



# Dismantling Cultural Borders Through Social Media and Digital Communications

---

How Networked Communities  
Compromise Identity

---

*Edited by*  
Emmanuel K Ngwainmbi

palgrave  
macmillan

Emmanuel K. Ngwainmbi  
Editor

# Dismantling Cultural Borders Through Social Media and Digital Communications

How Networked Communities Compromise  
Identity

palgrave  
macmillan

*Editor*

Emmanuel K. Ngwainmbi  
Department of Communication Studies  
University of North Carolina at Charlotte  
Charlotte, NC, USA

ISBN 978-3-030-92211-5      ISBN 978-3-030-92212-2 (eBook)  
<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92212-2>

© The Editor(s) (if applicable) and The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2022

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are solely and exclusively licensed by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use. The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

Cover illustration: © Alex Linch / shutterstock.com

This Palgrave Macmillan imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG.

The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

# CONTENTS

<b>Section I</b>	<b>Social Networking, Ethnolinguistic Connotations and Interpretations of Identity</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1</b>	<b>A Bird's Eye View of Networked Communities and Human Identity</b> Emmanuel K. Ngwainmbi	<b>3</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>De-stigmatization and Identity Refactoring of Chinese Online Celebrities: Case of the Chinese Economy</b> Mingli Mei and Siyu Wang	<b>19</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Social Media as Mechanism for Accountability: Cases of China's Environmental Civil Society</b> Ming Xie and Chin-Chung Chao	<b>45</b>
<b>Section II</b>	<b>Media Representations: Digital Public Cultures and the Global North</b>	<b>71</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Hate Speech and the Re-emergence of Caucasian Nationalism in the United States</b> Emmanuel K. Ngwainmbi	<b>73</b>

<b>5</b>	<b>How Global Cyber Mediated News Networks and Social Media Platforms Influenced Messages About COVID-19 Pandemic: Offering Sociological Solutions for Marginalized People</b>	<b>105</b>
	Emmanuel K. Ngwainmbi	
<b>Section III Social Media and Ethnic Identities Negotiated</b>		<b>145</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>How Television News Media Reinforce Racialized Representations of Haitian and Colombian Migration in Multicultural Urban Chile</b>	<b>147</b>
	Macarena Bonhomme and Amaranta Alfaro Muirhead	
<b>7</b>	<b>How Social Media Is Dismantling Socio-Cultural Taboos in Afghanistan</b>	<b>185</b>
	Hazrat M. Bahar	
<b>Section IV Media Representations in Global South: Discovering New Routes for Business</b>		<b>201</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Ethnic Diversity and Human Capital Development in the Digital Age</b>	<b>203</b>
	Toyosi Olugbenga Samson Owolabi and Ganiyat Tijani-Adenle	
<b>9</b>	<b>Understanding the Causes and Consequence of COVID-19 Information Crisis in Africa: Defining an Agenda for Effective Social Media Engagement During Health Pandemics</b>	<b>229</b>
	Adebayo Fayoyin	

<b>Section V</b>	<b>Media Role in Negotiating National Identities</b>	<b>249</b>
<b>10</b>	<b>Negotiating and Performing Vietnamese Cultural Identity Using Memes: A Multiple Case Study of Vietnamese Youth</b>	<b>251</b>
	Phuong Thu Dang and Hanh Thi Hoang	
<b>11</b>	<b>Identity Negotiation and Cosmopolitanism in Social Media: The Case of London and Sao Paulo Migrant Communities</b>	<b>283</b>
	Viviane Riegel	
<b>Section VI</b>	<b>Geopolitics and Cyber Mediated Communication Initiatives as Tools of Ethnicity and Diversity</b>	<b>305</b>
<b>12</b>	<b>Constructing the Consumer in the Digital Culture: American Brands and China's Generation Z</b>	<b>307</b>
	Janice Hua Xu	
<b>13</b>	<b>Ethnic Group Experiences with Social Media: The Case of the Cherokee and Native Americans Facebook Group</b>	<b>331</b>
	Fathi Bourmeche	
<b>14</b>	<b>A Revisit to Networked Communities and Human Identity</b>	<b>353</b>
	Emmanuel K. Ngwainmbi	
<b>Index</b>		<b>373</b>



# Social Media as Mechanism for Accountability: Cases of China's Environmental Civil Society

*Ming Xie and Chin-Chung Chao*

## INTRODUCTION

Arguably, no recent advancement in technology has impacted civil society organizations more than the proliferation of social media. Social media provides new ways and communication platforms for civil society organizations to connect with constituents and clients, promote their programs and work, raise awareness for causes, and garner donations. Scholars have studied social media activities (Lovejoy & Saxton, 2012) and the influencing factors of social media adoption and use by civil society organizations (Curtis et al., 2010; Maxwell & Carboni, 2016). There is also growing

---

M. Xie (✉)

West Texas A&M University, Canyon, TX, USA

e-mail: [mxie@wtamu.edu](mailto:mxie@wtamu.edu)

C.-C. Chao

University of Nebraska at Omaha, Omaha, NE, USA

e-mail: [chinchuchao@unomaha.edu](mailto:chinchuchao@unomaha.edu)

© The Author(s), under exclusive license to Springer Nature  
Switzerland AG 2022

E. K. Ngwainmbi (ed.), *Dismantling Cultural Borders Through  
Social Media and Digital Communications*,

[https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92212-2\\_3](https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-92212-2_3)

scholarly attention to the development of online accountability (Dumont, 2013; Saxton & Guo, 2011; Slatten et al., 2016). Within a neoliberal context, civil society organizations “mobilize citizens for politics, advocate for causes, and build social capital within communities” and therefore develop power relationships with other social actors (Frumkin, 2002, p. 25). The power relationships of social actors can also be understood by the extent to which these relationships encourage civic engagement in the capacity of facilitating “individual growth, attachment to society, and the democratic process” (Sobieraj, 2006, p. 52). For civil society organizations, social media has been seen as a primary means for civic engagement (Zhou & Pan, 2016) because of the feature of free and open access to information sharing, equal participation, and deliberate decision-making (Kruse et al., 2018; Loader & Mercea, 2011; Shirky, 2011). The proliferation of social media prompts a question of how civil society organizations establish and maintain relationships with social actors in the digital age.

