

Wall Slogans: the Communication of China's Family Planning Policy in Rural Areas

GUOYAN WANG

*Department of Science and Technology Communication and Policy, School of Humanities and Social Sciences; University of Science and Technology of China
gywang@ustc.edu.cn*

Abstract: The one-child era, which lasted thirty-five years (1980–2015), was a unique period in Chinese (and even world) history. With the introduction of the universal two-child policy in 2016, China put an end to the age of the one-child policy. Since the policy change has come into effect, China's rural areas, which contain approximately 800 million people, have experienced a very particular historical phenomenon. Due to the changes in China's family planning policy, slogans painted on walls have evolved in terms of the messages they carry to grassroots rural areas. Once conveying China's family planning policy propaganda with, at times, a shocking and controversial tone, the wall slogans in rural areas have evolved with the wider changes to the country's family planning policy. However, this dying, unique way of communication between the government and rural areas is being consigned to the memory of the times of rural policy advocacy in China.

Introduction

In China's rural areas, a landscape of art can be seen everywhere. That is, all kinds of propaganda slogans are painted on the outer walls of people's houses (Figure 1). This art constitutes an outdoor disseminating form, painted with lime or oil colour materials. On enclosing walls at the end of villages, in front of the houses, near the rivers or on both sides of the road, highly-visible wall slogans are frequent. Their disseminating scope covers not only Chinese rural areas, but rural-urban fringe zones as well (Li, 2009). In Chinese cities, this phenomenon has basically disappeared. However, in Chinese rural areas, where television and even the Internet have become all pervading, wall slogans still occupy a very particular and important position. These slogans serve as an important bridge between the central government and grassroots peasants. The artwork communicates and transmits information, reflecting a concentrated snapshot of China's political environment and even a mirror of the social times in which these people live. The changes in the family planning slogans serve as witness to the changing times in China.

A slogan is a phrase of brief and striking words, often displayed in public, with specific persuasive purposes (Gong, 2004). The word 'slogan' in English corresponds to two



Figure 1. (Colour online) Rural wall slogan: 'Family planning, binding on all'.

similar words in Chinese, '标语' (slogan) and '口号' (catchword). When a slogan is chanted in public, it is called a 'catchword'; when it is written, it is called a 'slogan'; when written on streamers or flags, it becomes a banner; when written on papers and hung up, it even becomes a poster.

The wide distribution of Chinese slogans, coupled with their enormous quantity, complicated contents, rich forms, and close relationship to social life are extremely rare in the life history of world languages (Han, 2008). Hu Shi (1928) once exclaimed that 'China has become a world of slogans.' Regarding the Chinese slogan culture, Sinologist Perry Link (2013) finely analysed its features of rich rhythm, conceptual metaphor and political language. However, Chinese natives are submerged in the slogan culture and therefore they are not always aware of the significance of the slogans they are surrounded by.

Slogans provide a typical organisational transmission case (Chen, 2005) and are closely linked with political advocacy. Robert North Roberts and Scott John Hammond (2004) collected and reorganised slogans and political platforms used during general elections in Western countries. Conserva (2006) collected and studied state slogans from around the entire world. Conserva concluded that, notwithstanding their differences, slogans generally had the goal-oriented function of guiding group members to understand, accept and achieve established tasks (Han, 2008). Regarding the origin of slogans, Zhu Ziqing (1947) theorises that the term '标语' did not previously exist in China; instead, it was borrowed from another culture. Despite Ziqing's theory on the history of Chinese slogans, there is some evidence that suggests that in Chinese traditional culture slogans did exist, such as in mottos and famous remarks. Some scholars conducted textual research and claimed that the word '标语' (meaning slogan) was introduced to China by Japan, after the New Culture Movement. In Japanese, the word '標語' (also meaning slogan) first originated from the paraphrases of 'motto' and 'slogan' in English. Thus, clearly, the word '标语' ultimately came from the West (Chen, 2005). Michael Aislabie

Denham (1851) investigated martial arts slogans in northern England and then wrote *Slogans of the North of England*, an example of such use.

