Research on the Pathways to Fostering a Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation in the New Media Era

Lingchen Jin, Song Zhou*

School of Marxism Studies, Dali University, Dali 671003, Yunnan, China

*Corresponding author: Song Zhou, happyzhousong@163.com

Abstract: New media have profoundly reshaped the context for disseminating innovative theories. This paper aims to elucidate that the rapid development of digital media presents both significant opportunities and formidable challenges for fostering a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation. In response to these dual aspects, this study systematically analyzes the core mechanisms and practical possibilities of how digital media can contribute to this goal from three dimensions: top-level design, civic literacy, and platform responsibility.

Keywords: New media; A sense of community for the Chinese nation; Digital communication; Technological ethics

1. Introduction

The General Secretary emphasized that "the internet is the primary platform and top priority for ideological propaganda work, and it should become the greatest increment in forging a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation" [1]. New media represent the primary manifestation of the internet. In this context, leveraging new media to optimize the publicity and education of the Chinese national community consciousness has become an inevitable and trend-aligned choice for disseminating innovative theories.

New media primarily refers to interactive and convergent media forms and platforms based on digital technology, network technology, other modern information technologies, or communication technologies. This includes communication mediums such as the internet—often termed the fourth media—and mobile networks, referred to as the fifth media [2]. New media have not only reshaped social interaction patterns but have also provided a new arena and brought fresh opportunities for the dissemination of innovative theories. However, it also introduces new challenges. While the academic community has taken note of this research area, studies on the operational mechanisms and relevant pathways of new media remain somewhat insufficient. This article focuses

on the communication mechanisms of new media platforms, addresses the novel issues faced in the dissemination of innovative theories in the new media era, and seeks to identify corresponding solutions to overcome these challenges.

2. The new media era: The digital communication background of a sense of community for the Chinese nation

The media and public affairs are increasingly intertwined, becoming the most fundamental provider of ideas [3]. The promotion and education of the Chinese national community consciousness in the era of traditional media mainly rely on the offline domain and linear textual narrative. Its coverage is limited by both physical space and fixed forms, making it particularly unattractive to the younger generation growing up with digital technology. In terms of communication effectiveness, the one-way transmission mode leads to information presentation being contextualized, lagging, and lacking in interaction, making it difficult to transform abstract theories into tangible experiences. The audience is prone to alienation, which restricts the deep construction of identity.

In the era of intelligent media, leveraging technologies such as virtual reality and immersive audio has given rise to a new paradigm characterized by immersive and interactive communication, thereby fostering a novel mode of interaction that transcends temporal and spatial boundaries while integrating the digital and the real[4]. Building on this, it can construct tangible digital scenes, transforming the grand narrative of the Chinese national community into a perceptive process characterized by multi-modal experiences and strong engagement. This model not only vastly expands the spatiotemporal boundaries and audience reach of dissemination but also significantly enhances its emotional depth and cognitive efficacy through situational immersion and real-time interaction. Intelligent systems can further provide personalized content recommendations centered on themes like "ethnic unity", fostering emotional connections and value consensus during interactions, thereby effectively strengthening the adhesion and resilience of identity.

The widespread application of new media creates structural opportunities for fostering a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation: it drives the transformation of publicity and education from one-way indoctrination towards participatory experience, enables high-quality, efficient, and targeted presentation, and vividly connects the historical trajectory of the Chinese nation to deepen the understanding of a shared sense of future, interests, honor, and responsibility. However, ideological contention within ethnic discourse in digital spaces has grown more complex. This reminds us that opportunities are accompanied by challenges. While actively embracing technological innovation, it is also necessary to prudently assess and address the new forms and issues of ideological engagement in the digital environment.

3. Multidimensional challenges in fostering a sense of community for the Chinese nation in the new media era

3.1. Cultural infiltration and identity challenges in the global arena

Amid the intertwined forces of globalization and digitization, new media have become a crucial arena for cultural dissemination and ideological contention. Leveraging their advantage in mediation, foreign cultures enter China's information environment with unprecedented speed and breadth, continuously challenging the subjectivity and continuity of Chinese culture. This exerts sustained pressure that undermines the cohesion of the Chinese national community consciousness. While new media accelerates the cross-border flow of information and fosters cultural

