



RESEARCH ON POLITICAL COMMUNICATION OF CHINESE MEDIA IN THE MEDIA CONVERGENCE ERA

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Abstract

In the media convergence era, the new media environment and political communication complement each other. With the characterization of multi-channel and multi-terminal, the pattern of political communication has been changed. Effective communication channels and technologies of political communication is provided by big data. Audiences could obtain political information timely and effectively. It is a practical problem for China to explore new ways of political communication and enhance political communication ability. This study mainly analyzes the developing status and characteristics of political communication of Chinese media in the media convergence era, discusses the problems and countermeasures in the process of media convergence and forecasts the future trends of political communication of Chinese media.



Keywords: Media Convergence, Political Communication, Chinese Media, Traditional Media, New Media.

Introduction

The logic of media behavior has been changed by the development of technology and the popularization of Internet change, which reflects the integration of technology and media (Kalamar, 2016). In 1999, Cui Baoguo mentioned the convergence and fission of technology-driven media and introduced the concept of media convergence into China (Cui, 1999), which led to great changes in China's media ecosystem. In 2013, the third Plenary Session of the 18th CPC Central Committee mentioned that promoting the integrated development of traditional media and new media for the first time. The year 2014 is known as the first year of media convergence in China. In 2019, General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed that it is an urgent task for China to make use of the achievements of the information revolution, promote the in-depth development of media convergence, expand and strengthen mainstream public opinion, and consolidate the common ideological basis for the united efforts of the whole Party and the whole people (Xi, 2019). In 2020, the central government officially incorporated media convergence in China's 14th Five-Year Plan and 2035 vision.

Media convergence is the realistic demand of the current world development and the cornerstone of the media intelligent development, which brings new technologies and injects new vitality into the dissemination of mainstream ideologies such as press, publication and theoretical propaganda. Therefore, it is important to reshape the political communication mode of Chinese media in the media convergence era, which is the potential context for solving the problems in the field of journalism and communication. In order to further promote the development of media convergence and improve the effect of political communication, the function of guiding public opinion and the consciousness of serving the masses should be strengthened. All-media communication pattern should be constructed and accurate political communication would be realized.

I. Basic Concepts of Political Communication in the Media Convergence Era

With the rapid development of technology, the era of media convergence is coming. The study of political communication in the media convergence era is one of the key research topics in the academic circle. Chinese scholar Shao Peiren pointed out that communication is the controller of politics, while politics is the main nerve of communication (Shao, 1991). With the innovation of communication means and discourse as well as the enrichment of political communication contents, deep



convergence of traditional media and new media could better publicize national lines, principles and policies, in order to improve the effect of political communication. With the new characteristic of current Internet development, media convergence reshapes the media ecosystem. Political communication develops in depth, which ushers in a golden age of development and realizes "Connection of everything".

i. Media Convergence

Multiple intelligent media share and coexist in the media convergence era. Media convergence is a self-revolution based on the technological development and the reform of communication concept. Media convergence era is an all-media era that seamlessly combines reality and virtuality. The growing maturity of digital technology is one of the key factors for the development of media convergence. In 1983, Poole first put forward the concept of media convergence and regarded media convergence as the trend of multi-functional integration of various media. He pointed out that media device once limited to one technology could be transmitted to any physically dispersed network nowadays (Steve, 2007). Therefore, media convergence is a process which media driven by network technologies converge towards digital and electronic forms. Media convergence not only has the functions of political information dissemination, communication and public opinion guidance like traditional media, but also the communication and feedback of political information, the reconstruction of political participation mode and the construction of meaning (Chen & Du, 2016).

ii. Political Communication

Political communication is the purposeful communication about politics (McNair, 2005). Political communication refers to the operating process of the organic system such as diffusion, acceptance, identification and internalization of political information, which is the process of political information flow within and between the political community (Jing & Su, 2014). The main form of political communication is determined by politics, media and audience as well as their relations. Political communication is an interactive process of information transmission among politicians, media and audiences. Political information is delivered by the government through media to target audience, whose political attitude and behaviors are influenced.