However, Ji Taoran (2009) conducted textual research and found that China had been using slogans since ancient times. Taoran also collected and interpreted typical slogans from each period since the Xia dynasty. According to historical records, Qin Shihuang, the First Emperor of Qin, engraved the achievements of the Qin dynasty on stones of praise. Successive monarchs followed his example to build up their own images. Thus, some scholars also saw these tablet inscriptions as the prototype of Chinese political slogans (Han, 2008). In Chinese history, the revolution behind the dynastic succession always put forward specific uprising catchwords and spread them widely in order to gain the public's support (Han, 1964). These went from, '王侯将相, 宁有种乎?' ('The nobility was born to be noble?'), raised by Chen Sheng and Wu Guang during the rising up in arms in the late Qin Dynasty, to '星星之火可以燎原' ('A single spark can start a prairie fire'), in the revolutionary war period. These catchwords are very simple, direct, and effective ways used to measure social and political mobility among the masses. For example, Mao Zedong said that, 'Propaganda work is the principal major work of the Red Army' (Literature Research Center of the CPC Central Committee, 1996). Rural wall slogans were used to evoke people's patriotism and call for their unity in the fight against the Japanese. In the Great Cultural Revolution that occurred after the founding of China, passionate political slogans could be seen on rural walls throughout the country. Some of these slogans included, '人民公社万岁!' ('Long live people's commune!'), '千万不要忘记阶级斗争' ('Don't forget the class struggle') and so on. An upsurge of political movement was set off in China and slogans became popular from within the city, to the countryside, and across the nation (Mang, 2016). In the initial stage of China's Reform and Opening-up, wall slogans provided an indispensable tool and medium for evoking people's passions and interpreting national policies. Thus, slogans have distinctive characteristics related to the times, including the social, economic, and political conditions, from which changes of history and society can be seen. Up until modern times, the prevalence of slogan culture in China has hundreds of years of history. Tao Yongcan (2012), Liu Lei (2011), Ma Shaohua (2012) and other scholars collected these slogans as political, cultural and historical profiles, and as historical memories of social times.

Since the implementation of the family planning policy in China more than thirty years ago, 400 million births in total have been recorded (National Bureau of Statistics of the PRC, 2008). After the 2014 launch of the two-child fertility policy for couples, where either the husband or the wife is from a single-child family, the actual birth rate was far below the estimation of the National Health and Family Planning Commission of the PRC. Thus, in 2016, China introduced the universal two-child fertility policy, thereby putting an end to China's one-child policy that lasted for more than thirty years. These years constituted a special period in Chinese (and even world) history. During this period, the strong disseminating strength, the strict enforcement of and the confronted resistance to the government's family planning policy in Chinese rural areas were all beyond our imagination. In rural areas, family planning slogans were commonly seen as a popular and simple interpretation of family planning rules. In the 1980s, unconcerned, hard, obligatory and even intimidating slogans provoked people's

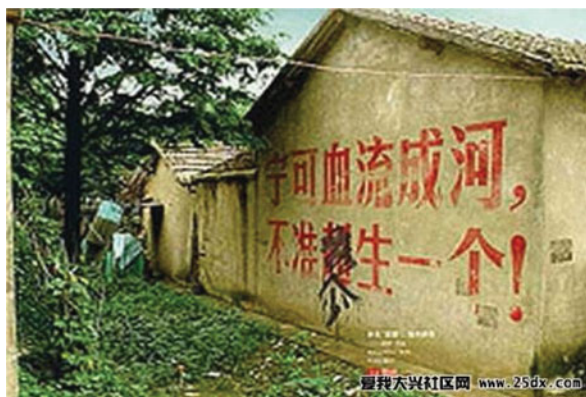


Figure 2. (Colour online) One-child slogan: 'Better blood flowing like streams than children born outside the state plan'.



