

Globalization of Information—Take TiKTok as an Example

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Received: August 19, 2022

Accepted: September 14, 2022

Online Published: September 20, 2022

doi:10.20849/ajsss.v7i9.1291

URL: <https://doi.org/10.20849/ajsss.v7i9.1291>

Abstract

Globalization is manifested in such dimensions as political globalization, economic globalization, scientific and technological globalization, and cultural globalization. Globalization of different dimensions supports and integrates. The “hardware” of information globalization is mainly concentrated in Internet and mobile communication, with obvious scientific and technological attributes. The “software” of information globalization is mainly reflected in the interaction and close connection with politics, culture, society, and other fields, with obvious communication attributes. It is a global complex integrating many elements. Information globalization brings convenience and risks to citizens at the same time. This article will take TikTok as an example to analyze the advantages and disadvantages of information globalization.

Keywords: globalization, social media, TikTok, data, cross-cultural communication

1. Introduction

With the in-depth development of globalization and the Internet, global connectivity in the digital era has become possible. This kind of global connection mainly divides into commodity globalization and information globalization. The two seem to be completely different types, but the two components are internalized, complementary, and inseparable from each other. This paper will take TikTok as an example to analyze TikTok’s contribution and potential risks in the current era of information globalization.

2. Globalization of Information

In the past, international communication theory held that international communication is a cross-cultural information exchange and communication regulated by politics among nations, countries, or other international actors. International communication is often bound to the corresponding national interests and can affect political orientation and valuable guidance. The influence of international communication covers cross-regional cultural, economic, social, political, and other aspects, and it is increasingly capable of getting involved in the specific ways and details of the operation of many people’s lives and organizations. Therefore, international communication has become an essential factor for a country’s development space. The diversity and complexity of international communication content have more profound meaning and connotation than traditional mass media. Through the content production, selection, transmission, and transformation of the public opinion field, the leading carriers of international communication influence the mainstream values, behavior patterns, and judgment criteria of the host country and the countries through which the communication path passes. Compared with traditional mass communication, the content and path of international communication have more obvious sociological characteristics (Du Huan, 2019).

At present, the global society is in the development era of information globalization, and the chain influence of information technology has led to significant changes in the field of social communication. Under the influence of the breadth and depth of information technology dissemination, traditional media have lost their previous leading ability to speak in the mainstream of society and the timeliness of information dissemination, thus leading to the decline in the ability to guide public opinion and influence values. The diversity and complexity of international communication content have more profound meaning and connotation than traditional mass media. The primary carrier of international communication is the content production, selection, transmission, and transformation of the public opinion field. Influence the mainstream values, behavior patterns, and judgment standards of the countries where transmission occurs and the countries through which transmission occurs. The development of the Internet has led to the emergence of universal platforms, but they are limited by linguistic and cultural differences and political levels between countries (Liu Lei, 2011). Professional media organizations

are still the mainstream choice for international communication and public opinion guidance. Information technology is both a productivity and a catalyst. In the practice of international communication, users and recipients need to understand the opportunities provided by information technology and the limitations brought by information technology and fully grasp and coordinate the relationship between value and tool rationality in international communication.

3. The Popularity of TikTok

With the development of the mobile Internet and the globalization of information, Internet information is constantly increasing, and the distribution of people's attention must be selected from a wide range of information. Moreover, the fragmentation of people's time has undoubtedly become a potential market. TikTok's short videos target this potential market, delivering short, precise content across the Internet and mobile devices. Therefore, short videos can capture the fragmentation time of users better than long videos. TikTok, a short video app owned by ByteDance, was launched in September 2016 in China. 2017 is a hot year for short videos, with user growth and advertisers' attention driving the growth of the entire short video market, which is worth 5.73 billion yuan. The year-on-year growth rate was 183.9 percent. TikTok, as a young and active product, mainly targets young users (Zhao Cheng, 2019). Users watch and make videos on the platform in their spare time. In video content generation, TikTok is a mode in which users shoot video content, and TikTok provides background music synthesis. The camera features filters and special effects, which are popular among young people. Users can use these features to downplay their shortcomings and present themselves on the platform to interact with other users.