As one of the main representatives of political communication research, Jay G. Blumler called political communication as the third generation of political communication based on new media. In his opinion, the first generation of political communication dominated the two decades after the second World War, which was



mainly under control of political parties. The dominant media of the second generation of political communication is the radio network covering the United States after the 1960s. The third generation of political communication takes new media as important means with the three-dimensional media development (Blumler & Kavanagh, 1999). Chinese scholar Li Liangrong believes that the Internet is the medium of the fourth communication revolution, which is essentially extensive socialization of political communication resources and the nationwide popularization of communication power (Li & Zhang, 2012). Andrew Cabads believes that the Internet has four positive effects on government communication including the realization of populism for promoting citizens' direct political expression; the remodeling of civil society and the transformation of political culture; the promotion of citizens' access to political information and communication with political decision makers; the building of e-government and realization of the extension and innovation of government service (Zhu, 2014).

Under the leadership of the Communist Party of China, Chinese media has the thought of political communication with Chinese characteristics. General Secretary Xi Jinping pays high attention to the political communication and public opinion and puts forward a series of new ideas and viewpoints, which reflecting the concept of people-centered political communication of Chinese mainstream media. Traditional policy transmission is unable to meet people's increasing demand for political information acquisition. The pattern of Political communication in China has been constantly expanding. China's new path of political communication has been gradually constructed.

II. Analysis of Current Situation of Political Communication of Chinese Media in Media Convergence Era

The innovative measures of Chinese media convergence could be summarized as "active transformation of traditional media + active catering of Internet enterprises" (Duan, 2021). Technological development redefines China's traditional media platforms and basically realizes the overall transformation of the traditional media industry and the comprehensive transformation from media to people. With the comprehensive and stereoscopic convergence of content, technology and platform, Chinese media follow the rules of transmission and reshape the spread of media convergence concept to better and deeply promote the convergence of traditional media and new media, transform the political communication of traditional media to new media, in order to realize the transformation from political propaganda to political communication.

i. Content Integration: Break the Limitation of Media Content Communication



New technology serves content, and content production is the foundation of media (Qiao, 2021). While the content of political communication is consistent with the values of audience, good political communication effect could be achieved. Therefore, it is the key point for political communication to achieve content production in the media convergence era. Under the development situation of diversified content producers, UGC (user-produced content), OGC (organization produced content) and PGC (professional produced content) have become the most active productive forces on the supply side of social communication. What's more, MGC (machine-produced content) would become a new force in the field of content production (Yu, 2021). New convergence technology breaks the traditional limitations of media political communication, drives the morphological remodeling media and sets up the mechanism of intelligent all media content production, whose media content could be faster and higher quality shown.

Adhere to the principle of "technology is support, content is king", Chinese media continuously innovates the form of media products. The integration of text, picture, micro video, audio, H5, sand painting, cartoon, interactive trigger and other media forms, and the deep integration of collection, return, edition and distribution of content production process, which launch intelligent products and inject new vitality into diversified content production, and finally achieve the effect of all-media content communication.

ii. Technology Integration: Focus on Immersive Interactive Experience

Artificial intelligence, virtual reality, the Internet of Things and other technologies have been more widely applied in the media field. All-media news are comprehensive improved from "speed" to "quality". Media promotes the connection of the Internet and the Internet of Things, expands the all-media news matrix, innovates content production processes, strengthens language expression and construct capabilities and focuses on immersive interactive experience, truly realizing political communication into the mind and heart. China actively embraces new technology of media convergence and establishes all-media political communication centers. Audiences could obtain political content through integrating media products, in order to ensure the effective dissemination of political content. For example, the platform of "Learning Power" is an innovation of political communication, breaking the restrictions of time, space and region, meeting the needs of different audiences and enhancing the influence of political communication.

iii. Platform Integration: Building New Ecological Environment

In the media convergence era, mobile terminal connectivity builds new ecological environment of media convergence. Platforms are interconnected and the development of



mobile has shown an irreversible trend. Changing the reading habits of mobile users and eliminating the boundaries between traditional media are the key directions of the future development of media convergence. Mobile terminal devices break the restrictions and constraints of the traditional audience access to political information, presenting the characteristics of diversity, diversity and scenarioization. With the convergence technology, the all-media matrix consisted of newspaper, network and micro is created to realize multimedia linkage and multi-platform integration. The traditional newspaper is gradually generating new media products. Social media represented by Wechat and short video apps represented by Douyin are developing rapidly. TV, PC, mobile phone, VR/AR and other devices would be interconnected to support mobile political news production in the future, so as to fully meet the personalized needs of audience to obtain political information (Duan, 2021).

The new mission of Chinese media in the political civilization communication promotes the image change of the communication of political civilization and the discourse construction in the dissemination of political civilization, accelerates the integration of the media field of political civilization communication and drives the ideal and reality in the communication of political civilization (Jing & Yu, 2017).