The increasing economic and social impact of civil society organizations has been a global phenomenon. While nonprofit and civil society organizations have been used interchangeably throughout scholarship, the scope of this research will adopt the language of civil society organizations. There have been various definitions and proxy concepts across contexts regarding the social institutions and organizations beyond the public sector, the private sector, and the family. These distinctions include civil society, nonprofit, nongovernmental, voluntary sector, and third sector organizations. For example, nonprofit organizations are primarily used in the U.S., while nongovernmental organizations and charity organizations are commonly used in China. Wagner (2012) argued that the third sector concept represents the economic paradigm while the civil society concept represents the political and democratic paradigm. Civil society organization is defined as “any legal entity that is nongovernmental, nonprofit, not representing commercial interests and pursuing a common purpose in the public interest” (Rainey et al., 2017, p. 1993).

Based on shared values and beliefs (Glover, 2004), solidarity, mutuality, and voluntary altruism (Smith, 2000), civil society organizations are positioned as a bottom-up approach of empowerment and participation as opposed to the elitist and top-down approaches of social change that is espoused by neoliberalism (Nygren, 2017). Therefore, it is essential to explore how civil society organizations build their accountability and engage in participatory democracy through social media use. Furthermore, the exploration will help gain an in-depth understanding of the extent to

which social media has been put into practice and how to facilitate alternative community-based democratic participation. Therefore, the following research question guides the current research:

How do environmental civil society organizations in China construct accountability mechanisms and interact with social media upward and downward social actors?

The case of China offers a valuable perspective for the cross-context comparison with the existing literature regarding the formation and development of civil society and democratic practice. Also, this research challenges the neoliberalist understanding of accountability. It views accountability as a concept of power relations and a lens to understand the role of civil society organizations rather than a concept about performance measurement and assessment. The analysis of accountability building will enrich the accountability literature. Finally, this investigation seeks to understand better the role social media and information technologies play in situating civil society organizations in the public sphere.

### THE ADOPTION AND USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Although the Chinese government has banned most foreign social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, and Instagram, the Chinese versions of social media platforms such as WeChat, Sina-Weibo, and Tencent QQ have been integrated into Chinese people's daily lives. The development of the civil society sector in China is significantly influenced by the proliferation of information technology (Tai, 2006; Yang, 2003; Yang & Calhoun, 2007; Zhou & Pan, 2016). The literature on Chinese civil society organizations explored how Chinese civil society organizations use information technology to raise awareness and to express their opinions on issues such as domestic violence (Leggett, 2017), disaster relief (Wu & Yang, 2016), feminist movements (Li & Li, 2017), and environmental issues (Yang & Calhoun, 2007; Zhou & Pan, 2016).

Focusing on the cultural differences such as collectivism/individualism, high/low context, Waters and Lo (2012) compared civil society organizations in China, Turkey, and the U.S. and examined the cultural impacts on organizational online communication and engagement. They found that Chinese civil society organizations outperformed American organizations

in promoting their accomplishments, demonstrating the influence of “Western business principles” (p. 313). Despite the traditional knowledge that there would be a lack of civic engagement within authoritarian regimes, Wu and Yang (2016) found Chinese citizens’ active use of information technology for political participation. More importantly, Chinese citizens invented different strategies (p. 2058). Wu and Yang (2016) analyzed the case of Yiyun, a participatory mapping website that collects and shares interactive maps for various types of social services. The website allows diverse civil society organizations to collaborate across organizational boundaries and overcome political restrictions without establishing a formal organization. With the growing impact of information technology and globalization, social movements have emerged. Kou et al. (2017) studied the Umbrella Movement in Hong Kong and its interaction with mainland China through social media. Leggett (2017) examined a Chinese feminist organization that challenged the status quo of gender roles and domestic violence through online engagement. She found that the feminist civil society organization uses “less confrontational engagement strategies to raise awareness of problems, challenge the status quo and sometimes criticize subordinate authorities or abstract institutions” (p. 2275).

Scholars also explored the social media use by environmental organizations in China (Büsgen, 2006; Fedorenko & Sun, 2016; Yang & Calhoun, 2007; Zhou & Pan, 2016). For example, Fedorenko and Sun (2016) found that “the Internet has become a predominant public sphere where environmental activists play a pivotal role in producing and disseminating information to mobilize the public” (p. 2079). Furthermore, they suggested that social media play an essential role “to create sustainable channels for public dialogue with the State and other opportunities to influence the policy in urgent areas” (p. 2099).

### SOCIAL MEDIA AS AN ACCOUNTABILITY MECHANISM

With the prevalence of information technology and social media, the development of online accountability has attracted scholars’ attention. Online accountability is defined as “the provision of inclusive and transparent organizational practices that serve to demonstrate or enhance accountability on the Web” (Lee & Joseph, 2012, p. 170). From a social constructionist perspective, accountability integrates stakeholder participation in the decision-making process and involves beneficiaries in

organizations' activities (Schmitz et al., 2012). Ebrahim (2005) identified five dimensions of accountability, information disclosure, evaluation and assessment, self-regulation, stakeholders' participation, and organizational learning. He also pointed out that the information disclosure and evaluation are generally tangible and repetitive tools, while the latter three dimensions are broader than tools and probably intangible. Scholars have also proposed two functions of online accountability: information provision and fostering dialogue from the perspectives of transparency and mandatory/voluntary accountability (Tremblay-Boire & Prakash, 2015).

### *Transparency and Information Disclosure*

Transparency has been viewed as generating or improving organizational accountability (Anheier et al., 2013). Scholars have argued that transparency is the essential aspect of responsibility (Bothwell, 2001; Edwards & Hulme, 1996), which allows civil society organizations to fulfill their fiduciary and legal duties (Sloan, 2009), to be accountable to stakeholders, and to increase the visibility and public scrutiny (Kearns, 1996). Frumkin and Kim (2001) pointed out that more information regarding organizational management and performance would lead to higher transparency and accountability. Slatten et al. (2016) stated that more details disclosed online might reduce the suspicion, audits, and other investigations from regulating agencies. However, studies on what kind of social media content generate transparency and improves accountability are still underdeveloped.