Figure 3. One-child slogan: 'One person bears one more child, the whole village goes to ligate'.

antipathy and resistance (Tang, 2014). Some wall family planning slogans included: '宁可血流成河，不能超生一个' ('Better blood flowing like streams than children born outside the state plan') (Figure 2), '一人超生，全村节扎' ('One person bears one more child, the whole village goes to ligate') (Figure 3), '宁添十座坟，不添一个人' ('It's better to add 10 tombs than one child'), and '引下来，流下来，就是不能生下来' ('Inducing labour and abortion are preferred to bearing children'). These and other slogans could be seen everywhere and were obvious misinterpretations of the family planning policy. Far from conveying messages of warning and education, these brutal and bloody slogans provoked people's antipathy and resistance (Yang, 2008). Mo Yan, winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature, also described the brutal facet of rural family planning work that occurred in the 1980s, in his novel *Frog* (2009). In rural areas, in a high-pressure atmosphere, the relationship between officials and villagers could become very strained, due to the seizing of people who had given birth more times than the permitted number. In any social cultural environment, politeness and respect are the basic principles of interpersonal

communication and dissemination (Brown and Levinson, 1987). However, the vulgar cruelty transmitted by rural wall slogans made the receivers of those messages feel threatened, psychologically and even physically. The relationship between grassroots governments and common people changed from the original 'fish and water' relationship to one of 'cat and mouse'. Verbal violence in family planning slogans actually reflected the violent behavioural tendency of rural grassroot government movements when executing this policy (Jiang, 2009).

In China, the traditional fertility concepts of bringing up sons for one's old age and continuing the ancestral line has a foundation of thousands of years (Yu, 2012). Changing this traditional cultural concept is a long process, thus the execution of family planning policies that support traditional views have been confronted with great resistance. From rural to urban locations, the childcare policies of the Chinese government are transmitted and carried out step-by-step from the central government to the countryside. Rural residents live together in a unit of natural villages, and villagers' committees or residents' committees are established in each village. These are the most grassroot organisations that exist in Chinese rural areas. The ministerial staff of these organisations, most of whom are local residents, are the administrative staff ranking at the bottom of the Chinese government.

Wall slogans, specifically in these areas, are an important form of propaganda and communication for the villagers' committee because it reflects the information and attitudes of the people and transmits it to the masses; a type of practice used in executing policies to reflect new social norms. Although communication between grassroots organisations and the rest of society is full of resistance and even hostility, this shows the unilateral communication that takes place between the advantaged and disadvantaged members of society, which reflects a top to bottom structure (Chang, 2010). Apathy towards the slogan content demonstrates the rulers' lack of cultural cultivation, the deficiency of slogan creation, and the supervision mechanisms that dominate society (Bai, You and Kong, 2007).

Through the investigation and analysis of wall slogans in rural areas of North China, specifically in the rural areas of Gansu, Shanxi, Shandong, Peking, and Tianjin, it was found that wall slogans contained content related to the socioeconomic life in rural areas such as party building, laws and policies, family planning, traffic safety, forest fire prevention, environmental protection, medical health, civilised norms, as well as scientific and technical information (Song and Guan, 2010). Although family planning slogans only took up about 5 per cent of the rural slogans in investigated regions, they are a highly concerned social issue as expressed by rural residents, ranked only second to party-building slogans (Wang, 2016). Wang's investigation also showed that family planning was considered to be more of a female than male concern (Wang, 2016).

Communication history and social environment of family planning slogans

With the release of the Chinese family planning policy, the painting of family planning slogans on rural walls in China started at the end of the 1970s. Over the years, these

slogans experienced a changing process, from expressing brutality to expressing warmth. Behind those changes was the evolution of humanity, which has influenced the progress of Chinese society (Jia, 2008). Rural wall slogans have three functions: namely political propaganda, business promotion and public welfare dissemination (Li, 2009). After entering the twenty-first century, family planning wall slogans changed from presenting initially strong political propaganda to a type of warm, public welfare dissemination, or even a type of entertaining culture.

