais, 2018), and as a result have raised important questions about research design, budget provisions, and holistic understandings of the communities in question. Others have tackled the issue of reliability of translated data, implying an essential meaning or a disembodied authenticity in them (Kirkpatrick & Van Teijlingen, 2009). This in turn raises the ethical question of inclusivity and voice. Using my own experiences with rural communication research for an ongoing project on the use of mobile phones in South India as reference points at various junctures, in this paper I explore the methodological implications of linguistic translation that is often treated as a functional necessity in international rural communication research. I do so by addressing design, the tension between inclusivity and authenticity, participatory research, and the subsequent (and inevitable) co-created nature of the narrative in research findings.

Submission ID

1580

Digital Film Screening in Remote areas of Southwest China: A Study Based on Field and Digital Humanities

Authors

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Abstract

China's rural digital film screening is a government-led public welfare film undertaking for rural areas, ethnic minorities, and remote frontier areas. In 2010, digital projectors were entirely used for rural film screenings in China, and detailed GPS / GPRS screening information records began in 2013. The object of this research is the rural film screening in Nujiang Autonomous Prefecture of Lisu Ethnic Group (怒江傈僳族自治州) in Southwest China. DH tools and field investigation examines 54,424 records of 35 digital screening teams in Nujiang Autonomous Prefecture of Lisu Ethnic Group from 2013 to 2021. This research finds that three favorite themes of feature films for villagers and ethnic minority

audiences in Nujiang Lisu Autonomous Prefecture are wars and the communism revolution, martial arts and action, and rural drama (concerning their daily lives).

Meanwhile, educational films also play a crucial role in rural screening. It publicizes national policies and regulations, spreads healthcare and medical knowledge, teaches planting and breeding knowledge to villagers and minority audiences. During the research, found that take 2015 as the watershed, along with the development of local society in both Han and non-Han communities, it can seem that the content of science and education films is more in-depth and can reflect the improvement of national policies. The reason may be related to a series of national policies and regulations such as the "Comprehensively build a moderately prosperous society" proposed by the Chinese government in 2014, the "Two-child Policy," and the "Three-child Policy" in 2015 and 2021.

From the perspective of media-anthropology with Victor Turner's theory of ritual, we regard open-air film screening as a national ritual that provides imagination resources for local ethnic groups to imagine China as a community with unity in diversity (多元一体). This state imagination of china is called "Tian'Xia" (天下, under heaven), is similar to Geertz's Theatre State and Tambiah's galactic polity, and we would like to compare and demonstrate how open-air film screening is a ritual provided by the state.

After two years of attending a rural communication working group, our research project and prior works gained inspiring feedback and generous suggestions, which allowed us to go deeper and present this interdisciplinary research in both media-anthropology and digital humanity.

Keywords: Digital Film Screening, Rural Film Screening, Chinese Rural Area, Chinese Minorities

Submission ID

1581

The Digital Farmer Field School as a living lab configuration in Enrekang

Authors

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Abstract

The concept of traditional rural communication has changed radically within the last couple of years. Being physically present in a rural community isn't the only communication and learning option anymore, with access to the internet and new technologies within reach. During Corona times, we worked in Enrekang, Sulawesi, Indonesia, on designing and developing a Digital Farmer Field School (DFFS). A DFFS offers a tablet-based digital learning environment. With a DFFS, it is anticipated that the farmers and the extension agents have access to quality learning and knowledge exchange.

This article analyses the initial stage of the DFFS Enrekang as a living lab configuration. In this configuration, the following principles were centralized, (1) Setting priorities of DFFS features and contents based on the result of Social-Ecological System Analysis and users' needs, (2) Adhering to the internally constructed design principles to ensure that rural services through using the DFFS are synchronous toward sustainable agriculture, and (3) Establishing DFFS Design and Management Teams to govern the DFFS. The article addresses the implementation and operation of these principles and explains how the DFFS functioned as a living lab configuration.

