Vol.7 Iss.4 2026 Communication & Education Review
https://doi.org/10.37420/j.cer.2026.059

Research on algorithmic hegemony of international social media platforms: a perspective of power

Wenqing Shi*
School of Journalism, Liaoning University, China
***Corresponding author, E-mail: 1829519428@qq.com**

Abstract:
With the in-depth development of digital globalization, international social media has become an important field of international news, and international social media platforms use algorithms to define the scale and visibility of information dissemination and change public perception with their technical advantages and user size. From the perspective of power, this article explores the formation mechanism and influence path of the "algorithm hegemony" of international social media platforms. This study adopts the method of combining questionnaire survey and in-depth interviews to discuss around three core dimensions: First, analyze how algorithm technology hides the logic of decision-making and affects the opaque technology of information exposure. Secondly, based on the results of in-depth interviews and questionnaires, analyze how Western-dominated social media platforms use algorithmic rules to output values, suppress Chinese voices, and strengthen digital hegemony. Finally,we can explore how China can make a dynamic breakthrough at the level of system, technology and discourse shown in the process of dealing with algorithmic hegemony, improve overseas communication ability, ensure the objectivity and authenticity of information, and shape a good international image.

Keywords:
Algorithm hegemony, power perspective, international social media platform, algorithm black box

1 Introduction

In recent years, overseas social media platforms have become important arenas for international news. As infrastructure and key platforms for public news and public opinion, these international social media platforms are by no means mere products of “mediation”; rather, they constitute significant agents of “mediatization.” On the one hand, they have restructured the old order of international news, challenging the power of traditional mass media; on the other hand, they have shaped a new discursive power order in international news.

This study asks:What impact do the algorithms of international social media platforms have on the current global news flow? How does the algorithmic logic of these platforms affect the construction of China’s national image? What value biases do they introduce into public opinion concerning China? How can China’s

© 2026 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

mainstream values be harnessed to steer the algorithms of Western media platforms and enhance China's international public opinion guidance capability in the age of intelligent media? These questions have become new research topics. Therefore, focusing on the potential impact of the algorithmic logic of international social media platforms on the construction of China's national image, this study proposes the following research questions: What value biases do the algorithms of international social media platforms currently exhibit toward international public opinion related to China? Against the backdrop of platform-enabled empowerment, how do international social media platforms shape China's national image through their algorithms? What is the underlying logic of these algorithms?

2 Literature Review

2.1 Impact of Algorithms on National Image

In the era of globalization and digitalization, algorithms have become key carriers of information dissemination, public opinion production, and international cognitive construction, profoundly influencing the shaping of national image and the logic of international communication.

Scholars Aijun Zhang and Honglin Liu, in their study "*Research on the External Communication of China's National Image from the Perspective of Algorithmic Power,*" point out that algorithms can positively guide the emotional orientation of international audiences, control the international public opinion sphere, and accurately grasp audience preferences. At the same time, however, algorithmic power also generates negative effects such as political bias and discrimination, fabrication and manipulation of unfavourable public opinion, endangerment of national data security, and monopolisation of the international communication order. The authors further note that "regulation can be carried out at the three levels of the state, platforms, and audiences, in order to better disseminate a true and objective image of China to the outside world."

Scholars Jiangang Fan and Weiwei Cui, in "*Algorithm Embedding and Optimisation of National Image Communication from the Perspective of Artificial Intelligence*," concisely point out the need to strengthen the positive impact of algorithms on national image and to mitigate the harm caused by algorithm bias, algorithm preference, and algorithmic "anti-ethics" to the national image.

Scholars Aijun Zhang and Lu Jia, in "*Construction of National Image from the Perspective of the Internet*," carefully analyse and point out that while technology empowers the general public and leads to the proliferation of communication rights, the difficulty of constructing national image has increased. Moreover, users' deepfake content and their widespread dissemination of competitive news make the international transmission of objective facts more challenging.