Three historical stages of slogans in the one-child age

The communication of China's family planning policy was focused on rural areas. This was because, in the 1980s, the population in rural areas had reached as high as 800 million. That figure accounted for 80 per cent of the population of the entire country. After more than thirty years of the one-child policy, the rural population had declined to approximately 600 million. With the exception of those rural inhabitants who migrated to cities, the decline in rural population was partly due to how wall slogans played a mediating and promotional role in political propaganda and popularisation. In 1798, Malthus, an English clergyman, put forward in *An Essay on the Principle of Population* that moral constraints (including late marriage and abstinence) could be used to control population growth. In 1957, Ma Yinchu, an economist, published his *New Population Theory*, which was criticised during the anti-rightist struggle of China. Yinchu finally drew people's attention to the population issue. Combined with the increasingly prominent contradiction between population and available resources, the Chinese government came to realise the practical significance of birth control. In 1962, the State Council issued *Instructions on Earnestly Promoting Family Planning*. This was an attempt to disseminate birth control as a means to control population growth. In the 1970s, the country advocated and encouraged Chinese citizens by proclaiming, '一对夫妇只生一个孩子好' ('It's better for one couple to have one child'). The common slogans then were statements like '见证怀孕, 持证生育' ('The Certificate of Permitted Birth is the premise of pregnancy and procreation'), and other similar sayings. However, the country did not, at that time, impose compulsory birth control.

In 1982, family planning was listed as a basic state policy. A strict population control period thus began. Generally speaking, since the 1980s, the changes to family planning slogans can be divided into three stages.

The first was the stage of strictly controlling population growth. This stage lasted from the early 1980s to the mid-1990s. In this period, the policy changed from merely advocating giving birth to one child, to strictly imposing the rule of giving birth to only one child. The propaganda during this period was mainly based on administrative methods that were relatively brutal and tough. A number of violently-worded slogans appeared during this stage, such as '宁让你家破人亡, 不让你超生一胎' ('It's better to make a family disappear than to make a second new birth appear'), '该流不流, 扒房牵牛' ('If you don't have an abortion, you'll lose your properties'), etc. Every family was aware of the skit *Guerrillas Who Give More Births than the Birth Quota Allows*, which was presented on China Central Television's New Year's Gala of 1990. The skit portrayed

rural people abandoning their farmland and leaving their hometown to give birth to a boy. These people had to live a vagabond life to avoid the family planning laws of that time. In terms of describing the harm caused by having more babies, the concept as disseminated by this skit was in accordance with government policy. Zhang Kefa, a retiree from the family planning office in Taolin Town, Huangchuan County of Henan Province, recalled that, during the one-child era, the quality of life for rural public servants was relatively low. After receiving instructions from a superior, the public servants usually carried out their duties quickly, without fully understanding why. Superiors simply gave orders, rather than educating and persuading people. There was also no unified formula at that time for creating family planning slogans. Sometimes, people simply thought up several words, almost at random. Without further examination of the slogan, these people used lime-water or red paint to write them on the wall. The characters, colours and sizes were frequently in a mess and sometimes written with incorrect characters.

The second stage was stabilising a low fertility level. This stage lasted from the mid-1990s to the early twenty-first century. During this period, the slogans such as ‘计划生育家庭每月补助 50 元’ (‘The family practising family planning can receive a subsidy of 50 yuan each month’) appeared. These slogans communicated to the masses that family planning was a kind of compensation, not an award.

The third stage was promoting the comprehensive development of the population. In 2002, China issued and implemented the Population and Family Planning Law. This law strictly prohibited the abuse of power in carrying out the government’s family planning policy and any infringement of civil rights through illegal administrative means. The object of family planning became an object of service, and excellent service became the orientation of family planning work. Gradually, the posting of poor family planning slogans began to decline, while new slogans began to become more civilised. Examples of these new slogans include: ‘少生优生, 幸福一生’ (‘Give a good birth and good care; live a happy and healthy life’), ‘珍爱你的妻子, 请从避孕开始’ (‘Loving your wife starts with contraception’), and ‘朋友, 你计划生育了吗?’ (‘My friend, have you begun your family planning?’).

