

Dividing or Uniting - ICT-Use and Regional Economic Growth in China

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Policy makers worldwide put great emphasize on national and regional ICT development not least because it is believed to constitute a decisive factor for enhancing competitiveness and sustaining growth. And indeed a row of empirical studies suggests that ICTs have a positive impact on economic development. At the same time, Internet infrastructure and technology adoption appear to reinforce existing endowment cleavages between rich and poor countries, between urban and rural areas, and between high-skill and low-skill work. This raises the question whether ICTs can really change the game? The here presented paper seeks to render insight into this issue for the case of China. I analyse the impact of ICT use on regional economic development patterns based on Provincial panel data for the period 1998 to 2013. The empirical investigation takes into account potential direct and indirect effects as well as spatial spill over effects.

Legal Empowerment of the Poor (LEP) and ICT4D: Challenges and debates in the Chinese context

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This paper critically discusses notions behind and strategies within two different discourses and development agendas: Legal empowerment of the poor (LEP) and ICT4D. These two frameworks and agendas are seldom discussed together but they can be fruitfully combined, and contrasted, as both address issues of access to information, empowerment, and development among marginalized groups of people. However, LEP seldom seem to explicitly address the use and role of ICTs for legal empowerment, and the ICT4D discourse do not seem to address legal dimensions of empowerment and development. This paper is divided into a more theoretical part addressing the role of ICTs for legal empowerment and development, and some of the overly optimistic assumptions of the impact of ICTs in the context of China. The empirical part provide examples from China that reveal both the challenges and limitations of ICTs for legal empowerment in an authoritarian regime as well as the strategies poor and marginalized people use to try get their voices heard and obtain justice.

ICT for (Personal) Development in Rural China: Games, Videos, and the Emergence of Unimagined Users

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ICT is becoming widespread in rural China, and mobile phones and computers are finding unlikely users: old people, rural women, and people with little disposable income and little education. These ‘unimagined users’ not only are not the consumers that the ICT industry expects and caters to, but they are people who often do not think of themselves as ICT users at all. In contrast to both the macro-level policies (and discourse) of the state and the prevailing literature on the use of ICT in rural China that depict rural users as passive recipients of technologies that will help them improve their material conditions, my work locates these users as active agents who often appropriate ICT in unconventional and unexpected ways. I draw from my

ethnographic findings in three villages in rural Hebei and Shandong to illustrate the emergence of such unimagined users, and to show how their use of mobile phones and computers—albeit dependent on intermediaries such as migrant workers and younger people—allows them to participate from the margins in China's rapid modernization.

Satellite antenna in a Chinese village

Sun Wusan, CASS

TV in China is not only about entertainment, but politics and ideology. The TV satellite antennas are spread all over China, both in rich suburbs and remote and poor mountains in the countryside. These TV satellite antenna are different in size and format, apparently not from a single producer, which should be a state owned producer. The situation differs from the Chinese government wishes, which is TV satellite antenna should be strictly supervised by government.

The differences of TV satellite antenna shows at least two things: one is an effort of government to keep ideological control and satisfy the demand for entertainment in rural areas, the second is that economic interests is so powerful in practice, so that an interest conflict between central and local governmental TV agency leave a gap for an illegal private TV satellite antenna industry to develop, regardless of the political and ideology emphasized by the Party.

Transforming Healthcare Systems through ICT Innovation: Exploring the Potential and Barriers to Resident Health Card Project in Rural China

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The transforming health systems with ICT penetration has become a vital issue globally. Although some studies have been done in developing countries, they are far from enough. As a country with the largest number of Internet users and more than half of the population living in rural areas, China provides an interesting context to study ICT implementation within healthcare systems. This study is among the first to examine and evaluate the implementation of the Chinese Ministry of Health's newly launched Resident Health Card (RHC) project in rural China. The RHC program aims to improve the efficiency of medical services by electronically linking individual health records, hospitals, public health institutions and insurance operators. Individuals will be able to access their personal medical records with their ID via the Internet. Currently implemented in some experimental communities, the RHC program will eventually enrol residents throughout the entire country. This study focuses on researching the potential of ICTs, in this case a specific program, to improve healthcare delivery within a specific socio-cultural context. This study will pay special attention to the enrolment of people in rural area, who are more likely to suffer from health disparities in China. Guided by the theoretical framework of the ICT for healthcare development (ICT4H) model, the study will try to find out: 1) What are the benefits of ICT usage in the healthcare context, specifically opportunity production, capabilities enhancement, social enabling and knowledge generation? 2) What are the inter-related constraints to ICT usage in the healthcare