III. New Features of Political Communication of Chinese Media in the Media Convergence Era

The characteristics of Chinese media, such as holography, full effect and full staff, are combined with political communication to enhance political guidance and the cultural heritage of political discourse, create diversified and three-dimensional images of party leaders, and enhance the political participation of the audience, so as to innovatively improve the effect of political communication.

i. Strengthening Political Guidance

The way of constructing own identity and locating position in the global political order is related to the development of Chinese political civilization. Political propaganda education is an important content of the comprehensive governing party. Through the innovation of release decision and political propaganda, Chinese media improves the effectiveness of the party's propaganda education work, propagandizes the party's idea and course policies to people, strengthens people's trust in the party and government. Media should consolidate Marxist guiding status, hold high the great banner of socialism with Chinese characteristics, follow the path of development of socialism with Chinese characteristics, spread political and mainstream values, and vigorously promote core socialist values. With China's multi-subject social power structure, it is the primary



ability for national governance to conduct dialogue and communication with other pluralistic political governance subjects, strengthen political guidance and realize the communicative government in the process of modernization of China's national governance system and capacity.

ii. Enhancing the Cultural Foundation of Political Discourse

From the perspective of political civilization communication, the convergence of traditional media and new media presented by the convergence development of Chinese media plays a certain role in promoting the construction of political civilization from the aspects of internal communication and the connection of the history and the present. In recent years, metaphors and allusions with strong characteristic of China's political and cultural are often reported in the press, revealing Chinese cultural confidence, strengthening Chinese cultural background and telling good Chinese stories to people. Chinese political communication tells Chinese stories to the international society by understanding and reading, in order to show China's national image and national policy. For example, a short video of the successful launch of Chang 'e-5 was released by the official Tik Tok account of CCTV news on November 24, 2020, which likened Chang 'e-5 to a guest who was going to the moon to dig the earth and bringing back gifts. The way of reporting technique is popular among political communication audiences, which stimulates the audience's national self-confidence and pride, enhances the audience's sense of identity and belongings to Chinese culture. Another example is General Secretary Xi Jinping, who likened the system of tightening some departments to rubber bands and scarecrows, pays attention to the importance of institutional implementation in a vivid way. In addition, General Secretary Xi Jinping often quotes classics and scriptures such as "Life is diligent, not deficient", " Soil for mountain, water into the sea " and so on, expressing ardent expectations to Chinese students, which aroused high response.

iii. Shaping the Diversified and Multidimensional Image of State Leaders

The image of party leaders shown in traditional media and social media has become a common communication way for national leaders to conduct political affairs and make government political decisions with relatively distinct political color. It is shown that media attaches great importance to value orientation, position and emotion of leaders' political communication from the state leaders presentation of the media image communication dimensions such as report content, report characteristics and news frame. It is one of the key issues of political communication for Chinese media to make good interaction between visual media and political reports, improve the image of party leaders and the national image of China. For example, the images of General Secretary Xi



Jinping announcing the opening ceremony, Chinese soldiers entering the stadium and Chinese people cheering were spliced and edited to show the image of Chinese state leaders in the video of the opening ceremony of the 7th Military Games released by CCTV News on October 18, 2019. What's more, General Secretary Xi Jinping's warm image to people, reflecting the image of Chinese state leaders coming from the masses and to the masses was released by CCTV News on November 4, 2019.

In addition, the cartoon of state leaders marks a new starting point of political communication. For example, National leaders shown in cartoon productions such as *Where Did President Xi's Time Go*, the State Council Executive Meeting on February 26, Mass Line Anime Series and so on is fresh and populist, which is spread widely in the network. While spreading China's political system and policies, the cartoon of state leaders makes the distance state leaders and people closer.

iv. Improving the Audience's Political Participation

Political communication is abundant in the media convergence era. Audiences' political participation has been continuously improved. The role of audiences has been changed from passive acceptance to active participation. The pattern of political communication has been changed. Media convergence broadens the space for audiences to participate in politics, enables multiple social subjects to participate in political communication, develops political communication topics from political issues to public issues, and strengthens the discourse power of political communication. In the new pattern of political communication, the mainstream media communication is no longer the center, but the status of the audience in political communication is increasing.

As one of the important ways to achieve extensive democracy in modern society, online political participation has far more advantages than traditional political participation. The disseminators and receivers of political information could communicate in time or in real time to expand the space for political participation. With the help of mass media and Internet media to disseminate political information, young audiences actively take part in political communication, whose group identity is constantly improved.