Studies have found that civil society organizations promote organizational processes, including outcome measurement and strategic planning, contributing to their reputation among influential institutional actors (Barman & MacIndoe, 2012; MacIndoe & Barman, 2013). However, even though civil society organizations have been seen as being more accountable for upward accountability (Schmitz et al., 2012), existing literature has demonstrated the underutilization of social media for financial disclosure and performance disclosure (Blouin & Lee, 2013; Saxton & Guo, 2011; Slatten et al., 2016). Although, for example, financial disclosure and performance reporting are widely cited ways civil society organizations demonstrate accountability (Ebrahim, 2016), Blouin and Lee (2013) found that among the 1769 civil society organizations they studied, only 43% posted their annual reports, 13% posted audited financial statements. Only 3% posted their IRS letters of determination. In

addition, Saxton and Guo (2011) found that most organizations do not make a concerted effort to disclose their financial and performance information through social media. Also, Saxton, Neely, and Guo (2014) claimed that performance and annual report disclosure online is more critical than financial disclosure for current and potential donors. They suggested that deciding how much financial, strategic, and performance information they should disclose online is critical for civil society organizations to get charitable contributions.

### *Online Community Building*

In 2011, the mobile phone-based application WeChat was launched by Tencent Company, which has become the most popular social media platform over Sina-Weibo. As of September 2019, WeChat had 1.08 billion monthly active users. Compared to Sina-Weibo, which focuses on user-generated content posting and sharing, WeChat is a more comprehensive platform with multiple functions such as instant messaging, audio and video chat, individual posts, online shopping, and gaming. Besides the one-on-one chat, WeChat features a group chat function that allows up to 500 users to communicate within a group. The group chat function provides a closed network and cultivates an alternative public sphere (Tu, 2016), in which family members can use civil society organizations or any collaborative group to plan events, share information, and generate discussions.

Compared to other social media platforms featuring instant messaging and content sharing, one of the main features of WeChat is official accounts, which include three categories: service account, subscription account, and enterprise account. The three categories of accounts have different purposes and can post different posts each month (Table 3.1). Generally speaking, the official accounts allow individuals and

**Table 3.1** Official accounts categories of WeChat

	<i>Service account</i>	<i>Subscription account</i>	<i>Enterprise account</i>
Main function	Provide service	Disseminate information	Internal communication and management
Users	Companies, organizations	Individuals, companies, organizations	Companies, organizations
Number of posts	Four times per month	Everyday	No limitation

organizations to send out posts of text, images, audio, and videos to massive followers. WeChat users can follow an official account through QR code scanning or ID search and receive services and information through the account.

Among the three types of WeChat official accounts, service accounts and subscription accounts are the most used. These two types of accounts have different functions and post limitations. For instance, a service account can post four times per month, while a subscription account can post every day. Enterprise account is mainly used for an organization's internal communication. Based on organizations' types, they can open either service or subscription account, or both.

### *Mandatory Accountability Versus Voluntary Accountability*

Compared with requirements for civil society organizations to be accountable to government regulators, funders, and other upward stakeholders, the accountability based on information technology is a kind of voluntary accountability. Without mandatory responsibility and the formal standards and criteria such as auditing, accounting, and reporting systems of the governmental regulators, civil society organizations can decide what information is shared and disclosed over social media. Through voluntary information dissemination, civil society organizations can legitimize their presence, elevate organizational images and perceptions, build reputations among various stakeholders (Manetti et al., 2017), and monitor the spread of awareness of their mission and issues (Appleby, 2016). For example, Svensson et al. (2015) found that civil society organizations share general information about the program or organization, including "events, news updates, and grants and funding approval focus on what the organization or one of its programs have achieved such as participation and funding milestones as well as program or chapter expansions" (p. 1094). In their research specific to social media and advocacy, Guo and Saxton (2014) found that information dissemination was focused on "getting the word out through the continuing sending of brief messages to the organization's followers" (p. 71). In addition, they found that hashtags on Twitter were a handy tool to get the organization's advocacy message out.

The discussions of transparency and mandatory/voluntary accountability focus on how social media content and activities can generate transparency and accountability for civil society organizations. The social media use by Chinese civil society organizations demonstrated that although the

civil society organizations face censorship and regulation regarding their online activities, they are using social media strategically to navigate and balance state control and their expressive function for civic participation, democratization, and social change. Social media allows them to gather and disseminate information, mobilize online conversations, and discuss public events (Dong et al., 2017). Generally, they focus on issue-specific public concerns (Zhou & Pan, 2016). However, the existing literature mostly stays at the descriptive and normative research; a more in-depth study is needed to understand the nuanced conceptualization of accountability and civil society organizations in Chinese society.

## METHODOLOGY

This study employs the research method of multiple-case studies. The case study can be conducted to answer the “how” and “why” questions (Yin, 2013) and can offer a prolific and detailed understanding of the variations and nuances of social phenomena (Snow & Trom, 2002). As Stake (2006) stated, the multi-case study focuses more on particularization instead of generalization. To make the research manageable, three cases were identified, which reflect the distinct characteristics of environmental organizations in China, to maximize understanding of how environmental organizations construct accountabilities and promote civic engagement in the digital age. The sample organizations vary tremendously in size, ranging from 8 to 34 employees, from 3 to 25 years.

Online research was conducted by observing these organizations’ online activities and conversations through their social media platforms. The online observation was undertaken from October 1 to November 30, 2019, focused on all the available online platforms such as the websites, Sina-Weibo, and WeChat. The two-month period allowed the researcher to obtain sufficient information about multiple messages and was in line with previous research about social media use by civil society organizations (e.g., Saxton & Guo, 2011). Sina-Weibo and WeChat are both the most popular social media sites in China (Tu, 2016; Zhou & Pan, 2016). Sina-Weibo is the Chinese version of Twitter. Sina-Weibo is especially popular for business, civil society organizations, and governmental organizations (Zhou & Pan, 2016). At its start in 2011, WeChat was a platform for real-time communication. In 2012, it launched the public account platform, allowing both individuals and organizations to send out posts of texts, photos, audios, and videos. WeChat has been seen as a platform that

profoundly changes people's lives, "mediates information diffusion, public discussion, thus promoting the public sphere; it negotiates the relationship between the civil society and the state and creates new forms of daily interactions" (Tu, 2016, p. 345). All three cases have WeChat accounts, while only Friends of Nature and Green Earth Volunteers have a Sina-Weibo account. The researcher was also able to join several group chats of Friends of Nature and Green Earth Volunteers. The online observation focused on the individuals and organizations the research participants interacted with and what type of content they shared. All organizational information published on Sina-Weibo and WeChat during the two months was downloaded for analysis. The content analysis was helpful to address the research questions regarding the dimensions of being accountable to whom and what kind of messages have been conveyed by these three cases.