exchange and mutual learning, it also intensifies conflicts and clashes of values. Certain groups, especially youth, immersed in diverse cultural information, may experience a gradual dilution of their identification with their own national culture. This potentially weakens the emotional foundation upon which community consciousness relies. Western developed countries, capitalizing on their first-mover technological advantages and platform dominance, conduct organized and systematic ideological output through new media. This often involves denigrating or even challenging China's mainstream values and ethnic policies in covert or distorted ways, thereby exacerbating risks and challenges within the ideological domain. The proliferation of new media has disrupted the relatively centralized discourse landscape of the traditional media era, leading to a redistribution of discursive power among diverse actors and increasingly complex communication ecosystems [5]. In this process, negative information or one-sided views concerning ethnic factors are highly susceptible to amplification through new media's viral dissemination mechanisms. If manipulated and incited by those with ulterior motives, they could directly impact the stability of ethnic unity and social consensus.

3.2. Discursive fragmentation and consensus erosion in cyberspace

The virtual interaction space constructed by new media has profoundly reshaped the ways in which the public perceives communal consciousness and constructs identity. Due to the fragmented nature of content dissemination in media, the Chinese national community consciousness—which carries profound historical and value connotations—is prone to being fractured into isolated, superficial symbols or topics. This dilutes its significance as an authoritative public value and gradually disperses its inherent cohesive force in imperceptible ways [6]. The digital media ecosystem has fostered numerous dissemination nodes, prompting extensive participation from diverse actors such as self-media creators, internet influencers, and ordinary users. On one hand, this has broken the traditional monopoly on discourse and unleashed the vitality of social expression; on the other hand, it has also sparked contention over the interpretive authority regarding ethnic narratives, potentially leading to new fissures within the Chinese national community amid its digital-intelligent transformation [7]. In the discussions on ethnic issues on social media, some comments deliberately emphasize differences and ignore commonalities, cutting off the dialectical relationship between the diversity and unity of the Chinese nation. Extreme and labeled online debates continue to tear apart social consensus, putting greater pressure on official narratives to effectively guide public opinion, bridge differences, and rebuild consensus. The authority of professional media institutions has been diluted in the clamor, and the "sinking" of discourse power reflects democratization, but it is also accompanied by uneven discourse quality. The competition for traffic from multiple entities has squeezed the dissemination volume of mainstream media, and some one-sided, emotional, and even misleading information may distort the public's cognition, especially young netizens, and damage the overall image construction of Chinese culture. There is a tension between fragmented and emotional online expression and the systematic and rational interpretation required by mainstream ideology, making it difficult to aggregate the sense of community of the Chinese nation [8].

3.3. Ecological and cognitive dilemmas under traffic dominance

Under the dominance of the platform economy, the logic of traffic profoundly governs content dissemination. Information concerning ethnic issues is prone to being caught in the race for traffic, becoming trivialized and sensationalized. Algorithms, prioritizing user engagement time, risk diminishing the depth and seriousness required for disseminating community consciousness. This subjects profound historical and cultural content to the danger of being reduced to easily consumable symbols, leading to constrained dissemination of high-quality

content and the hollowing out of cultural substance.

Personalized recommendation algorithms, based on user profiles, readily construct robust "information cocoons" and "echo chambers" [9]. Users from different groups and regions become confined within highly homogenous information environments, systematically reducing their opportunities to encounter and understand the history, culture, realities, and developmental achievements of other ethnic groups. The richness and integrity of the Chinese nation's "pluralistic unity" are filtered by algorithms into fragmented, even distorted, cognitive snippets, severely hindering deep understanding and emotional identification across groups. Should potential biases or blind spots in algorithm design combine with real-world structural disparities—such as differences in digital access capabilities and media literacy—the cultural expression and narrative discourse of frontier ethnic regions risk further marginalization within new media spaces. This makes it difficult for them to participate equally, fully, and deeply in the construction and shared meaning-making of the Chinese national community's digital narrative.

The fusion of capital and technology, lacking effective value guidance and ethical regulation, can easily steer the dissemination of ethnic issues towards pure commercial logic and traffic competition. This trend not only creates and reinforces cognitive divides between groups but may also deconstruct, at a deeper level, the common foundation of cultural identity and erode the value bedrock of social solidarity.