IV. Problems Existing in the Political Communication of Chinese Media in the Media Convergence Era

The political communication of Chinese media in the media convergence era should solve problems such as the confusion of public opinion field, the obvious port diversion problem and the problem of "hollowing out of talents".



i. The Confusion of Public Opinion Field

The embodied and mobile communication has become the reality in the media convergence era. The characteristic of pan-entertainment consumption is obvious, presenting multi-dimensional communication channels. Fragmented media has become the main battlefield of public opinion. Everyone has the speaking right. The network space presents decentralized distributed architecture at present (Tang & Hao, 2018). The period of social public opinion is compressed. Political communication channels like Weibo, WeChat are the channels of political communication, leading to the confusion, communication and spread of false political information. These efforts make public opinion and the content hard to control and bring new challenges to political communication. For example, in-depth study is required to understand some policy information, however, the audience's attention is focused on only a few words rather than a large length of text, which has a negative impact on political communication. In addition, the process of false information highly relies on the background manual audit, which is difficult to completely solve the spread of false information. In addition, the dissemination of political content highly relies on super platforms and commercial oligarchs, leading to the crisis of weakening potential energy of Chinese media's political communication (Qiang & Liu, 2019).

ii. The Obvious Traffic Diversion problem

There are obvious problems such as port shunting and uneven progress of media convergence. Traditional media is successively entering in Weibo, WeChat, Tik Tok and other social media platforms to open new media accounts. Some convergence of traditional media and new media is failed without thoughts and modes of convergence operation. Traditional media and new media ports sing different tunes, resulting in port diversion, poor integration effect, product asynchronism, inconsistent content phenomenon, and even zombie platform. It is difficult to break the convergence circle for the general public.

iii. The Problem of "Talent Hollowing out"

Technology promotes the development of media convergence. While liberating the mechanical labor of political journalists, technology brings unprecedented challenges to the production of political news. Traditional mass and broadcast models could not satisfy all readers (Chen & Song, 2019). Facing the complexed, high speed, massive and fragmented false political news in the media convergence era, it is difficult for traditional political media talents to instantly screen information from the perspective of journalism



professionalism. Therefore, higher requirements are put forward to news producers. How to immediately check the quality and quantity of political information has become one of the practical problems. The problem of "hollowing out of talents" becomes increasingly intense, which would be difficult for further developing media convergence.

V. Strategies for Promoting the Development of Chinese Media Political Communication in the Media Convergence Era

Under the background of media convergence for further development, the problem to be solved for political communication of Chinese media could make full use of big data to monitor political public opinion, build full media matrix and make political communication professional talent team with full media thinking, in order to promote the development of political communication in the media convergence era.

i. Algorithm Utilization: Make Full Use of Big Data to Monitor Political Public Opinion

Algorithm is not only a core technology of new infrastructure, but also a new form of rights. Algorithm penetrates into all levels of the political field, promotes the reform of political communication and brings new opportunities and risks. Convergence media should make full use of algorithm technology, improve the monitoring mechanism of big data political public opinion, deeply define the scope of political communication and construct the framework of political communication.

First, intelligent recommendation technology with the integration and complement of multiple algorithms should be developed to improve the accuracy of political information. Algorithm rules such as editor selection rules and quality manuscript recommendation rules in line with the mainstream of society should be formulated. Second, various types of text data should be judged from semantic analysis, text emotion analysis and other aspects with advanced means such as big data to timely monitor the flow of political information. Third, the cause of the political public opinion events should be deeply analyzed with deep learning technology. The processing mechanism of political public opinion should be established to improve the ability of early warning, public opinion supervision and public opinion reaction. The construction of network integrated management system should be strengthened in order to make real-time feedback, make quick response to the political public opinion and guide the correct political opinion. Fourth, the human-machine cooperation database of political public opinion should be built to accurately grasp the trend of political public opinion.



ii. Same-frequency Resonance: Create All-media Matrix

The integrated support strategy should be implemented, and the internal operation mechanism of media should be optimized, in order to establish an all-media system featuring extensive consultation, joint contribution, sharing and unity, and build an all-media matrix with resonant frequency. Political news product service and information service products are complemented each other, in order to realize the full convergence of upstream and downstream, traditional media and new media, content and operation (Yu & Chen, 2021). The content on various media such as Weibo and WeChat should be connected by innovating the acquisition, production and propagation path of news content, strengthening the correlation of transmission mode and handling all ports connection. Adhere to the principle of transition and integration, media convergence would realize from plus to convergence.