The data analysis was conducted based on online observations. Based on Lune and Berg's (2017) suggestion, the data analysis was conducted in three stages: data display to identify the themes and patterns from research participants' responses; data verification to map out the relationship between themes; and final data analysis. The current research adopted a directed data analysis approach, which involves "using more analytic codes and categories derived from existing theories and explanations relevant to the research focus" (Lune & Berg, 2017, p. 183). The researcher was also aware of the emerging themes or surprising information that was not expected. Initial themes and additional concepts not mentioned in the previous interviews were recorded in memos and used for future inquiry. Below in Table 3.2 is the codebook for data analysis.

**Table 3.2** Codebook

<i>Accountable mechanism</i>	
Performances and resources: being a stable mechanism that accounts just for performance and resources	Financial and performance disclosure Regulatory oversight Evaluation and external control
Responsiveness: integrating stakeholder participation in the decision-making process and involving beneficiaries in organizations' activities	Stakeholder participation and integration
Adaptiveness: organizations' adaptive strategies and capacity that are executed and developed to adjust to the changed circumstances	Capacity development and organizational changes

## FINDINGS

The development of the civil society sector in China is significantly influenced by the proliferation of information technology (Tai, 2006; Yang, 2003; Yang & Calhoun, 2007; Zhou & Pan, 2016). Social media provide opportunities for environmental civil society organizations to gather and disseminate information, mobilize online conversations, and discuss public events (Dong et al., 2017). The findings section focuses on activities and content on the selected three organizations' websites and social media platforms to explore the online-based accountability mechanisms and what accountability messages have been conveyed by these three organizations. Table 3.3 shows the websites and social media platforms of these three organizations.

*Information Disclosure and Transparency*

Case 1 established its website in June 1999. Case 1 had a website with both Chinese and English versions, a Sina-Weibo account, two WeChat accounts (one official account and one service account), and several WeChat groups. The Chinese website of Case 1 has four main sections: Activities, Latest News, Organization Introduction, and Engagement Opportunities. As previously mentioned, the website provides archived historical documents of the organization, such as the annual reports and auditing reports, the organizational structure, contact information, organizational regulation, change, and the organizations' projects, activities,

**Table 3.3** Social media platforms of environmental civil society organizations

	<i>Case 1</i>	<i>Case 2</i>	<i>Case 3</i>
Website (Chinese)	Yes	Yes	No
Website (English)	Yes	Yes	No
Sina-Weibo account	Yes (291,108 followers; 11,591 posts)	Yes (15,207 followers; 17,538 posts)	No
WeChat official account	Yes	Yes	Yes
WeChat service account	Yes	No	No
WeChat groups	Yes	Yes	No
Other platforms	No	BBS	Jianshu

and publications. In addition, the Engagement Opportunities section provided information regarding how to become interns, volunteers, and monthly donors. Currently, the monthly donations' data, including donors' names and donation amounts in 2016 and 2017, was published. However, the information on the website was mainly before the end of 2018. As of the time data collection in October and November 2019, the researcher only found that Case 1 published one article about the environmental education school in April 2019. Other information was published on the website before 2019. At the bottom of the website's page, there were QR codes scanned by cellphone to subscribe to the WeChat official account and service account.

The English website had a similar structure, design, and less content compared to the Chinese website. It also had information regarding donations. However, some of the content was linked back to the Chinese website. Some sections, such as the financial disclosure and members' stories, were empty. The organization's introduction included the organization's vision, mission, core values, and the founder LCJ. There was no information regarding the organization's current structure, such as the board's information.

Similarly, Case 2 had both Chinese and English websites. The Chinese and English websites provided information regarding the organization's introduction, projects, archived documents such as daily newsletter, and media coverage related to environment protection. At the bottom of the English website, there was information regarding the needed volunteers and donations. On the English website, the first page had a link to the website of the Guardian Environment Network and highlighted that Case 2 was a part of the network. However, the English website's latest content was published in January 2019, while the Chinese webpage was updated.

Sina-Weibo is a Twitter-like platform in China. Since its launch in 2009, it has become the biggest online platform and the most used social media platform for individuals and organizations. Many social issues such as scandals, government corruption, environmental problems, and social conflicts have been revealed and attracted public attention through Sina-Weibo. As of June 2019, Sina-Weibo had 486 monthly active users (Table 3.4).

Case 1 and Case 2 both have Sina-Weibo accounts (Table 3.2). As of November 2019, the Sina-Weibo account of Case 1 had 291,108 followers and 11,591 posts. Within the online observation period, there were 54 posts, including information about the volunteer recruitment, the

**Table 3.4** Sina-Weibo accounts of Case 1 and Case 2

<i>Sina-Weibo</i>	<i>Case 1</i>	<i>Case 2</i>
Followers	291,108	11,591
Posts in total (November 2019)	11,591	17,538
Posts between October 1 and November 30, 2019	54	49

organization's events, and activities, such as Green Peacock Protection and environmental public interest litigations, and the discussion of current environmental issues. Case 1 had one post about the board meeting in November, introducing the work reporting by the general director to the board. Among the posts, stakeholders such as the domestic foundations, the general director, the project teams, the volunteers, and partner organizations were mentioned. Among the 54 posts, 3 posts were about public participation in governmental policy-making. On November 11 and 12, Case 1 posted two posts regarding the regulation of the eco-certification for the mails and packages by the National Post Bureau. On November 21, a post was about the public opinion solicited by the National Energy Bureau regarding the regulation of small hydropower projects. The posts shared the links and encouraged the public to provide suggestions for soliciting. On November 21, the post was retweeted 32 times, which was the most retweeted post during the observation period.

Overall, the Sina-Weibo account of Case 1 lacked engagement with the followers. Among the 54 posts, usually, there were only no more than ten retweets or likes. The post which got the most retweets was retweeted 32 times. Most of the posts did not have any comments.