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1676

Social Media Use, the Extended Network, and Algorithm-driven Echo Chamber: the Study of Rural Female Workers of China

Authors

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Abstract

Social media has become an integral part of social life for Chinese. However, social media has a special meaning for the lives of rural women workers. This article examines the motivations of social media usage among rural female workers in an auto parts factory in western Guangdong, China. In-depth interviews were conducted with 28 samples aging from 18 to 28 obtained by snowballing acquaintances. From the perspective of social network, this paper reveals how the use of social media extends the networks of rural women workers on the one hand, and restricts them within algorithm-driven echo chambers on the other hand. Rural female workers usually watch TV series, variety shows, play online games, and watch short videos through mobile social media. They all agree that mobile phones play an extremely important role in their leisure life. The motivations can be classified into four categories. First, those with high school degree may search information and seek knowledge, including current affairs, social news, national policies such as medical care, pension, etc. However, those with lower secondary school degree present little interest in this kind of information. Second, some respondents use mobile phone software or Douyin to meet new friends, which expands their original social network. Third, the rural women workers to some degree achieve self-expression in the virtual network through communicating on WeChat, using emoticons, sending WeChat Moments and delivering Douyin short videos. Fourth, the social media bring about escape and imagination for them such as watching "sweet pet" dramas (*tianchongju*) on social media. It is easy for female audiences to identify with the character in the love story and imagine they are the heroine and fall in love with the protagonist who is rich and infatuated. In summary, the impact of social media use on rural women workers is twofold. On the one hand, social media provides for them an extended network, expands the symbolic space, and becomes a comfort and escape from everyday life. On the other hand, the vast majority of respondents have exposure to short videos in Douyin most often, which constitutes an information cocoon manipulated by recommendation algorithms. What these rural women workers most frequently watch are idol dramas, family dramas, shopping information, and funny jokes, and the use of new media for the purpose of self-status enhancement as expected by some scholars in development communication could hardly happen in our study.

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1786

Recentralization: A Study of Rural Residents' Policy Cognition and Its Influencing Factors from the Perspective of Organizational Communication

Authors

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Abstract

To promote rural development and narrow the gap between urban and rural areas, in recent years, China has promulgated a series of favorable agricultural policies, which have played an important role in improving the income and life quality of rural residents. In the process of policy implementation, the effectiveness of policy communication is related to the rural residents' sense of policy identity and the measurement of policy value. If the effectiveness of agricultural policy communication is low, rural residents' understanding of the policy may be biased, which may stimulate their negative feelings about the policy and affect policy implementation (Yuan & Li, 2020).

Organizational communication is an important channel for rural residents to obtain policy information. The narrowly defined organizational communication usually refers to the top-down communication about policy information from the central government to the rural grassroots through governments at all levels. For a long time, the effectiveness of organizational communication has also been challenged in two aspects: one is the impact of other media under the change of media technology, the second is interpersonal communication channels. Nowadays, many changes have taken place in rural areas. In terms of the media technology environment, the popularization of smartphones and mobile Internet has profoundly changed the original pattern of information communication in rural areas. One view is that the embedding of new media may bring about a crisis of policy communication efficiency, and the grassroots government is more marginalized in the pattern of rural information communication (Zhang, 2020). In terms of the interpersonal communication environment, more and more young people go to work in cities, and the hollowing out of the countryside is becoming more serious. The acquaintance society in traditional rural areas is gradually changing to a half-acquaintance society (He, 2013).

Based on a questionnaire survey of 1,284 rural residents in rural areas of central and western China, this study measured the subjective and objective aspects of rural residents' policy cognition level of rural residents, using multiple linear regression model and zero-inflation Poisson regression model to explore the influence factors of rural residents policy cognition, examine whether organizational communication can use social media to

improve the effectiveness of policy communication, and how interpersonal communication affects internet-based organizational communication.