iii. Talent Cultivation: Build a Professional Talent Team of Political Communication with All-media Thoughts

General Secretary Xi Jinping stressed that build a political ideological team with politically competent, high skill as well as realistic and innovative capability. First, the introduction and management mechanism of political communication talents with all-media thinking should be established. The talent incentive system and mechanism should be improved, the introduction of political communication talents should be strengthened to stimulate the endogenous vitality. Second, the cultivation of compound political communication talents with technical and innovative thoughts should be strengthened to build a professional and versatile all-media political communication talent team. Third, high-tech professionals in computer communication technology, mobile new media technology, new platform construction, maintenance and operation should be directionally trained to provide a solid reserve of political communication talents for the development of media convergence. Fourth, Strengthen the cooperation between the media and universities, encourage political communication scholars to actively learn new technologies and train all-round political communication scholars for the transformation and upgrading of media.

VI. The Development Trend of Chinese Media Political Communication in the Media Convergence Era

Facing the situation of in-depth development of media convergence, Chinese media should find the way of media convergence with Chinese characteristics. Political communication would constantly bring forth new ideas in the wave of in-depth



development of media convergence in the future. Chinese media convergence would innovate the political communication by innovating the way of media political communication, constructing the media discourse system with Chinese characteristics and communicating the political communication content in the story-telling way.

i. Innovating Political Communication Methods of Chinese Media

Chinese media should break the time and space barriers of conventional political communication, build a new platform for political communication, innovate the way of political communication, enrich the forms of content presentation, construct the three-dimensional and diversified political communication system, and maximize the use of political resources.

Political communication in the media convergence era takes ultra-high definition (UHD) video news as the mainstream trend, which provides new development opportunities for UHD video news. The combination of various new technologies improves the upstream and downstream speed of video, bringing revolutionary changes to all aspects of UHD video content from collection, production, pushing and streaming, which was called the new video era. UHD video would be combined with traditional graphic to construct new high-definition live TV screen scenarios such as the new media formation of multiple element fusion with "technology + video + news". The Enrichment of the content present form and the enhancement of audience's political participation and subjective initiation is to provide more high-quality political communication service for audience.

3R, 3D, VR, AR and interactive reality technologies would become increasingly mature, bringing immersive news experience to audiences. Immersive news is a form of political news production allowing audience to get the first-person experience of events or situations described in political news (Huang & Zhu, 2020). Audience would be able to restore the real-time scene of political news. With the 360-degree panorama, the perspective could realize the real-time sharing and switching of political news scene, so as to enhance the interaction and interest of political news. In the future, political news would rise from planar space to three-dimensional space, virtual space and multi-dimensional space, realizing the combination of reality and virtual space, highlighting the value of scene and making the audience completely immersed in three-dimensional and multi-dimensional space. The Web 3.0 era make immersive political news possible. The era of "news for everyone" is coming.

ii. Construct a Media Discourse System with Chinese Characteristics



The problem of innovating the language style of Chinese mainstream media for political communication, enhancing the feedback and interaction mechanism of political communication, and constructing the media discourse system with Chinese characteristics need to be urgently solved. General Secretary Xi Jinping pointed out that China should strengthen the construction of discourse system, create new concepts, new categories and new expressions integrating China and the rest of the world, and enhance China's voice in the international arena. Chinese media should follow the mass line to the greatest extent, stay close to life, serve the general public and make political information transparent and political language understandable. Audiences should timely feedback political information with media, express self-cognition and opinions and build a systematic media discourse system with Chinese characteristics. It has gradually reached a consensus to build a philosophical discourse system with Chinese characteristics. What kind of discourse to choose and how to choose discourse for the transmission of political civilization need to be deeply studied.

iii. Story-based Political Communication Content

The communication of political content in a story-telling way is the developing direction of Chinese media political communication. The ways of interpreting news and individuating narrative scenes make traditional serious political topics into daily news report, which make political communication more influential and appeal and improve the audience's understanding and acceptance of political news.

VII. Conclusion

In the media convergence era, China's traditional media and new media should adhere to the correct values, seize the development opportunities for media convergence, embrace new technologies to complement each other. With deep and comprehensive media convergence, Chinese media should explore new paths of the convergence development of political communication with complementary advantages, resource integration and sharing accommodation. China should develop digital media and unswervingly promote the development of the media convergence in the future. With new technology, Chinese media should transform from the convergence media to the wisdom media, complete deep development and overall upgrade of media convergence and speed up new pattern of political communication in the media convergence era.



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