As of November 2019, Case 2 had 15,207 followers and 17,538 posts. Within the online observation period, there were 49 posts, mainly focused on the field trips of the founder WYC and the news coverage related to environment protection. For example, WYC had trips to Iceland and the Balkans in the fall of 2019. She recorded the videos of her trip. The videos were edited and shared on Sina-Weibo. There was no information regarding the organization and no comments and likes from followers. The Sina-Weibo platform was more like an information-sharing platform than a communication and interaction platform for Case 2. Of the 49 posts, 19 included videos, and 30 had external links to the original media coverage. The content on Sina-Weibo reflected the emphasis on the media by Case

2. The collected news coverage was all from both traditional and new media outlets. Also, the content had shown the substantial personal influence of the founder WYC.

### *Online Community Building*

Besides information disclosure, these organizations have used social media to build their online communities since they started using social media. Three organizations have official WeChat accounts. As of November 2019, the subscription account of Case 1 had 632 posts, Case 2 had 57 posts, and Case 3 had 172 posts. Unlike Sina-Weibo, the users cannot see the total number of followers of the WeChat official account but can only see how many of the users' friends are following the same official account. Also, the users can see how many times the accounts' posts have been read and all the other users' comments. The WeChat subscription accounts' information is shown in Table 3.5.

Case 1 has one subscription account and one service account. The subscription account is more like an integration of the website and interaction platform. There were three sections on the account's main page: About Us, Support Us, and Funny Stuff. The About Us provided similar information as the website, including the organization's history and founder LCJ, the annual reports, the newsletter of environmental public interest litigations, and the members' stories. The Support Us provided information regarding the contact information of the litigations, the volunteer opportunities, monthly donation acceptance, and disclosure and hiring information. In addition, the subscribers could fill out the online forms of litigations, volunteer registration, and event sign-up.

The Funny Stuff section was more about environmental protection information such as reading lists, house renovating knowledge and skills, and kid games. Besides the three areas, the account sent out a daily post directly to the subscribers. The subscribers could access the post on their

**Table 3.5** WeChat subscription accounts

	<i>Case 1</i>	<i>Case 2</i>	<i>Case 3</i>
Number of total posts	632	57	172
Number of posts during the observation period	44	43	10
Average reading times of each post	1255	12	656

information page without logging in to the account's main page. The subscription account stated that it aimed to share the latest environmental protection information, activities, stories, and daily life tips with the subscribers. For example, memorizing the founder LCJ on October 28, 2019, got the most readings, 15,000 times. In contrast, the purpose of a service account was to provide a platform for donors and volunteers to keep track of the donations and volunteer opportunities and find interest groups and activities. At the service account, the subscriber was able to manage their contributions.

Like its Sina-Weibo account, the WeChat subscription account of Case 2 was also mainly about the newsletter of the environment protection media coverage. Within the two months, two journalist salons' information was shared on the account. According to Table 3.5, the reading times of Case 2's posts were very low, only 12 reads of each post. Also, the posts that got the most times were about the journalist salons (185 and 98 times for two posts, respectively). The part-time employee responsible for the WeChat management explained that all the newsletters were sent directly to the subscribers' emails. Therefore, the people who were interested in the information might have gotten the information through emails. Consequently, they did not need to access the newsletters through WeChat.

There were three sections on the main page of Case 3's WeChat account: Activities, About Us, and Engagement. The Activities included the village fairs, the conference held by Case 3, and workshops. The About Us introduced the organization's history, mission, and primary focus. In the Engagement section, information included volunteer recruitment, the participation of the village affair, and tour organizations. The account sent out ten posts during the observation period, primarily focusing on the village fairs, workshops, and the invited environmental protection experts. Although most of the WeChat posts of Case 3 did not have many readings, the communication director believed social media was necessary. She stated,

This study could not determine that social media has been very effective for us, but it is necessary. Sometimes when you want to introduce the organization to someone, or when someone wants to know more about our organization, social media would be a convenient platform. I can easily share our WeChat account with others, seeing the organization's introduction and previous posts.

It has to be noted that both the subscription accounts of Case 1 and Case 2 provided information regarding the organizations' registration numbers and registration type. According to the platform statement, the Tencent company and a third party inspect the organizations' information each year. Therefore, for Case 3, although its introduction stated that it was a professional public interest institute focusing on waste sorting in rural areas, the account was categorized as a personal account rather than an organizational account.

### *Construct Accountability Through Meaningful Stakeholder Engagement*

One of the main features of social media is its two-way communication and the function of user engagement. These organizations engage with their stakeholders through various social media activities. For example, the Chinese website of Case 2 disclosed the bookselling information and upcoming events. More importantly, it provided more engagement information. For instance, on the first page of the Chinese website, there was also a QR code to subscribe to the WeChat official account of Case 2. Besides the information about volunteer recruitment, there was a section called "Pollution Report." The website provided information regarding reporting pollution in local communities and promised to keep the reports' anonymity.

Furthermore, there was also a link to a public forum. The public forum had nine themes: Forum Announcement, Home for Environmental Journalists, Weekend Jokes by the founder WYC, Me and Case 2, River Watch Project, Public Discussion of Environment, Yellow River Decade Project, River Decade Project, and Environment English. Under the nine themes, users could post and join discussions. As of November 2019, it had 52,376 users and 1416 posts. The posts included suggestions for volunteer recruitment and the projects of Case 2, reports on local environmental issues, and personal stories and experiences related to Case 2.

The WeChat official accounts are open to the general public; anyone can subscribe to the accounts through scanning the QR code or searching ID. In contrast, group chats are a relatively compact system; people can only join the group chats through the invitation from the existing members in the group. Therefore, if the official accounts can be viewed as a type of mass communication, the group chat is more like organizational or small group communication, which features a close connection or shared

interest among the group members. A WeChat group chat can have a maximum of 500 members. Each member can send out texts, visual materials, documents, and links in the group. The researcher was able to join two group chats of Case 1 and two group chats of Case 2. The content of the four group chats was collected from October 1 to November 30, 2019. The general information of the four group chats is shown in Table 3.6.

The botanic group is composed mainly of the members of the botanic interest group of Case 1. The discussions in the group chat mostly were about the plants and the activities of the Botanic interest group. The members posted the photos of the plants they saw and asked for information such as their names and categories or tips for taking care of a specific plant. The group chat was like a knowledge exchange platform for people who are interested in plants and nature. The members were from various places all over China, such as Beijing, Hainan, Guangdong, and Shandong. One member sent outposts of advertisement twice but received no responses. Another member posted discussions related to political issues. Other members immediately criticized the member. The other members said that the group chat was for interest in plants but not for political discussions.

