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### **Beijing's Identity as Represented in the Local Official Government Website**

*Key words:* government website, national identity, representation, textual genres, institutional communication

In China government websites have been considered as crucial tools for the implementation of the open government information policy since 2008. In 2015 the Chinese government conducted the first national survey of official government websites. Throughout the year, the survey examined institutional websites published by the central and local levels of the state executive apparatus. One of the declared objectives of the survey was “to raise the government websites authoritativeness and influence and to safeguard the governments’ credibility”. This statement confirm the relevance still accorded to the Internet as a medium in the institutional communication with the general public, and the focus on the state intent of moulding public opinion. As a country capital is often considered as an emblem of national identity, this paper will focus on the representation of Beijing as the centre of the country spirit and life for Chinese audiences. It will particularly concentrate on how the municipality’s identity is constructed through Beijing’s Chinese language website ([www.beijing.gov.cn](http://www.beijing.gov.cn)). This online materials seem to be relevant as the 2015 survey data identify the official website of the municipality of Beijing as one of the most reliable at the provincial level, affirming therefore it has an influence over the national public. In this framework, the paper will start by analyzing the structure and the content of Chinese language version of Beijing’s website. Then it will classify the main genres displayed by the website. The hypothesis is that genre identification can shed a light on the intended purposes of the online texts and highlight the concrete functions performed by the website, thereof further clarifying the peculiarities of the representation of the city role in the country.

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### **Speaking through Cartoons and Animation Videos. The Role of Creative Industries in China**

*Key words:* new media, political cartoons, video sharing, online animation, political economy

One of the most innovative strategies proposed by Xi Jinping leadership in terms of political communication is the introduction of video cartoons and animations in his narratives. Although the use of political cartoons does not represent something completely new in the Chinese media context (Liu, 1993; Ji, 2009), the new leadership focused its efforts to address its messages also to the younger generations through new media. The foundation of the state-funded Chinese magazine Pengpai 澎湃 (Olesen, 2014) as well 461 million Chinese Internet video sharing users (CNNIC, 2015) represent two important opportunities for the Chinese leadership to approach its present fragmented audience (Zhao & Guo, 2005). This trend has to be included in the path of creative industries (Caves, 2000, Cunningham 2002, Richeri, 2009) and it needs to be analyzed not only under the political discourse perspective (Greenberg, 2002; Medhurst & De Sousa, 1981) but it has also a concrete economic impact on the national media economy (Keane, 2013). This article aims to analyze -the most representative video animations, which represented Xi’s policies; -the channels and the platforms used to support the circulation of cartoons and animated videos; -the actors involved in the production and the distribution of the videos. A mixed methodology will be used to reach the proposed findings. A video content analysis (Hauptmann, 2009) will be implemented for investigation #1 while a political media economy approach (Richeri, 2012; Wasko, 2011) for investigations #2 and #3.

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### **Media and State: China’s Linguistic Policy as Reported in the Issues of Language Situation in China (2005–2015)**

*Key words:* Language Situation in China, linguistic policy, borrowings, neologisms, Internet language

Li Yuming 李宇明 has recently written the introduction of the 2015 issue of the *Language Situation in China*, entitled “New media and linguistics”. It is remarkable that he has devoted a section on the problems which affect society in the era of new media (also addressed as “net-media”, wangluo meiti 网络媒体). Among them, Li Yuming has comprehended the problem of the relationship between new media and standard language: the former must not be felt as threatening the pureness of the language, as large groups of people have evoked in the latest years, but certainly a source of not standardized linguistic phenomena, which may compromise the harmony of the life of language. To sum up, new media, in Li Yuming’s opinion, have created some contradictions which the State is due to settle. The 2015 issue of *Language Situation* is not at all the first to deal with the problematic relationship between media and standard language: in fact, since its first issue in 2006, *Language Situation* has always given report about China’s language policy towards not-standardized linguistic items (such as foreignisms, but also dialects, borrowings, the language of Internet and even neologisms), which in the latest years have flourished in contemporary Chinese media. The present contribution aims at spotting the main features of the issues of *Language Situation*; in particular, the tendencies of China’s linguistic policy and the language-related problems China has been facing in the last 10 years, as reported in the *Language Situation* reports will be highlighted. This overview will show, on the one hand, that China has been constantly striving to impose a standard language, as a vehicle for a standard culture and a standard self-image, to (new) media. On the other hand, she has permanently coped with parts of language which by nature would eschew standardization. As a result, China has been trying to hold a position in between those w

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### **Zhou Xiaoping: A Blogger for China’s Renaissance?**

*Key words:* Zhou Xiaoping, blogging, Xi Jinping, Internet, celebrity

In October 2014 Xi Jinping, while chairing the Forum on Literature and Art Work, praised attending bloggers Zhou Xiaoping 周小平 (b. 1981) and Hua Qianfang for “spreading positive energy” with their online essays. This paper analyses Zhou Xiaoping’s blogging, focussing on some of his most read and shared essays on national and international issues. The paper puts Zhou’s writing in relation to the content of Xi Jinping’s speech at the Forum and to current CCP cultural policies in general. It discusses Zhou’s rise from minor Internet personality to national celebrity following the General Secretary’s endorsement. The paper compares Zhou’s writing style, positions and status to those of China’s best-known blogger, Han Han. Despite differences in their political stances and the fact that Han Han’s celebrity status derives more from commercial success than official endorsement, our paper points to similarities in their writing styles and online personae. In particular, both bloggers aim at persuasiveness and credibility by posing as spokespeople of China’s “man in the street”, as opposed to the authoritative, but impersonal and “wooden” language of the officialdom. The official endorsement of Zhou’s work echoes a practice of the Mao and Deng eras, when Party leaders identified the writings of certain little-known or anonymous authors with the “correct” position on a given political issues to express their stance indirectly, or to claim popular support during a factional struggle. At the same time, it exemplifies how the Party-State propaganda apparatus has embraced certain forms and contents from Internet culture, including online celebrity.

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### **The China Scholar in the Social Media Age**

*Key words:* Social Media, Research Methods, Ethics, Informants, Public Debates

The Internet, apart from being a fascinating field of study, has also opened up new possibilities for China scholars to get news, gather data, connect with informants, and in general stay updated on rapidly changing developments in Chinese society. Social media have added yet another dimension as it enables the researcher to catch up with events and public debates as they unfold, and also get valuable insights into issues, developments, and views among scholars, opinion leaders of different kinds, as well as informants.