A family planning slogan is a form of local expression of central policy. The difficulty in implementing an effective family planning policy in China lies in the country’s rural areas. In order to promote equality of the sexes and emphasise that it makes no difference whether a woman gives birth to a boy or a girl, slogans like ‘不生女孩就没媳妇’ (‘No girls, no wife’) (Figure 4) emerged. In 2002, the activity theme for the third Masculine Health Day was ‘关注男性健康’ (‘Pay attention to male health’). Contraception was not just the woman’s job. Husbands should also take responsibility for contraception and even accept the idea of having a contraceptive operation. However, it was later proved that this operation would impact on sexual function and was completely banned. The slogan in Figure 5 is ‘计划生育, 丈夫有责’ (‘The husband is responsible for family planning’).

Cleaning up inappropriate family planning slogans

In August, 2007, the National Population and Family Planning Commission realised that some of the population and family planning slogans in some regions did not evoke



Figure 4. (Colour online) 'No girls, no wife'.



Figure 5. (Colour online) 'The husband is responsible for family planning'.

humanistic concerns and people-oriented thought. Such slogans seriously sullied the image of population control efforts in the hearts and minds of the masses (Tang, 2014). These family planning slogans called for more prohibition and less advocacy. They placed more emphasis on civil obligations and less on civil rights, and they showed more apathy and less warmth. The quality of these slogans was usually poor. Some villages even made slogans according to arbitrary 'local rules'. The slogans were created by rustic family planning staff. The rights or wrongs of the slogans completely depended on the quality and level of the slogan makers. In some cases, this led to people misunderstanding family planning policy and rules. Meanwhile, these slogans lacked any form of unified management, uniform quality standards and normalised operation procedures. For these reasons, the National Population and Family Planning Commission proposed that the effects brought about by the bad and prevailing ruling culture must be radically eliminated and that rudeness must be strictly avoided. On the basis of fully respecting

the fundamental rights of citizens and their perspective, the government decided that they should create propaganda slogans that were simple in language, easy to understand, and persuasive and popular in the way the slogans were compiled. Since 2007, a cleaning activity of family planning slogans has been conducted in China. The aim is to clean and update inappropriate slogans. Thus far, 190 slogans nationwide have been recommended for this programme (Bai, You and Kong, 2007). Some of the affected slogans ‘地球妈妈太累了, 再也擎不起太多的孩子’ (‘Our mother earth is too tired to support more kids’), ‘让自己更轻松, 使社会更和谐’ (‘Make us more relaxed, make society more harmonious’) and others. Previous barbarous and authoritative family planning slogans have lost their place. These slogans are being replaced by warm and loving words. Every year since 2007, the National Population and Family Planning Commission has been recommending new standard slogans for reference purposes, right across the country. The slogans that were made arbitrarily, in free style and without management, are gradually disappearing.

In 2011, the government also started the ‘Washing Face Project’. The aim of the project is to optimise the outdoor family planning propaganda and to foster a good and healthy image of family planning efforts in the new age. With humanitarian-oriented thoughts being deeply rooted in the hearts of the people, rural wall slogans are gradually becoming warmer and more tender. Slogans like ‘宝宝素质高, 生活少烦恼’ (‘The higher the quality of the baby, the less the troubles of life’), ‘优生优育, 幸福生活新概念’ (‘Give a good birth and good care, open up a new concept for happy life’), and so on are now being seen in most places. From showing the state’s will to expressing the wishes of the masses, the changes in wall slogans have reflected the distinct themes of the times and have shown the changes in Chinese rural policies and work ideas over these past thirty years.