**Table 3.6** Group chats information

	<i>Case 1</i>		<i>Case 2</i>	
	<i>Botanic group</i>	<i>Media group</i>	<i>Big family</i>	<i>Yellow River decade project</i>
Members	470	179	438	32
Active members during observation	141	16	135	16
Main topics	Plants; birds; traveling; group activities;	Events and newsletters	Finance and donation disclosure, activities, environment protection knowledge	Protection of the Yellow River and the tamarisk trees; project documents sharing
Function	Member communication	Information dissemination	Member communication	Member communication

Compared to the botanic group chat, which had more communication, the media group was more like an information dissemination platform. The members of this group included the communication staff of Case 1 and journalists from various media platforms such as the Central Television Station, Xinhua News Agency, and several newspapers and journals. The communication director of Case 1 was the main person who was managing the group chat. She introduced that the purpose of this group was to make close connections with various media outlets and provide information resources for the media to report the activities and events of Case 1. Therefore, most of the information in this group was about the upcoming events of Case 1, such as conferences, workshops, and activities and a regular newsletter of the events summary of Case 1.

In the big family group chat of Case 2, discussions have had more diverse topics such as establishing national parks, donation soliciting, and the experienced pollutions in local communities. Besides the general discussion on broader topics, two types of information were shared explicitly within the group. The first was the information about financial and donation disclosure. The accountant of Case 2 shared the received money donations within the group. Also, the collected clothing and books were distributed to the local communities. The organization's volunteers took photos when distributing the donations and shared the photos in the group chat. The second type of content was also from local communities. The farmers from various places could sell their products through the group chat, such as apples and crops.

The group chat of the Yellow River Decade Project 2019 was for the project's participants, including organizers, volunteers, participants, and residents. Therefore, the group chat did not have many members, but the information was more targeted and focused on the project. During the field trip in summer 2019, the group chat was the primary communication platform for the 2019 trip members to share personal feelings and reflections. For example, the photos from the local communities when they received the donations were shared within the group. Also, because each participant was required to write at least one daily journal for the trip, the group chat served as a coordination platform for the organizers and participants to share and manage documents. In addition, other information related to environmental protection, especially the protection of Yellow River and tamarisk trees, was discussed within the group.

Besides Sina-Weibo and WeChat, Case 3 used Jianshu, an online blog website, to publish the working summary and reflect on the organization's

management. Her purpose was to use blogs as an internal communication channel between her and her colleagues and avoid misunderstandings. She said,

In 2018, we had a lot of internal conflicts among the staff. Our work was arduous, and we had different opinions about the organization's development. And sometimes, I just felt that it was hard to talk with them. So, I hoped the blogs could be a way for us to understand each other.

Overall, all the group chats have remained a relatively active discussion among members. As a result, members were able to share and receive the information they were interested in. Although most of the content was not directly related to the organizations, the group chats provided equal communication opportunities.

It has to be noted that the social media use by these three organizations has shown the characteristic of lower social recognition regarding the environmental civil society organizations themselves and their activities. Even for Case 1, the reading times of their posts were not very high. As the board member of Case 2 said, they did not have much public engagement on social media because they targeted environmental journalists and policy-makers. Although public participation is the central part of their mission, they believed that the achievement of public participation relied more on institutional recognition and policy change.

## DISCUSSIONS

The social media use by the three organizations has had both similarities and differences. First, the information sharing and engagement activities on social media have a similar frequency, although the three organizations have various organizational communication capacities. For example, Case 1 has the Department of Communication and Public Relations with one director and two full-time employees; Case 3 has a communication director, while Case 2 does not have any specific staff responsible for communication. Existing literature has discussed the relationship between organizational capacity and social media adoption. For example, scholars have argued that organizations with sufficient financial and human resources were more likely to allocate resources for social media management and development (Curtis et al., 2010; Kim et al., 2014; Nah & Saxton, 2013; Young, 2017). However, this research found that

organizations with limited resources, such as Case 2, could also use social media to provide organizations with more resources.

Second, WeChat official accounts were the most used social media platforms for all of them. The official accounts were like an information dissemination platform for the organizations to maintain an online presence. The websites and social media platforms have allowed organizations to store and share archived documents such as the main events, newsletters, and annual reports.

Third, generally speaking, the open social media platforms for the general public lacked engagement activities. For example, the Sina-Weibo posts of both Case 1 and Case 2 had very low numbers of retweets, comments, and likes, especially when comparing with the alleged large number of volunteers by these two organizations. Also, the reading times of the WeChat subscription accounts of these three organizations were not very high. In contrast, the WeChat group chats have been more engaged platforms for the members to communicate and share information.

In terms of social media as an accountability mechanism, the three organizations have shown their resource-based accountability based on the stakeholders who have held the critical resources for the organizations through their social media activities. The various mechanisms and discourses reflected resource-oriented accountability and the power relations of different stakeholder groups. For example, all the organizations disclosed their financial information. However, the disclosures were at different levels and with other purposes. According to the 2018 annual report, 64% of Case 1's revenue came from domestic foundations with a business background. Therefore, Case 1 has enacted accountability by a professionalized organizational structure and demonstrates effectiveness and efficiency through numbers, financial disclosure, and social enterprise incubations.

For Case 2, the media, journalists, volunteers, and participants have the essential resources and support. Therefore, their accountability mechanisms have been mainly focused on these two groups. First, regular journalist salons, newsletters, and publications have been the primary way to reinforce a close network with the media and journalists. The journalists were able to receive the training and information resources from Case 2 for their media reports. In turn, Case 2 has achieved its goal through the mobilization of media and journalists. Therefore, the primary accountability mechanism for Case 2 was to retain the mutuality with media and journalists. Second, the financial disclosure of Case 2 was targeted to the

individual donors to maintain the trust and accountability with the massive support. For individual donors, they do not care about the organization's financial status and auditing. Instead, they are more interested in seeing their donations have been delivered to the people and communities in need. The organization published photos of when the local community received donations and the number of libraries established books purchased using the individuals' donations. In the process, Case 2 played the role of an intermediary to connect the individual donors with the beneficiaries, and they knew how to satisfy the primary stakeholders' demands and expectations.

