

Conflicts in Narratives of Circular Economics and Sustainable Development

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Abstract: Environmental protecting is an often discussed topic in recent years, researches on sustainable and circular economics emerge in large numbers. The relationship of the methods of examining sustainable development and the narratives on it has seldomly been studied. Media's emphasis on low carbon life and lowering green house gases, as a main form of presentation of narratives, media plays a significant role, to what degree could the narratives of circular economics suggest anthropocentric and conflicts among economical hypothesis and indexes of media is the aim of this essay.

Keywords: Sustainable development, Environmental economics.

1. Introduction

Narratives play an essential role, as an important aspect of human lives, narrative has impact on its objects.

Narrative itself and its pluralism are reflected in a variety of means of expressions and processes. As Ryan proposed in 2004, narrative is a mental representation of causally connected states and events which captures a segment in the history of a world and of its members (Ryan, 2004, p.47). How narrative influence circular and sustainable economics and the conflicts within will be discussed.

Robert Shiller mentioned in "Narrative Economics" that economic narratives refer to disseminated stories that have the potential to change people's economic decisions. Classical economics has rational man hypothesis, when a person makes a decision he must pursue his profits. However, behaviors sometimes are not rational and affected by complicated elements, even in industries related to carbon emission.

As Shiller says, "Analogies and metaphors consistently activate a certain area of the human brain." agents' behaviors are not purely influenced by thinking ways but embedded with narratives like analogy and metaphor, includes social pressure.

Since people cannot accurately judge its dissemination power by their own fascination with narrative, and the difficulties of quantify, research remains complex and needs more indexes and theories. For instance, *Kyoto Protocol* in 1997 and *Paris Climate Agreement* in 2015 are two famous worldwide agreements about climate change, in the education of sustainability or green economics, these two agreements are always used as examples, which is a way of education narratives, although it is normal to use examples, these has been metaphors in people's mind in disciplines.

Media's descriptions of the environmental crisis and the significance of low-carbon life operate as a narrative factors, which influences people's points of view of circular economics and sustainable development. Greenhouse gas is even used as a political lie and means by some people, because low carbon is a global developing perspective to some degree. German sociologist Ulrich Beck thought that environmental risks is not only subjective construction, but also objective existence. For the subjective aspects of environment, like the risks, which may be conducted by narratives of media, to assess the consequences of collective behaviors. Reflecting on the concept of development itself,

this essay will discuss the inner conflicts.

1.1. The society, the environment, and the narrative of ethics

Treating the environment and the resources into an integer, and the society as a whole system, philosophically speaking, how to deal with the relationship of sustainable development the related narratives remains exploring.

Representative theorists of conflict theory like Dahrendorf and Koser's, coin that conflicts can increase rather than reduce social regulation, and thus put forward the law of safety valve to regulate the conflicts.

Sociologists, in their attempts to unravel social movements, see the spread of narratives as a central factor in social change.

Symbols, or rituals, are used by journalists and marketers to remember essential elements of a narrative. The human mind forms a narrative embedded in social interactions, striving to achieve an ongoing understanding of events.

Philosophically speaking, conflicts do exist, first it should be stated from the concept of development itself. The concept of development stems from Europe in early times, borrowed from Biology discipline. Development is a broad concept, the term social change is used to explain it in Sociology. In a simple way, development refers to a process that change from low level to high level, the explanation to itself has lots of methods.

What could not be ignored is the constructive way of narratives directly affect audience's subjectivity, like their cognitive way. When scholars try to explore the association between environments and economy, only panel data has a direct leading effectiveness and consequence. Combined with narratives, no matter functionalism or constructionism, the former one focuses on the role of narrative, while the latter concentrates on how narrative is produced.

For example, media propaganda about what should communities do to improve the environment, it is a collective frame, although it has been proved that positive environmental beliefs has positive effects by various researches, on methodological practice it can be different.

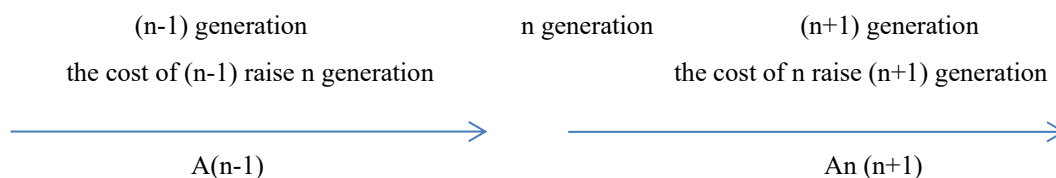
1.2. Narratives about environment development and public goods

Private goods can be exchanged in the market and will have a market price and a market value. However public goods

cannot be exchanged in the market. Public goods have the property that one person's consumption of the goods does not affect other people's consumption. environment is like public goods,

Studies on the history of restoration include William Jordan and George Rubik's "Making Nature Whole" and Marcus Hall's "The Restoration of the Earth", which sheds light on conditions in Italy and the United States. Emmanuel Crick takes a different approach in Deforestation and Reforestation in Namibia, recognizing the complexity of environmental history and the fact that the accepted views of ecological degradation are not borne out by empirical change.