4. Cultural Homogenization and Cultural Diversity

Cultural homogenization refers to the process in which two or more asymmetric cultures interact and gradually acquire strong cultural characteristics under the influence of the infiltration of a strong culture. Cultural assimilation is a process and a result, which not only contains the infiltration of a strong culture but also contains the catering of weak culture. Cultural assimilation under the background of globalization is an essential means for western developed countries to carry out "cultural hegemony" and carry out cultural invasion and ideological control, and also often contains the political intention of western developed capitalist countries. Whether it is Huntington (1993)'s "Clash of Civilizations," Francis Fukuyama (1992)'s "The End of History and The Last Man," or John Townlinson (1991)'s "Cultural Imperialism," there are different degrees of western universal values and cultural homogenization tendency. It reflects the trend of cultural homogenization under the influence of globalization and reflects Western culture's mighty discourse power. Sassen(2008) mentioned in his geopolitical analysis of globalization that place and location networks are emphasized in the context of the globalization process. These dominant regions and states are likely to form new claims and thus provide cross-border economic and political openness to rights composition. Similarly, countries and regions that are also dominant in the culture of information globalization have dominant advantages.

There are two main ways of cultural homogenization, infiltrating strong culture to weak culture. Western developed countries, with their substantial economic and technological advantages, have tried to beautify and package western capitalist culture through language, movies, books, newspapers, religions, and the Internet, and propagated the Western universal values of democracy, freedom, and human rights so that people in developing countries could worship and yearn for them. The purpose of doing so is to complete the cultural infiltration and transformation of developed countries to developing countries. In essence, cultural infiltration is when the strong culture enslaves the weak culture, and the weak culture gradually loses its self-identity. The other is that the weak culture actively caters to the firm culture. The disadvantaged culture actively supports westernization and modernization, adopts self-digging catering policies, and falls into a dilemma (Zhang Xiaodong, 2012). In the 1980s, for example, Mr. Salinas overhauled Mexico, promoting economic liberalism and concluding the North American Free Trade Agreement with the United States and Canada to transform Mexico from a Latin American country into a North American one. However, doubts about Mexico's ability to abide by the agreement have led to opposition in the United States. In Mexico, dissatisfaction with reform led to guerrilla uprisings, and internal and external difficulties made Mexico an island of culture (Du Huan, 2019). Cultural pandering is essentially the result of loss of cultural confidence and the collapse of cultural identity.

In TikTok, traditional culture is presented in the video, which emphasizes the combination and interaction between traditional cultural elements and modern space environment, different from the dissemination of text and pictures. The creator has carried on the personalized interpretation and the interesting expression to the traditional culture so that the traditional cultural elements are more natural in front of the audience, highlighting the spirit of traditional culture and arousing emotional resonance (Liu Li, 2019). TikTok takes advantage of the

communication form of social media to bring users around the world the opportunity to spread traditional culture. The pattern of cultural homogeneity brought about by the last round of information globalization is gradually broken by social media and other Internet products. Users worldwide spread their traditional culture and life based on the Internet's accessibility and unique convenience (Zhu Haiting et al. 2020). Users from different countries share their lives, giving other users an experience, that newspapers and movies cannot match. When traditional culture is reported in TV and print media, users often passively receive information, and the audience's participation is low. In an audience-centered environment, audiences are eager for more attention. TikTok can meet that demand. On TikTok, users only need to register and log in to express their views at any time, and audiences can also comment and reply to each other. This sense of interaction and participation is a fresh experience TikTok brings to the audience. Users interested in traditional culture can easily upload a personalized short video with their unique perspective of understanding and the production technology provided by TikTok.

Furthermore, for the viewer, it can also communicate with the author in time. Take China as an example. Traditional ancient poetry, folk music with long melodies, and traditional painting and calligraphy that emphasize artistic concepts can all be presented in vivid forms on TikTok. Short videos can decode traditional culture, reduce the context for people to understand classics, and help more people understand the charm and inheritance of traditional culture (Guo Xiaoxue, 2020).

Take Li Ziqi as an example (the later unified name is Li). Li's videos show the audience some inherent and holistic Chinese cultural connotations and aesthetic implications through surface images such as Chinese cuisine, rural scenery, and living customs. Through social media (such as TikTok), audiences worldwide are subtly influenced and infected by traditional Chinese culture (Ma Yue, 2021). For example, the presentation of traditional Chinese festivals in rural citizens. This form of cultural transmission is more accurate and attractive than the past through TV news and books. With videos like these filled with local culture, people are dispelling stereotypes that people have acquired in the past and allowing cultural diversity to be reflected.