In contrast, Case 3's work focused on mobilizing support from the local government and the local community. Therefore, its information disclosure focused on the beneficiaries' experiences and contributions to communities rather than the organization itself. As Christensen and Ebrahim (2006) defined, accountability is "being answerable to stakeholders for the actions of the organization, whether by internal or external initiation" (p. 196). For Case 3, the stakeholders and resources they held were the foundations and the funding they received, the community's participation, and the organization's reputation. Therefore, although the beneficiaries did not provide financial support for the organization, the organization's discourses have focused on the individuals' responsibility for problem-solving. Through their positive description of the active participation and the influence on the community, the organization attempted to create shared values and joint responsibility of the whole community for environmental protection.

Overall, the above understanding and practices of accountability by the environmental civil society organizations presented a complex and multi-dimensional concept of accountability. Understanding the organizations' practices has to be based on understanding the nuanced power relations of various stakeholders and each organization's unique stakeholder groups. Even for financial disclosure, it cannot be understood as the accountability mechanism for funders. The organizations were disclosing the information based on various purposes.

## CONCLUSION

The rising green public sphere was composed of various actors such as citizens, environmental organizations, and multiple media platforms and information technology. Indeed, environmental civil society organizations

such as Case 1 and Case 2 have played a critical role in constructing a green public sphere. In addition, scholars have discussed the potential of information technology to be a public sphere for public participation in decision-making. For example, Fedorenko and Sun (2016) found that “the Internet has become a predominant public sphere where environmental activists play a pivotal role in producing and disseminating information to mobilize the public” (p. 2079). They also suggested that social media play an essential role “in creating sustainable public dialogue channels with the state and other opportunities to influence the policy in urgent areas” (p. 2099).

However, the review of the websites and social media content of the three environmental civil society organizations in China shows limited public participation and limited impact on policy-making. First, the content was primarily issue-based rather than challenging the root cause of the issues, which might explain the deteriorating environment after several decades’ efforts of environmental activists and organizations. Second, information technology has been a tool or instrument for organizations to demonstrate their accountability and transparency, lacking the engagement and direct input from the public and the community. Therefore, the use of social media reflected the organizations’ understanding of their roles and functions in society rather than shaping the relationship among civil society organizations, the state, and the public.

## REFERENCES

- Anheier, H. K., Hass, R., & Beller, A. (2013). Accountability and transparency in the German nonprofit sector: A paradox? *International Review of Public Administration; Seoul*, 18(3), 69–84.
- Appleby, M. (2016). Nonprofit organizations and the utilization of social media: Maximizing and measuring return of investment. *SPNHA Review*, 12(1), 5–26.
- Barman, E., & MacIndoe, H. (2012). Institutional pressures and organizational capacity: The case of outcome measurement. *Sociological Forum*, 27(1), 70–93. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1573-7861.2011.01302.x>
- Blouin, M., & Lee, R. (2013). Is your financial information online? *Nonprofit World*, 31(2), 22–23.
- Bothwell, R. O. (2001). Trends in self-regulation and transparency of nonprofits in the U.S. *The International Journal of Not-for-Profit Law*, 2(3), 604–622.
- Büsgen, M. M. (2006). NGOs and the search for Chinese civil society environmental nongovernmental organizations in the Nujiang campaign. *ISS Working Paper Series/General Series*, 422, 61. <https://repub.eur.nl/pub/19180>

- Christensen, R. A., & Ebrahim, A. (2006). How does accountability affect mission? The case of a nonprofit serving immigrants and refugees. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 17(2), 195–209. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.143>
- Curtis, L., Edwards, C., Fraser, K. L., Gudelsky, S., Holmquist, J., Thornton, K., & Sweetser, K. D. (2010). Adoption of social media for public relations by nonprofit organizations. *Public Relations Review*, 36(1), 90–92. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pubrev.2009.10.003>
- Dong, T., Liang, C., & He, X. (2017). Social media and Internet public events. *Telematics and Informatics*, 34(3), 726–739. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tele.2016.05.024>
- Dumont, G. E. (2013). Transparency or accountability? The purpose of online technologies for nonprofits. *International Review of Public Administration*, 18(3), 7–30.
- Ebrahim, A. (2005). Accountability myopia: Losing sight of organizational learning. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 34(1), 56–87. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764004269430>
- Ebrahim, A. (2016). The many faces of nonprofit accountability. In D. A. Renz (Ed.). *The Jossey-Bass handbook of nonprofit leadership and management* (pp. 102–123). Jossey-Bass.
- Edwards, M., & Hulme, D. (Eds.). (1996). *Beyond the magic bullet: NGO performance and accountability in the post-cold war world*. Kumarian Press.
- Fedorenko, I., & Sun, Y. (2016). Microblogging-based civic participation on environment in China: A case study of the PM 2.5 campaign. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 27(5), 2077–2105. <http://dx.doi.org/leo.lib.unomaha.edu/10.1007/s11266-015-9591-1>
- Frumkin, P. (2002). *On being nonprofit: A conceptual and policy primer*. Harvard University Press.
- Frumkin, P., & Kim, M. T. (2001). Strategic positioning and the financing of nonprofit organizations: Is efficiency rewarded in the contributions marketplace? *Public Administration Review*, 61(3), 266–275. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0033-3352.00029>
- Glover, T. D. (2004). Narrative inquiry and the study of grassroots associations. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 15(1), 47–69. <https://doi.org/10.1023/B:VOLU.0000023633.40621.b4>
- Guo, C., & Saxton, G. (2014). Tweeting social change: How social media are changing nonprofit advocacy. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 43(1), 57–79.
- Kearns, K. P. (1996). *Managing for accountability: Preserving the public trust in public and nonprofit organizations*. Jossey-Bass.
- Kim, D., Chun, H., Kwak, Y., & Nam, Y. (2014). The employment of dialogic principles in website, Facebook, and Twitter platforms of environmental non-