Domestic scholar Xuechen Song, in "*Research on the International Communication Strategies and Enhancement Paths of CGTN on the Twitter Platform*," starts with CGTN Official to explore the communication strategies and patterns of mainstream media on overseas social media platforms, how they compete with Western media for international discourse power, and to what extent they follow and utilise the algorithmic logic of social platforms.

2.2 Hegemony Theory

© 2026 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

The Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci first systematically proposed the theory of hegemony in his *Prison Notebooks*. His main argument is that the ruling class does not rely on violence, but rather through civil society institutions such as education, media, family, and church, enables the subordinate class to voluntarily identify with its values and order, thereby achieving non-coercive domination.

In China, scholar Jin Miao, in "On Media Hegemony: Theoretical Origins, Power Composition, and Realistic Dimensions," points out the characteristics of "media hegemony" as the attachment, collusion, diffusion, and naturalisation of various powers. Scholar Qiu Weidong, in "The Operational System of Western Discursive Hegemony in the Digital Age and China's Response," conducts a detailed study, noting that "Western discursive hegemony in the digital age is mainly constructed through the systematic packaging of social culture, the capitalised monopolisation of communication carriers, and the covert shaping of audience identification. Thus, it builds a discursive system, communication system, and identification system that align with its own hegemonic aspirations." Scholars Zhou Yuhan and Hu Yiqing, in "From Cultural Hegemony to Media Hegemony: On the American Journey of Gramsci's Thought," carefully explore the loss of criticality in cultural hegemony theory, noting that in the United States the theory has become a rationale for maintaining the legitimacy of capitalist rule. Yang Chunfeng, in "The Operational Model and Theoretical Forms of Western Cultural Hegemony," points out that powerful Western countries, especially the United States, under the banner of cultural universalism, arbitrarily infiltrate and impose their own cultural values on other national cultures, disregarding the autonomy and independence of those cultures, even interrupting their development, thereby homogenising the world's culture and driving global culture in a single direction. This explains the operational mode and logic of Western media hegemony. Domestic scholar Yan Jing and Wang Jiachen, in "Western Digital Cultural Hegemony and Countermeasures from the Perspective of Digital Cultural Imperialism," point out that vigorously developing digital technology and building digital infrastructure is the fundamental solution to breaking Western digital cultural hegemony. Domestic scholars Lin Aijun and Wang Fengqi, in "Cultural Bias in Generative AI and China's Large Model Strategy," engage with contemporary developments, discussing algorithmic bias in generative AI, and argue that to address cultural bias in generative AI, more inclusive, open, and shared AI large models need to be built.

2.3 Propose a question

In the era of digitalization, social media platforms at home and abroad use algorithms to push content. The content recommended by algorithms on international social media platforms can show national characteristics and build a national image. However, there is actually a deviation in the push content and algorithm logic, and there is relatively little research in this field in the academic school. Therefore, this study start with the possible impact of the algorithm logic of international social media platforms on the construction of China's national image, and raise the following questions: What are the value biases of international social media platform algorithms on the current international China-related public opinion? Under the background of platform empowerment, how can international social media platforms build China's national image through algorithms? What is the inherent logic of the algorithm?

3 Researched Method

© 2026 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

3.1 Questionnaire survey method

Data shows that the activity of overseas IP users on the Xiaohongshu (domestic version) platform is significantly higher than that of domestic mainstream social media platforms such as TikTok and Kuaishou, and the willingness, age level and proportion of Chinese use of overseas users are more suitable for the needs of this study. Therefore, this study selects Xiaohongshu (domestic version) as the main platform for distributing questionnaires. It carries out the questionnaire distribution and data collection of overseas IP users by sending questionnaires and filling posts, assisting international students in posting, and private messages to comment on different IP netizens in the area.