The entertaining phenomenon of slogans in the two-child age

In 2016, China began to implement a universal two-child policy. Since then, on the walls in remote rural areas, some astonishing slogans that disappeared for years have occasionally resurfaced. The wall slogan ‘一人拒绝多生, 全村人工授精’ (‘One person refuses to bear one more child, the whole village goes for artificial insemination’) (Figure 6) was from Yan’an of Shaanxi Province. This slogan sharply contrasts the slogan ‘一双人超生, 全村结扎’ (‘One person bears one more child, the whole village goes to ligate’), which appeared in one-child times. Just as giving birth to the second child is different to previous eras, the slogans from varying times are also completely various. However, in reality, such ridiculous slogans have become extremely rare. In a modern network environment, silly family planning slogans have constituted more of a kind of entertaining and humorous cultural element in today’s Chinese society. Netizens now try to restore the political tone of the slogans from the 1980s through various and surprising ways, but obviously, without any pressure or vindictiveness. These people sometimes find amusement and will tease about the country’s history, but they still advocate the universal two-child policy. Some netizens have changed the old slogans from the one-child years into new slogans of the two-child era using Photoshop. This is being done now to encourage people actively to answer the call of the government to promote population



Figure 6. (Colour online) Two-child slogan: 'One person refuses to bear one more child, the whole village goes for artificial insemination'. Source: Visual China.



Figure 7. (Colour online) Family planning poster: 'Give a good birth and good care, live a happy and healthy life'.

growth. Some of the new slogans include: '二胎奖，一胎罚，丁克不育都该抓' ('The family giving birth to the second child should be rewarded, while the one supporting the one-child policy should be punished, and the dink [dual income no kids] family should be arrested') (Figure 8). Also, '怀上来，生出来，养起来，就是不能打下来' ('Bearing and fostering are preferred to inducing labour') (Figure 9), a humorous slogan, is almost the mirror image of the previous slogan which proclaimed '引下来，堕下来，流下来，就是不能生下来' ('Inducing labour and abortion are preferred to bearing [children]'). '经济搞上去，人口跟上来' ('The economy goes up and the population follows up') echoes, but also contradicts a slogan from the one-child times: '经济搞上去，人口降下来' ('The economy goes up and the population goes down').

Discussion and conclusion

The communication of family planning policies in grassroots rural areas is, in essence, a type of organisational transmission phenomenon. Each natural village in rural areas is a grassroots political management unit. The transmission of family planning information



Figure 8. (Colour online) Internet slogan: 'The family giving birth to the second child should be rewarded, while the one supporting one-child policy should be punished, and the dink family should be arrested'.



Figure 9. (Colour online) Internet slogan: 'Bearing and fostering are preferred to inducing labor'.

from village government to villagers is a one-sided form of communication. No disagreement is expected, so most slogans are presented in an authoritative tone. The reason wall slogans became an important disseminating carrier of Chinese rural family planning policy is that they were closely linked with the characteristics of the receivers and communication media environments in Chinese rural areas.

First, the qualities of communication media of rural receivers and transmitters are relatively low. A recent investigation into the contrast between rural and urban communication media shows that, in terms of the methods used by people to access the universal two-child policy information, city dwellers mainly use the Internet (86.9 per cent), television (71.7 per cent), slogans (45.5 per cent), newspapers (37.4 per cent) and broadcasts (28.8 per cent). Rural dwellers mainly resort to using slogans (73.2 per cent), television (68.4 per cent), the Internet (53.2 per cent), newspapers (12.6 per cent) and broadcasts (12.6 per cent) (Hao, 2017). Nowadays, in Chinese rural areas, where television and the Internet have become popular, we still see that slogans hold the first

position in terms of communication media. As the transmitters of grassroots working information, grassroots township governments are incapable of controlling powerful media (such as television and other broadcasts), as these media are frequently used only by the central, provincial and municipal governments. Limited by the educational level and media quality of managers and working objects, rural governments cannot keep pace with the times in terms of website construction. Some rural governments do not even have an official website. In addition, rural dwellers have not yet developed the habits of skimming through various media, such as the village government website and email, or even reading newspaper columns and the noticeboards located near village government centres, which receive very little care and attention. In this case, the walls on the roadsides that are passed by people at all times of the day solve the problem of 'the last one kilometer' in terms of policy information communication. A passing glance becomes the best media carrier.