Our research found that the policy cognition level of rural residents differs between subjective and objective levels and between different groups, rural residents' subjective perception of policies is good, indicating that the publicity of agricultural policies is becoming more and more open and transparent. However, concerning the specific content of the policy, the perception of rural residents is lower than the average level. This shows that the precision of the communication of agricultural policies needs to be improved. In addition, after group comparison, we also found that women, younger age groups, and rural residents in the western region have a lower level of policy awareness. These groups should be the key objects that need attention in future agricultural policy publicity work.

Second, compared with economic factors, intellectual factors have a greater impact on rural residents' policy cognition level. This finding reminds us that if we want to improve rural residents' policy awareness, what we need to bridge is no longer the "economic gap" but the "knowledge gap".

Third, organizational communication plays an important role in the communication of policy information, the number of information service agencies and the improvement of the quality of the information services provided can positively affect the level of policy awareness of rural residents. Besides, social media can empower organizational communication, in previous studies, we can generally see this kind of view: the communication of rural organizations is mostly unidirectional, hierarchical, and stereotyped. The practice has proved that the rational use of mobile Internet can expand the influence of grassroots government and village cadres in the communication of agricultural policy information.

Finally, our study found that whether rural residents obtain information mainly through interpersonal communication channels does not directly affect their level of policy awareness, interpersonal communication channels will negatively regulate the influence of social media-based organizational communication on the policy mastery of rural residents. This also enlightens us that the main body of organizational communication should make reasonable use of interpersonal communication channels to prevent the negative effects of interpersonal communication, and pay special attention to those "opinion leaders" who are proactive and willing to share information, let them understand the policy more accurately and comprehensively, and allow informal channels and formal channels to form a parallel communication pattern.

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1800

Live-streaming farmers: relational work in China's rural cultural economy

Authors

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Abstract

China's livestreaming e-commerce has gained prominence in recent years. According to China Internet Network Information Center, as of June 2021, the scale of live broadcast e-commerce users has reached 384 million, accounting for 38% of the total netizens. Behind the rapid growth of livestream commerce users is the optimized social environment in China. E-commerce in China is highly developed and COVID-lockdown stimulated it even further, and livestream's potential to boost business after the outbreak wins newfound respect from the government. President Xi Jinping has lauded livestreaming sales as a way to help rural residents get rid of poverty, which is the top priority for China's government. Taobao, the world's largest eCommerce website, seizes the opportunity timely and now is the frontline of e-commerce poverty alleviation in China.

On Taobao live, there are more than 100 billion livestreaming studios, a quarter of which are from rural areas^[1]. Farmers who perform well in selling of their homegrown products via livestreams are called newly minted *cun-hong* (Village influencers). They are capable of producing agricultural products and affectively constructing connection with distant audiences, working as both material labor and affective labor. Through interactive livestreams and bite-sized videos, rural streamers show watchers how agri-food is made and chat with them. Farming work becomes a relational work embedded in virtual communities, where farmers are normally engaged in the interaction with the audience as they work in agriculture.

As such, live streaming has been transforming agricultural work in rural China in terms of work routine, space, and target. Farmers do not have to deliver their produce miles away to marketplaces before dawn, since the livestream app grants them mobile access to their own live rooms, the 24-hour free stalls, exposing them to more potential consumers by algorithms. In this case, mobile phones become new agricultural tools to produce new agricultural materials – data. How to attract and monetize network traffic through the display of their daily farm work in the live room becomes the new focus of streaming farmers.

This noteworthy phenomenon urges me to think about the impact of this data-driven farm work on rural live-streamers (*cun-hong*), especially on their self-identity, family and community relationships, and their affection to the land they live on, as their work-time rhythm

is being retuned by information technologies. Specifically, how do everyday life of *cun-hong* changes in response to the influx of live-streaming activities; how these changes impact on their interpersonal relationships and the affection felt for the village. Participatory observation and depth-interview will be adopted to respond to the concern. In this way, this article could contribute to our understanding of rural cultural economy in the digital age.