In the selection of survey subjects, adhere to the double standard of regional representativeness and the balance of sample capacity. The research subjects cover North America (represented by the United States), Europe (represented by the United Kingdom), Oceania (represented by Australia), Asia (represented by South Korea) and other major regions, requiring different countries/regions The amount of questionnaires collected is basically equal. At the same time, it is necessary to clearly screen the access conditions of the survey subjects: have real experience in using the Internet and Chinese social media in China and using the Internet and social media abroad. At the same time, you can read, communicate and fill in questionnaires fluently in Chinese to ensure the efficiency of communication and the accuracy of questionnaire data.

In order to expand the number of samples, the survey adopts three questionnaire methods. First, the questionnaire filling post is published through the author's own Xiaohongshu account, and waits for those who are interested in or quite touched by this research topic to fill in. Second, submit a questionnaire to the international students of our school. Third, randomly select overseas IP users in the comment area. They need to meet the requirements of leaving China for ≤10 years, using Chinese and foreign social media at the same time, having independent information retrieval ability, and being able to browse the content of domestic and foreign social media skillfully.

In order to improve the efficiency of questionnaire recovery, taking into account the time differences in various regions around the world, questionnaires and private messages are issued around 20:00 local time according to the possibility of target users focusing on the internet.During this period, overseas users' leisure time is concentrated, the online rate is high, and netizens' interaction is more active and enthusiastic, which effectively uses the push mechanism of the platform to increase exposure and reduce the probability of ineffective placement.

This questionnaire is distributed. This study takes overseas study groups as the survey object, and a total of 181 valid questionnaires are collected. Based on sample data, descriptive statistics, difference tests, correlation analysis and regression analysis are carried out to systematically explore the relationship between the use of international social media, the platform's China-related information environment and individual national cognition. .

The international students interviewed are mainly distributed in the United Kingdom, Australia and the United States (84.0% in total), mainly undergraduates (40.3%); 75.1% of those who use international social media for 1-5 hours a day, and frequently use platforms are Instagram, TikTok and Facebook.

© 2026 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

Overall, 65.2% of the respondents believe that there is an obvious information cocoon on the platform, 53.0% said that China-related public opinion affects their views on China, 76.8% have encountered restrictions and deletions of China-related content, and most of them believe that there is a differentiation in the platform's review and recommendation of China-related content.

The group difference test shows that there are significant differences in the perception of China-related content tendency and information cocoon perception of respondents from different countries studying abroad, and there are also significant differences in the flow limitation experience of users on different platforms. The information cocoon perception of groups affected by public opinion is significantly higher than that of the unaffected group.

The duration of international social media use and the experience of content restriction are significantly positively correlated with the perception of information cocoon. The frequency of Chinese social media use is positively related to the positive tendency of China-related content, and the degree of information cocoon is positively related to the singleness of cognition. The tendency of China-related content, the experience of content restriction, the degree of information cocoon and the duration of use are significant factors affecting China-related public opinion to change the perception of individual countries.

3.2 In-depth interview method

In order to make up for the limitations of the single questionnaire survey method and ensure the depth of the survey and the comprehensiveness of the research, the author introduces the in-depth interview method as a supplementary research means on the basis of questionnaire research.

The in-depth interview method is an unstructured, one-on-one qualitative research method, which is different from the standardized questioning model of questionnaire research. Its core advantage is that researchers break the shackles of the fixed questioning framework and guide the interviewees to actively express their true thoughts through in-depth, free and open two-way conversations with the interviewees. , the deep logic behind attitudes, emotions and behaviors, and then explore the implicit information that is difficult to capture or ignored information in the questionnaire research.

In order to verify the conclusion of the audience survey method, this study uses the in-depth interview method. The interview content of the survey subject can cross-verify the algorithm push mechanism of foreign social media platforms, how the algorithm obtains user preferences, the difference between the presentation of the same content, and how the audit mechanism of foreign social media is different from that of domestic social media. Are there any restrictions on users when uploading content or whether the platform is not allowed to upload, whether foreign social media publish content about China is stereotyped and smears the national image, how is the user experience, and why there are more information cocoons in today's highly developed information. With the help of the in-depth interview method, it can help researchers have a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of algorithmic hegemony on foreign social media platforms, and provide richer and more convincing qualitative support for research conclusions.