Second, walls provide the most influential form of outdoor media in rural areas. Rural wall advertising has the same function as lightbox billboards in cities. Consisting of paint, lime and rent only (and sometimes rent can be saved as well), the cost of posting wall slogans is very low. The rural dwellers in the 1980s and 1990s were very willing to see their walls painted and decorated for free. The average educational level of the rural population is relatively low. Their means of information transmission and communicating social propaganda are under-developed. Compared with oral communication or radio speakers, wall slogans are relatively fixed and can be kept in place for a long time, thus maintaining a subtle, ongoing communication with villagers. Compared with posters and handbills, wall slogans are nearly free and almost permanent. By virtue of the high access rate and exposure frequency, wall advertising has solved the objective problem of the decentralisation of information receivers. Based on their simple form, wide transmission range and low cost of creation, wall advertising is no doubt the most influential outdoor medium in rural areas.

Third, Chinese language is friendly when it comes to slogan creation. This is an important reason for the prevalence of China's slogan culture. Because of the language features of Chinese characters, as well as family planning slogans on the walls, various slogans are commonly seen in mainstream mass media, such as newspapers, television, and even in official files. The basic features of slogans are that they are refined in language, simple in meaning, arresting in external form and easy to read. Thus, it is easy to write the Chinese language into slogans, which are as rhythmical as ancient Chinese poetry. Just as with Chinese antithetical couplets, slogans also require the same word number of the two halves and a similar pronunciation of the last words. For example, in the slogan '计划生育好, 政府帮养老' ('Family planning is very good. Government helps raising the old'), both sentences in the slogan have five Chinese characters, and the last words, 'good' and 'old', have similar pronunciations. Slogans like this are easy to read, remember and transmit. Meanwhile, Chinese characters are block-shaped, easy to pack (like containers), and easy to identify, whether they are used in horizontal or vertical writing. As such, the Chinese language is the type of language carrier that is very suitable for slogans.

For the above three reasons, as a medium, walls enjoy unique advantages in rural areas. Wall slogans, a kind of cultural transmission phenomenon, have flourished and

are still flourishing in China's rural areas. In modern times, with the acceleration of urbanisation, the number of slogans in cities has decreased greatly. Only propaganda banners or colourful posters are kept in urban areas. In broad rural areas, however, traditional wall slogans painted with lime and paint materials still exist, but a decrease in the number of slogans is an inevitable trend. On the one hand, rural dwellers don't want the walls of their newly-built houses painted with slogans, as slogans are non-aesthetic. On the other hand, with the continuous development of the rural economy, the slogans used in recent years are no longer bald propaganda slogans. Instead, with the improvements in wall quality and the increase in propaganda investment, brightly-illustrated family planning cartoons have been added to the landscape. Figure 7 depicts a family planning cartoon painted on a smooth concrete wall in a rural area. The slogan states, '少生优生, 幸福一生' ('Give a good birth and good care. Live a happy and healthy life'). In some developed areas, slogan walls are being gradually replaced by light billboards (Yang, 2009). Finally, with the popularisation of information communication means in rural areas, the Internet and mobile terminals are gradually becoming the main platforms for government management and communication.

With the introduction of the universal two-child policy in 2016, China put an end to the one-child age that had lasted for more than thirty years. In the future, wall family planning slogans will eventually die out with further regulation of family planning policies and changes in the social environment of rural areas. However, those family planning slogans once painted on rural walls will become an unforgettable mark of a special historical period in China.

Acknowledgements

The research is supported by the National Social Science Foundation of China (#14CXW011) and Korea Foundation for Advanced Studies (International Scholar Exchange Fellowship 2017–18).