[1] Please refer to: <https://new.qq.com/omn/20210908/20210908A047NP00.html>

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2064

A Prospective Study on Digital Exhibition and Dissemination of Agricultural Heritage to Stimulate Rural Communication

Authors

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Abstract

Agricultural heritage refers to the unique agricultural production system created and inherited in the long-term coordinated development of humans and their environment. Today's rapid technological, cultural, and economic development is threatening much of the agricultural cultural heritage and its biodiversity and socio-environmental foundations. Therefore, the research on the protection and communication of agricultural cultural heritage has always been an important academic topic. This paper focuses on how to use digital technology to promote the dissemination of agricultural heritage, so as to achieve the effect of protection, and at the same time use digital technology to advantage the development of rural communication.

In the digital era, on online platforms and intelligent terminals, successful publicity of agricultural heritage systems requires the employment of digital narrative, by which can we grasp the core of narrative landscapes and means of dissemination in the age of new media. Discussion about the important value-added method of "digitalized creative + content of agricultural heritage systems", that is, digitalized creative and content expression of agricultural heritage systems, is an important research subject in the field of agricultural heritage systems protection and inheritance now. For example, technologies such as 3D, VR, AR, 3D modeling, and interaction can be adopted to effectively tell the stories of China, carry out secondary creation and publicity of Chinese agricultural heritage systems, and

create modernity and a sense of science and technology as well. It is urgent to further explore how to create ways of narrative and models of dissemination, which better meet the needs of people, facilitate their learning knowledge and connotations of agricultural heritage systems, and provide more aesthetic experiences, with emerging technology in this era.

This research attempts to analyze the application and prospect of digital methods and technologies of agricultural cultural heritage. By combing the current situation of digitalization of agricultural heritage, combined with the practice in related fields, it is proposed that the main mission of digitalization of agricultural heritage is to strengthen the theory of digitalization research and application exploration. It predicts the application prospects of digital technology in three aspects of agricultural heritage protection, including the digitization of agricultural heritage information organization, such as the establishment of information databases; the digitization of agricultural heritage individuals or systems, such as the establishment of digital preservation, display and dissemination requests; digitization of research methods, such as the use of digital methods to assist in the quantitative and visual research on agricultural heritage.

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2095

La Amazonía de Ecuador, un territorio de contradicciones

Authors

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Abstract

La Amazonía, con 7,4 millones de kilómetros cuadrados y un área continental de 4,9% es considerada el pulmón del planeta. Este estudio tiene como propósito conocer si la comunicación cumple roles en la transformación social y participativa de las comunidades o es un instrumento de prácticas que buscan un “desarrollo” sustentado en una falsa idea de “progreso”.

Dentro del análisis haremos un repaso profundo por el gobierno del ex presidente Rafael Correa, pues encontramos que este período es clave, porque se gestaron algunos avances en cómo los medios de comunicación, desde la estructura del Estado, cambiaron su posición al comunicar sobre la Amazonía. Esto es evidente en dos momentos: el Caso Chevron, que llevó a Ecuador y a la multinacional a tribunales internacionales en un

conflicto que aún no termina y la campaña internacional para dejar bajo el suelo el petróleo que se encuentra bajo en el territorio denominado como Yasuní ITT.

Es en este contexto nacieron posturas como el Sumak Kawsay o Buen Vivir, que es una idea de desarrollo nacida desde Ecuador y que de alguna manera llama a redefinir el papel de la comunicación, en aras de la reivindicación de las propias maneras en que las culturas han encontrado el bienestar, lejos de intereses corporativos e incluso institucionales. Pero ¿funciono o no?

Al analizar el mensaje de las publicaciones de Diario El País, La Confederación de Nacionalidad Indígenas de la Amazonía de Ecuador y la Revista Terra Incógnita, en el período 2013 a 2017, se encuentran puntos de quiebre, que hacen que se entiendan de mejor forma las teorías del desarrollo: Dependencia, Multiplicidad y Modernización, que son las estudiadas en el trabajo de investigación.

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