4. Constructing integrated pathways to foster a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation

4.1. Strengthening top-level design and innovating cultural communication mechanisms

The General Secretary emphasized, "In the new era and new journey, the important position and role of the cyberspace industry are increasingly prominent" [10]. New media have become a critical arena for international soft power competition. To foster a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, it is essential to proactively grasp media trends, effectively guard against the impact of radical liberalism and harmful foreign cultures, and address disorders in digital communication. The General Secretary pointed out that people should use the power of the system to cope with the impact of risks and challenges [11]. Efforts should be accelerated to improve the digital governance legal framework, integrating cultural security into the national strategic outlook with clear objectives and implementation rules. A comprehensive content security barrier must be constructed, with strengthened law enforcement and supervision to curb the spread of infringing and non-compliant information. A systematic approach is required to advance the digital transformation of traditional media from top-level planning to ground-level execution. This involves integrating media resources to build a new communication system with clear direction and extensive coverage, thereby expanding the reach for guiding mainstream values.

Driven by technology, the nation needs to enhance its capability and innovation in utilizing new media platforms, leveraging big data and artificial intelligence to revolutionize communication formats. Through deepening cultural system reform, it is essential to support and nurture influential cultural brands and enterprises. This will boost the efficacy and appeal of disseminating Chinese culture, consolidate the dominant position of mainstream ideology, guide the healthy development of digital interactions, delve into the profound connotations of various ethnic cultures, and foster their deep integration and symbiosis.

4.2. Integrating the communication ecosystem and reinvigorating cultural subjectivity

To cope with the dispersion of discourse power and fragmentation of content caused by algorithms, people

should promote the platform algorithm logic to shift from "traffic led" to "value led", embed the core elements of community consciousness into the algorithm model, such as setting cultural content weight coefficients and establishing a social value evaluation mechanism for communication effects, to achieve a balance between commercial and social benefits. "Culture is the key to national identity" [12]. Promoting the digital dissemination of culture can activate the national narrative and historical memory in culture, and help build a digital community for the Chinese nation.

To address the cognitive gap between digital natives and traditional mainstream discourse, "metaverse" technology can be employed to construct an immersive ethnic cultural experience space, thereby bridging the generational divide in cultural perception [13]. By digitally reproducing historical scenes such as the Tea Horse Ancient Road and Princess Wencheng's visit to Tibet, users can deepen their understanding of national history and ethnic integration through interactive experiences, making the digital space a new frontier that strengthens community consciousness. In a highly mediated society, it is necessary to construct a media ethics system that is in line with the core socialist values. Some platforms sacrifice their cultural mission in pursuit of traffic, promoting the dissemination of provocative content and eroding the foundation of social identity. Therefore, it is necessary to enhance the public's ability to identify and criticize information, cultivate their sensitivity to information value, enhance their ability to resist cognitive risks, and eliminate the distortion of ideas caused by false narratives. By improving the ethical framework of algorithms, awakening users' subjective consciousness, integrating fragmented cognition into systematic identification, and making the digital space truly a platform for consolidating social consensus.

To bridge the experiential gap between mainstream discourse and digital natives, new media forms such as the Metaverse can be leveraged to create immersive spaces for national cultural dissemination. By digitally recreating historical scenes—such as the Ancient Tea Horse Road or Princess Wencheng's journey to Tibet—users can deepen their understanding of national history and ethnic integration through interactive experiences, transforming digital spaces into new frontiers for strengthening community consciousness. In a highly mediated society, it is imperative to establish a media ethics framework aligned with the core socialist values. Certain platforms, in pursuit of traffic, compromise their cultural mission, fueling the spread of inflammatory content and eroding the foundations of social cohesion. Therefore, it is essential to enhance the public's ability to discern and critique information related to ethnic issues, cultivate sensitivity to information values, and bolster resilience against cognitive risks, thereby counteracting the distortions caused by false narratives. By refining the ethical framework for algorithms and fostering user agency, fragmented perceptions can be integrated into systematic identification, enabling digital spaces to genuinely serve as platforms for forging social consensus.

4.3. Regulating technology ethics and guiding algorithms for social good

Within the intelligent communication ecosystem, interest-driven recommendation mechanisms can easily derail the dissemination of ethnic issues from a rational track. They tend to reinforce biases and stereotypes, squeeze out space for reasoned dialogue, and imperceptibly construct digital barriers that hinder ethnic interaction. Furthermore, the fusion of capital and technology, if lacking ethical constraints, risks diluting the seriousness and depth required for fostering community consciousness, potentially rendering the guiding function of mainstream values ineffective.