References

- Bai, J., You, C. and Kong, Q. 2007. 'Cold, Tough Slogans, Should Not Be on the Wall', *People's Daily*, 9th August, p. 10.
- Brown, P. and Levinson, S. C. 1987. *Politeness* (Cambridge).
- Chang, P. 2010. 'Slogans Should Not Be Only "Official Words"', *Southern Weekly*, 15th April, E30.
- Chen, X. 2005. 'Communication analysis of slogans in Jiangxi Soviet area', *Journalism & Communication Monographs*, 4, 35–9.
- Chen, Y., Wang, D. and Sun, L. 2014. 'Research on scientific and technological communication functions of rural science and technology slogans based on surveys in North China', *Studies in Dialectics of Nature*, 30:7, 70–4.
- Conserva, H. 2006. *National Slogans from Around the World* (Author House).
- Denham, M. A. and Longstaffe, W. H. D. 1851. *Slogans of the North of England* (Oxford).
- Gong, W. 2004. 'The Evolution of Slogans', *China News Weekly*, 26, 50–1.
- Han, C. 2008. 'Study on the function of slogans', *Ideological & Theoretical Education*, 15, 56–61.
- Han, G. 1964. 'The antifeudal essence of peasant revolt slogans in Chinese history', *Teaching History*, 7, 2–8.

- Hao, Z. 2017. 'Comparative Study of Urban and Rural Communication on China's "Two Children" Policy' (Master's thesis, Anhui University).
- Hu, S. 1928. 'Famous religion', *New Moon*, 1:5.
- Ji, T. 2009. *Slogans in China* (Beijing).
- Jia, M. 2008. 'Slogan: the Evolution of Humanity Behind the Changing Times', *Xinhua Daily*, 27th November, p. 7.
- Jiang, Y. 2009. 'Rural administrative slogans and cultural diagnosis of grass-roots administrative organizations', *Administrative Tribune*, 16:4, 31–4.
- Li, X. 2009. 'Long tail effect of rural wall advertising', *Journalism Lover*, 16, 82–3.
- Link, P. 2013. *An Anatomy of Chinese: Rhythm, Metaphor, Politics* (Cambridge, MA and London), 367.
- Liu, L. 2011. *The History of Slogans* (Guiyang).
- Ma, S. 2012. *Centennial Slogan* (Wuhan).
- Malthus, T. R. 1798. *Essay on the Principles of Population* (Darlington).
- Mang, D. 2016. 'Slogans in the Cultural Revolution', *General Review of the Communist Party of China*, 1, 30–5.
- Mo, Y. 2009. *Frog* (Shanghai).
- Roberts, R. N. and Hammond, S. J. 2004. *Encyclopedia of Presidential Campaigns, Slogans, Issues and Platforms* (Westport, CT).
- Song, X. and Guan, Y. 2010. 'A linguistic perspective on slogans: a survey of slogans in the construction of contemporary new rural areas', *Big Stage*, 3, 159–60.
- Su, L. 2014. 'Research on the Social Function of Slogans, from a Perspective of the Changes since the Founding of China' (Master's thesis, Qingdao University of Science & Technology).
- Tang, Yu. 2014. 'Family Planning Slogans: 30 Years Refraction Population Policy Changes', *The Democracy and Law Times*, 28th April (Beijing), p. 8.
- Tao, Y. 2012. *Old Slogans: History on Chinese Walls* (Beijing).
- The Literature Research Department of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China. 1996. *The Propaganda Work of the Red Army, the First Volume of the Mao Zedong Anthology* (Beijing).
- Wang, Z. 2016. 'Investigation and Study of Government Outdoor Propaganda Slogans in Jiuquan Rural Area' (Master's thesis, Lanzhou University).
- Yang, Y. 2009. 'The historical evolution of rural wall advertising in China', *Advertising Panorama*, 3, 65–7.
- Yang, Z. 2008. 'Viewing the progress of law from the family planning slogans in China', *Citizen Review*, 5, 50–1.
- Yu, C. 2012. 'Changing trends and differences between generations of farmers' concepts of raising sons for old age', *Population Journal*, 6, 40–50.
- Yu, P. 2008. 'Investigation and study on publicity and education of population and family planning in the Jilin province', *Population Journal*, 6, 53–7.
- Zhu, Z. 1947. The slogans, first published in *Knowledge and Life*, 1st May 1947, republished in *Publication Reference*, 2004, 35, 37.