5. Big Data Algorithms and Information Cocoons

TikTok is a social media focused on short video sharing, is characterized by the autonomy of users and the individuation of short videos. On TikTok, users can choose what video messages to post and what messages to receive. These personalized choices will be personalized recommendations after the technical algorithm, thus forming an Information Cocoons virtually. Thus, like-minded people can quickly gather together to form a circle and form a discourse system belonging to this group (Zhao Chunmei, 2020).

The theory of use and satisfaction first appeared in the Book *The Use of Mass Communication* by Elihu Katz and Blumler (1974, P275), one of the essential theories to study mass communication. This theory analyzes the audience's motivation and satisfaction with the received information. At the same time, the subjectivity of the audience is also considered. The most significant change is that the role of the audience has changed from passively receiving information to actively obtaining information, that is, the transformation of audience status. Coincidentally, this theory is also extremely close to the Information Cocoons formed in TikTok by users accepting the algorithmic recommendation system. The data generated by users using TikTok is saved and analyzed in the background of the system. Users then tend to receive their favorite messages later on TikTok, which gives them a sense of pleasure. Therefore, TikTok will use the Information Cocoons created by the algorithmic recommendation system to meet users' needs according to their preferences and encourage users to enjoy the convenience and pleasure brought by the algorithm (Mou Haokun, 2021).

In today's information globalization, big data and algorithms have become important technologies in current scientific and technological products. Couldry (2016) views algorithms as a kind of social analysis, a sociological treatment of a series of social behaviors through analysis to realize the social purpose of individuals or organizations. The goal is to capture how specific actors use "analytics" to reflect on and adjust their online presence and behaviors. Whether in social media or online shopping platforms, big data and algorithms provide significant help. At the same time, its potential disadvantages are also gradually discovered. As a kind of information collection, distribution, and customization technology, the application of algorithm technology is not limited to algorithm news, including many kinds of products, including film and television, novels, comics, games, commodities, and other media forms (Zhang Lulu, 2021). However, algorithmic news, supported by algorithms, is one of the primary product forms on TikTok. For Internet users, the news is like air, permeating the network space. The emergence of algorithmic news makes the air like news and human beings realize a closer connection. TikTok algorithmic news has become an inescapable information product in the network world, affecting people's cognition of the real world. At present, there are about three views on algorithmic journalism

in the academic circle. One view holds that the emergence of algorithmic journalism is inevitable and can improve the old news production process. Another point of view is that algorithmic journalism depriving human editors of the right to choose news value is not conducive to the promotion and inheritance of journalism professionalism. There is also a reconciliatory view that algorithmic journalism can achieve more personalized news production and more accurate information distribution, but people should also pay attention to algorithmic journalism's value orientation and dissemination range (Bao Han, 2021). TikTok and other social media recommendation systems based on big data algorithms provide unprecedented convenience for people living in the information globalization. At the same time, there are potential risks such as limited information reception.

6. Data Security

In the age of information globalization, the security problem of user data is relatively easy to be discovered. On the one hand, TikTok users want to share information and display personal images through the platform. On the other hand, they are worried about their privacy. The paradox of user privacy in TikTok is mainly reflected in the disclosure of public and personal privacy (Zhao Minghao, 2020).

When users log on to TikTok, the Platform allows them to choose a mobile number or a WeChat account to log in. TikTok will then try to gain access to other features, like the microphone and camera. After that, users are asked to fill in their personal information to improve their profiles. Users often see people they know using TikTok because TikTok gains access to a user's phone book or address book. Users can only manually cancel the relevant push ban. Users seem to have the initiative over their information. After all, users need to upload their information. However, once a user has uploaded a message, it is controlled by TikTok's back-office staff, and users lose control over the spread of their messages. Even if the information is deleted, the relevant information left on the server is retransmitted. Users have no way to know how many people repost and which people's information screenshots are retained and can only passively accept the control of the Platform (Yang 2019). Therefore, in the face of data security issues on the Platform, TikTok needs self-discipline and heteronomy to regulate others' private information use and respect. The Platform shall inform users promptly when using users' privacy information, strengthen privacy Settings and reminder services, and proceed with the next step after obtaining users' consent and authorization.

7. Conclusion

Information globalization is no longer a noun or concept on paper. It has entered our life comprehensively, exerting influence in various aspects and becoming a noticeable development trend. The new generation of social media represented by TikTok has attracted worldwide attention. With the dividend of scientific and technological progress and data globalization, TikTok has made an outstanding contribution to the development of humanity and information. At the same time, TikTok's potential risks, like data security issues, have also become an issue debated by governments and scholars worldwide. However, with the development of human society, these disadvantages will eventually be solved with the development of society and science and technology.

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