Standardizing the operation order of digital platforms is an important guarantee for leveraging their educational empowerment role. On the supply side, people should encourage the development of cultural products

that comply with online ethics, integrate the concept of national rejuvenation into corporate culture, embed community consciousness indicators into the underlying architecture of recommendation systems, fully tap into and utilize Chinese cultural resources, and continuously optimize the online ecosystem. Platforms must improve their content review mechanisms, strengthen self-regulation, and enhance media discipline [14]. It is essential to translate the core socialist values into actionable technological governance plans, genuinely implement the principle of "algorithm for social good", and demonstrate the pace-setting role of official mainstream media in fostering a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation, thereby solidifying the defense line for national cultural security [15].

The rise of new media has placed the construction of a strong sense of community for the Chinese nation within a more complex digital environment. This paper argues that the essence of this process is not merely technological application, but a profound inter-construction of media, culture, and identity. While new media reshape the pathways through which community consciousness is generated, they also introduce new challenges. Consequently, the core task lies in harnessing technology to systematically strengthen social bonds and cultural commonality within virtual spaces. Cyberspace has thus evolved into a critical strategic arena concerning cultural transmission, identity formation, and ideological security. Looking forward, dynamic governance wisdom is required to continuously adapt to technological and behavioral changes, ensuring that new media genuinely serve the fundamental goal of building consensus and solidifying the spiritual foundation of the community.

Disclosure statement

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

References

[1] The United Front Work Department of the CPC Central Committee, the National Ethnic Affairs Commission, 2022, Study and Guidance Textbook on the Spirit of the Central Ethnic Work Conference. Ethnic Publishing House, Beijing, 180.

[2] Yang L, Tian XM, 2021, Theoretical Research on Media Convergence and Case Studies on Overseas Publishing Convergence. University of International Business and Economics Press, Beijing, 25.

[3] Castells M, 2003, The Power of Identity. Translated by Xia Zhujiu, Huang Liling, Huang Zhaoxin, et al. Social Sciences Academic Press, Beijing, 62.

[4] Li Y, He SH, 2024, The Practical Dilemma, Theoretical Transformation, and Practical Breakthrough in Strengthening the Sense of Community of the Chinese Nation in the New Media Era. Journal of Inner Mongolia Agricultural University (Social Sciences Edition), 26(1): 55–61.

[5] Yan S, 2025, Digital Space for Strengthening the Sense of Community of the Chinese Nation: Occurrence Logic, Practical Challenges, and Enhancement Approaches. Seeking Truth from Facts, 2025(2): 57–64.

[6] Fang Z, 2023, The Transformational Logic, Digital Obstruction, and Risk Prevention of Embedding Intelligent Algorithms in Fostering the Sense of the Chinese National Community. United Front Science Research, 7(6): 93–107.

[7] Deng SY, Wang ZP, 2024, The Transformational Logic, Risk Examination, and Resolution Pathways of Digital-Intelligent Empowerment in Fostering the Sense of Chinese National Community. Journal of the Corps Party School, 2024(5): 97–105.

[8]   Zhang LG, Yu HB, 2023, Multiple Challenges and Practical Responses to the Education of Chinese National Community Consciousness in the Algorithmic Era. Journal of Ethnology, 2023(1): 32–41.

[9]   Wen XJ, 2025, The Value, Risks, and Approaches of Algorithmic Recommendation in Strengthening the Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation. Theoretical Guide, 2025(11): 47–51.

[10] The President of the CPC, 2023, The President of the CPC Issued Important Instructions on Cybersecurity and Informatization Work, Emphasizing the Thorough Implementation of the CPC Central Committee's Important Thoughts on Building a Cyber Power and Vigorously Promoting the High-quality Development of the Cyberspace and Informatization Cause. Guangming Daily, 2023, 7–16(1).

[11] The President of the CPC, 2020, The President of the CPC on Governance: Volume III. Foreign Languages Press, Beijing.

[12] Friedman J, 2003, Cultural Identity and Globalization Process. Translated by Guo Jianru. Commercial Press, Beijing, 130.

[13] Yang YX, Wang T, 2024, A Study on Metaverse Empowerment in Forging a Strong Sense of Community for the Chinese Nation. Journal of Inner Mongolia Minzu University (Philosophy and Social Sciences), 50(2): 38–46.

[14] Li YX, Wang FQ, 2024, The Practical Challenges and Pathways for Strengthening the Sense of Community of the Chinese Nation in the Digital Age. Journal of Hubei Minzu University (Philosophy and Social Sciences Edition), 42(2): 1–9.

[15] Li S, Gu YR, 2025, Intelligent Algorithm Empowerment in Fostering the Sense of Chinese National Community: Value, Risks, and Optimization. Journal of North Minzu University, 2025(2): 35–43.