context, specifically infrastructural, economic, technological, and socio-cultural factors? 3) What are the key factors, benefits and barriers that contribute to, or detract from, healthcare system outcomes and health impacts? To collect pilot data evaluating the implementation of RHC project, the study will adopt multiple research methods, including observation, in-depth interviews, and a longitudinal quantitative survey. This study will provide recommendations for the domains of policy and practice, as well as provide theoretical guidelines for future studies.

Change Makers and New Media Technology: Introducing NGO2.0 and A Civic Hackathon Model

Jing Wang, MIT

This paper starts with the introduction of NGO2.0, a civic media technology project launched in China in 2009, demonstrates two of its participatory programs (e.g., a crowdsourced philanthropy map and a field guide to software for NGOs), and ends with the description of NGO2.0's newly developed civic hackathon model that mobilized local NGOs and local hackers' communities to practice collaborative design together. A prototype developed by hackathon participants is illustrated to show how web 2.0 and social networking tools are changing the ways in which NGOs mobilize support and empower themselves and the communities they serve.

NGOs' Communication and Social Changes in China: Action-oriented Media, Interactive Capacity Building between NGOs and Academics, and Emancipatory Use of ICT from Below

Bu Wei, CASS

I have written this paper with two identities – as a professor and as a social activist from workers' and women's NGOs. Based on experiences working with NGOs together about 20 years, I will argue the conceptual crisis on media from NGOs' perspectives, and suggest the concept "action-oriented media", which are as oppositional as well as strong constructive force for social justice. According as this concept, I will describe and discuss (1) the emerging opportunities and challenges for NGOs' alternative voices; (2) emancipatory use of media from Below; (3) interactive capacity building between NGOs and the academics; and (4) the roles of NGOs communication in social change.

Borrowing stage to perform: How Chinese migrant workers participate in the media representation of themselves?

Wan Xiaoguang, CASS

Most existing research of migrant workers' representation in mass media rarely shed light on their role as social change agent. In this case, migrant workers' voices could hardly be heard, their actions could hardly be concerned, and their efforts of changing the mass media could hardly be noticed. Drawing on three different cases, this paper focuses on how migrant workers participate in the media representation and make them heard by the public. These cases varied in action objectives and action levels. The study indicates that different action strategies and media tools, including ICTs, were employed in migrant workers' participation to influence media representation. And their action could increase the visibility of migrant workers' issues in mass

media, change the frames of mass media to some extent, and create a friendly public space for their rights protection and positive social change.

Grassroots NGOs for migrant workers in China: a New Working--- Class Translocal Cultural Space linked by ICTs?

Hongzhe WANG, The Chinese University of Hong Kong

Cultural formation among various worker groups via ICTs paves the way for a new power of working--- class identity and consciousness in the theoretical framework of working--- class network society in China (Qiu, 2010). This paper tries to inquire the relationship between workers' local materialized cultural activities and the translocal networks based on them, by a case study on a migrant workers NGO (小小草工友文化家园, grassroots workers culture home) in Shenzhen industry zone, south China, with a focus on its cultural and arts activities. Specifically, I want to ask: who are the actors of the group? What are the materialized characters of its spatial form and structure in the industry zone? What are the invisible networks linked by this visible physical node, with what borders crossed? How are the cultural actions linked, with what outputs? And finally what are the conditions these cultural expressions and practices created for the formation of a new working--- class cultural space, while also with what restrictions?