- profit organizations. *Social Science Computer Review*, 32(5), 590–605. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439314525752>
- Kou, Y., Kow, Y. M., Gui, X., & Cheng, W. (2017). One social movement, two social media sites: A comparative study of public discourses. *Computer Supported Cooperative Work (CSCW)*, 26(4–6), 807–836. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10606-017-9284-y>
- Kruse, L. M., Norris, D. R., & Flinchum, J. R. (2018). Social media as a public sphere? Politics on social media. *The Sociological Quarterly*, 59(1), 62–84. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00380253.2017.1383143>
- Lee, R. L., & Joseph, R. C. (2012). Survival of the fittest: Online accountability in complex organizational populations. *SAIS 2012 Proceedings*, 30, 7.
- Leggett, A. (2017). Online civic engagement and the anti-domestic violence movement in China: Shifting norms and influencing law. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 28(5), 2251–2277. <http://dx.doi.org.leo.lib.unomaha.edu/10.1007/s11266-016-9680-9>
- Li, J., & Li, X. (2017). Media as a core political resource: The young feminist movements in China. *Chinese Journal of Communication*, 10(1), 54–71. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17544750.2016.1274265>
- Loader, B. D., & Mercea, D. (2011). Networking democracy? Social media innovations and participatory politics. *Information, Communication & Society*, 14(6), 757–769. <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369118X.2011.592648>
- Lovejoy, K., & Saxton, G. D. (2012). Information, community, and action: How nonprofit organizations use social media. *Journal of Computer-Mediated Communication*, 17(3), 337–353. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1083-6101.2012.01576.x>
- Lune, H., & Berg, B. L. (2017). *Qualitative research methods for the social sciences* (9th ed.). Pearson.
- MacIndoe, H., & Barman, E. (2013). How organizational stakeholders shape performance measurement in nonprofits: Exploring a multidimensional measure. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 42(4), 716–738. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764012444351>
- Manetti, G., Bellucci, M., & Bagnoli, L. (2017). Stakeholder engagement and public information through social media: A study of Canadian and American public transportation agencies. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 47(8), 991–1009. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0275074016649260>
- Maxwell, S. P., & Carboni, J. L. (2016). Social media management: Exploring Facebook engagement among high-asset foundations. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership*, 27(2), 251–260. <https://doi.org/10.1002/nml.21232>
- Nah, S., & Saxton, G. D. (2013). Modeling the adoption and use of social media by nonprofit organizations. *New Media & Society*, 15(2), 294–313. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444812452411>

- Nygreen, K. (2017). Negotiating tensions: Grassroots organizing, school reform, and the paradox of neoliberal democracy. *Anthropology & Education Quarterly*, 48(1), 42–60. <https://doi.org/10.1111/aeq.12182>
- Rainey, S., Wakunuma, K., & Stahl, B. (2017). Civil society organizations in research: A literature-based typology. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 28(5), 1988–2010. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-016-9816-y>
- Saxton, G. D., & Guo, C. (2011). Accountability online: Understanding the web-based accountability practices of nonprofit organizations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 40(2), 270–295. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764009341086>
- Saxton, G. D., Neely, D. G., & Guo, C. (2014). Web disclosure and the market for charitable contributions. *Journal of Accounting and Public Policy*, 33(2), 127–144. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jaccpubpol.2013.12.003>
- Schmitz, H. P., Raggo, P., & Bruno-van Vijfeijken, T. (2012). Accountability of transnational NGOs: Aspirations vs. practice. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 41(6), 1175–1194. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764011431165>
- Shirky, C. (2011). The political power of social media: Technology, the public sphere, and political change. *Foreign Affairs*, 90(1), 28–41.
- Slatten, L. A. D., Guidry Hollier, B. N., Stevens, D. P., Austin, W., & Carson, P. P. (2016). Web-based accountability in the nonprofit sector: A closer look at arts, culture, and humanities organizations. *Journal of Arts Management, Law & Society*, 46(5), 213–230. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10632921.2016.1211048>
- Sloan, M. F. (2009). The effects of nonprofit accountability ratings on donor behavior. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 38(2), 220–236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764008316470>
- Smith, D. H. (2000). *Grassroots associations*. SAGE.
- Snow, D. A., & Trom, D. (2002). The case study and the study of social movements. In B. Klandermans & S. Staggenborg (Eds.), *Methods of social movement research* (pp. 146–172). University of Minnesota Press.
- Sobieraj, S. (2006). The implications of transitions in the voluntary sector for civic engagement: A case study of association mobilization around the 2000 presidential campaign. *Sociological Inquiry*, 76(1), 52–80. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-682X.2006.00144.x>
- Stake, R. E. (2006). *Multiple case study analysis*. Guilford Publications.
- Svensson, P. G., Mahoney, T. Q., & Hambrick, M. E. (2015). Twitter as a communication tool for nonprofits: A study of sport-for-development organizations. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 44(6), 1086–1106. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0899764014553639>
- Tai, Z. (2006). *The Internet in China: Cyberspace and civil society*. Routledge.

- Tremblay-Boire, J., & Prakash, A. (2015). Accountability.org: Online disclosures by U.S. nonprofits. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 26(2), 693–719. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11266-014-9452-3>
- Tu, F. (2016). WeChat and civil society in China. *Communication and the Public*, 1(3), 343–350.
- Wagner, A. (2012). “Third sector” and/or “civil society”: A critical discourse about scholarship relating to intermediate organizations. *Voluntary Sector Review*, 3(3), 299–328. <https://doi.org/10.1332/204080512X658036>
- Waters, R. D., & Lo, K. D. (2012). Exploring the impact of culture in the social media sphere: A content analysis of nonprofit organizations' use of Facebook. *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 41(3), 297–319. <https://doi.org/10.1080/17475759.2012.728772>
- Wu, F., & Yang, S. (2016). Web 2.0 and political engagement in China. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 27(5), 2055–2076. <http://dx.doi.org.leo.lib.unomaha.edu/10.1007/s11266-015-9627-6>
- Yang, G. (2003). The co-evolution of the internet and civil society in China. *Asian Survey*, 43(3), 405–422. <https://doi.org/10.1525/as.2003.43.3.405>
- Yang, G., & Calhoun, C. (2007). Media, civil society, and the rise of a green public sphere in China. *China Information*, 21(2), 211–236. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0920203X07079644>
- Yin, R. K. (2013). *Case study research: Design and methods* (5th ed.). SAGE.
- Young, J. A. (2017). Facebook, Twitter, and Blogs: The adoption and utilization of social media in nonprofit human service organizations. *Human Service Organizations: Management, Leadership & Governance*, 41(1), 44–57. <https://doi.org/10.1080/23303131.2016.1192574>
- Zhou, H., & Pan, Q. (2016). Information, community, and action on Sina-Weibo: How Chinese philanthropic NGOs use social media. *VOLUNTAS: International Journal of Voluntary and Nonprofit Organizations*, 27(5), 2433–2457. <http://dx.doi.org.leo.lib.unomaha.edu/10.1007/s11266-016-9685-4>