One of the famous criticisms is that environmental historians tend to write "declensionist" narratives; that is, they describe the progressive deterioration of beneficial environmental conditions as a result of human activity. Another critique of environmental history sometimes raised by other historians is presentism, which argues that the awareness of environmental issues is a contemporary phenomenon. The term "environmentalism" was not widely used until the end of 1960s, and environmental history has only become a recognized subdiscipline in the 1970s. Cliometrics is another new emerged discipline that tries to make environmental problems quantified, but there are still



Assuming that there are three generations A, B, and C, the function of accepting and transferring wealth will be:

$$T+(n)=A_{n-1}(n)+B_{n-1}(n)+C_{n-1}(n)$$

$$T-(n)=A_n(n+1)+B_n(n+1)+C_n(n-1)$$

In the complex system of society, individual interests and social interests are often at odds, and the dominant market economy is based on narrow self-interest. For example, a factory located in the upper reaches of a river does not take into account the external diseconomy it causes to the users of the lower reaches of the river. This is stated as a "market failure", even though the publicity is to protect the overall interests, many people, especially factory owners and farmers, find it difficult to abandon their own interests, even if such interests are meager.

On the research of sustainability, the conflicts are prominent in dealing with the rights of generations of using resources, this process could also be seen as a symbolic interaction system. Symbolic interaction theory believes that the history of social development refers to the evolution of communication methods between people and the corresponding enhancement of various communication abilities.

If development is seen as a process from low level to high level, the core problem is the view of anthropocentric and modernization, taking human as the centric point in the whole socioeconomic system, and environment as a resource served for human being.

many dilemmas to achieve numeralization.

All in all, how to portray or narrate is a presenting way of subjective construction, and the audiences will be affected by what they believe. Seeing from the whole environmental theories development, science of environment and related social sciences have not been well developed until the 70s of 20th century, it is a new subject, which also barriers the narrative study.

1.3. Narratives on natural resources about Intergeneration Relationships

Brundtland Report by UN gives sustainability a concept as: The current generation meets its own needs without damaging the development and resource needs of the next generation. However, in economical perspective, next generation is not seen as a rational person and has no opportunity to speak to stand for their rights of resources utilization.

When it comes to intergenerational fairness, this concept was first proposed by T.R. Page on the basis of the two concepts of social choice and distributional fairness. It mainly involves the justice of welfare and resource distribution between contemporary people and future generations.

2. Methodology

2.1. Case Study

Along with the rapid development of internet technology companies, several leading internet companies has held many activities.

This case study focuses on the narrative forms of low carbon life of Tencent company, the founder of Alipay in China, and its contributions in sustainability. Considering how major companies make their narratives on sustainable development will also contributes to the research of discourse of sustainability by enterprises.

Through "green" travel, reducing the use of paper and plastics and other low carbon behaviors to accumulate green energy, and grow trees in users' mobile phone. Every time a user raises a tree, Ant Forest in Alipay platform and public welfare partners will plant a tree in the desert as an incentive. 122 million trees has already been planted at the end of 2019. Tencent company received the United Nations "Inspiration and Action" award and the "Lighthouse Award for Climate Change".

To do a discourse analysis, the assumption is the narratives of sustainability by enterprises will affect people's behaviors. After interviewing 15 people from different ages and professions, it is concluded that the narratives of sustainability do have an impact.

The interview questions include:

1. When you see green travel ads in Ant Forest in Alipay platform, will you think of change your behaviors?
2. How do you think of the narrative way of Ant Forest, do you think it is leading you to sustainable economics and low

carbon life?

3. If you have, how many trees have you planted on Alipay? Will you give this behavior emotional sensation, like kindness?

The results of the interview indicates the actual influences of narratives of a major internet company, and 10 of 15 of people's positive emotional embeddedness.

In addition, the concept of ESG has been prevalent in recent years, digital economics also plays an important role in this process. Narratives in recruitments and the expression of ethic needs is also needs to be pay attention to.

2.2. Focus group

PISA the international education organization has conducted a survey about student's attitudes about sustainable development, their related behaviors, includes self efficacy. From the results it can be seen that students worldwide has postive attitudes toward sustainable development and will control their own related behaviors for low carbon life, even in education field, the power of narratives is intensive and has potential influences, language is a major carrier.

How to deal with the generation relationships of natural resources is the question discussed in this focus group. 5 people from master to doctor's degree in Mongolian universities, brainstormed for this topic and discussed. The impact of media narratives and the silence effect of next generation

Although indexes like GDP, GNP, HDI could show the level of development of one area to some extent, the very specific index to measure the sustainability and human living quality is still lack, which is another summary from the focus group discussion.

3. Results and Discussion

What needs to be considered are not only the meaning of sustainable development, but also whether it can be quantified in a new way, how to measure specific indicators, how to carry out education for sustainable development. Narrative

has never disappeared, it has its own meanings.

The economy is a complex system. The combination of any field and the economy should take into account some basic propositions in economics, such as rational persons, fairness and efficiency, and intergenerational relations.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, a specific narrative way will have a certain impact on related field, effectiveness and justice are two major topics in social science research, in researches, how to consider these two elements into the narratives of sustainable development also need to pay attention to.

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