The Consumer and User as the Subjective: The New Generation of Peasant-Workers and ICTs

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Among many investigations and researches in regard to application and consumption of ICTs, users and consumers are often considered as the target or objective of these researches; especially the peasants and peasant workers from the lower of the society are usually considered as more passive objectivity, they have to make some necessary choices under various conditions of the structured restriction. Although the structural condition, which includes institutional arrangement, social status, social relationship and consuming capacity etc, are the important factors that restrict the behavior of people, it still cannot be ignored the subjective role that people plays in the daily life. **Subjectivity** in this research indicates that when the Chinese young peasant-workers, who's the weak group in the social transformation and been facing various structural limitation, are not always like puppetry, who negatively make some choices that have no choice but too because of these external impacts. In their social practice, these peasant-workers have various kinds of initiative, even creative expressions and actions that resist the living pressure. They will try to apply those very limited resources and all the opportunities to approach their goal in spite of all the restriction. For this reason, it will be necessary to explore the possibilities and the puzzle of diminishing social gap by ICTs. This research will focus on three aspects: practical effect of ICTs for the new generation of peasant-workers; the cultural expression of their living condition and desire; and how they use various ICTs in the process of organized resistance. Obviously, as soon as young peasant-workers get familiar with new media or ICTs, they must apply it to their struggles for their legal or civil rights, while ICTs help to widen opportunity space for growth of subjectivity of the working class that come into being.

Grassroots Media, New Media, and the Complicated Terrain of Media Empowerment for Domestic Workers in Beijing

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This paper discusses the media use and potential media empowerment of domestic workers in Beijing. Among China's migrant labor population, domestic workers are often considered the most marginalized – economically, socially, and technologically. In some ways, this marginalization extends to academic scholarship as well. Although research has focused on the life struggles and media representation of domestic workers (Sun, 2009; Yan, 2008), their production of their own media – via community theater – and their use of social media have remained largely invisible. However, several NGOs in Beijing have organized activities for domestic workers to tell their stories, perform drama, and thereby potentially gain a voice in society. At the same time, more and more middle-aged domestic workers are using social networking sites and mobile applications, particularly Qzone and WeChat, for sociality, information seeking, and to express their outlook on life. This paper discusses the linkages, disjunctures, and contradictions between the grassroots media and social media usage of a group of middle-aged female domestic workers in Beijing. Through analyzing these women's goals and motivations for their different types of media involvement, this paper seeks to further our understanding of the complicated terrain of voice and media empowerment in China.

ICT for Rural Education in Chinese Setting: Case Studies

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Offering adult education programs to enhance farmers' qualities is an integral component of China's lifelong education system as well as an important approach to solving acute problems existing in rural areas and developing rural economy. Drawing on three long- duration, wide coverage, and ICT- supported projects, "Modern Distance Education Program for Rural Party Cadres", "National Science and Technology Training Program for Farmers in the New Era", and "One Village, One College Student" Programs, the paper reports on the program backgrounds, program sponsors, partnerships, and ICT application with the aim of summing up 'best practice' in ICT of rural education for farmers. Research findings show that supported by ICT, a variety of courses of different levels are available and that ICT plays multiple roles in these programs, including information networks construction, learning resources development and transmission, and learning tools. ICT itself can be the subject matter as well as serve as a gateway to marketing agricultural produces. Paper also show that ICT for rural education in Chinese setting are made great efforts to define objectives that take into consideration the socio- economic context of the target area, understand rural challenges and specific needs, choose ICT in accordance with user's social reality, and develop strategies and activities for training.

Bridging the Digital Gap in China Education: Policies, Measures and Practice

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This presentation briefly describes the background of digital gap in education in China. Based on that, it provides a brief picture of development of ICT in education in China since the beginning of 21st century. Mainly, it focuses on explaining how to minimize the digital gap in education in China. Several related important policies are explained which are issued by Ministry of Education. Many efforts to enforce those policies are introduced which are at national and provincial governments as well as from companies and universities.

The goal of bridging the digital gap is to empower teaching and learning all over China, so the presentation discusses the efforts of quality educational resources sharing thru. ICT for balanced development of education. Finally, the presentation makes comments on the development process of reducing digital gap in education in China, and propose challenges and opportunities we are facing now in China.