In order to ensure that the interview object and the interview content are representative, the author selected from the perspective of geographical coverage. From the foreign IP users of Xiaohongshu, a domestic social

© 2026 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

media platform, four different international students were selected as interview subjects according to the representativeness of the IP place. The four survey subjects were located in South Korea, the United States, the United Kingdom and Australia respectively. Dalia, its selection logic and representativeness are as follows:

Table 1 Interview implementation process and details

Location	Interviewee Identity	Specific behavior features	Value of the sample
South Korea	ordinary self-media user	"Primarily browsing and interacting, without actively posting content."	Can represent the usage experience of most ordinary users with foreign IP addresses
UK	self-media content creator	Actively create and publis content, including overseas life, eating habits, Chinese and foreign ways of thinking, ideological differences,	As a content creator, she have a deeper understanding of the logic of content dissemination.
USA	ordinary self-media user	"Primarily browsing and interacting, without actively posting content."	Can represent the usage experience of most ordinary users with foreign IP addresses
Australia	ordinary self-media user	"Primarily browsing and interacting, without actively posting content."	Can represent the usage experience of most ordinary users with foreign IP addresses

Use WeChat, Tencent Conference and other platforms to carry out communication and interviews. For interviewees with strong willingness to express and rich content output (such as self-media creators, interviewees located in the UK), the interview time can be appropriately extended to deeply explore their deep ideas. For interviewees with relatively concise expression, the duration should be reasonably shortened. Avoid burdening the interviewees and affecting the accuracy of the research.

Interview records and ethical norms: Before the official start of the interview, the author takes the initiative to explain the research purpose, content scope, data use and confidentiality principles of the interview to the interviewee. After obtaining the written or oral consent of the interviewee, the interview work is carried out. During the interview process, in order to avoid information omissions or errors, the double recording method is adopted.

Interview interaction and content combing: During the interview process, it is mainly guided. Under the premise of not destroying the core theme of the interview, the interview subject is allowed to be extended and the key points are captured in its extension. After completely recording the interview process, under the condition of ensuring the integrity of the interview content, integrate and sort out the interview content, eliminate the repeated expressions in the interview recording, and sort out the core points and key events. After the end of the four interviewees, the commonalities and personality differences of the four interviewees were distilled, and the data obtained from the questionnaire was combined with the questionnaire for another detailed integration to form a clear qualitative information to understand the algorithm hegemony mechanism of foreign social media.

© 2026 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

3.3 Interview results

The overseas social platform used by international students in four countries is both regional and universal, and the usage habits and needs vary depending on the country of study. Korean international students mainly use KakaoTalk, Instagram and YouTube, which are used less frequently and mostly used for information search and interest content browsing. Among them, KakaoTalk, as a national software in South Korea, is mainly used for daily communication. British and Australian international students use Instagram, TikTok and Facebook at the core, and British media female graduate students also use Twitter (X) and LinkedIn to follow industry dynamics and accumulate academic materials; Australian international students use the above three as a daily must-have tool, Facebook is mostly used to check school notices, connect with clubs and communicate with teachers and students. On the whole, the core needs of international students to use overseas social platforms are concentrated in daily communication, information acquisition and entertainment and leisure, and some professional international students also accumulate relevant materials in combination with academic needs.

All four international students reflected that there are obvious geographical bias, cultural bias and political bias in the algorithm push of overseas social platforms, and the platform bias characteristics of different countries studying abroad are differentiated, which is closely related to the regional culture and public opinion environment of each country.

Platforms in various countries take local and related regional hotspots as the core push direction. For example, Korean platforms focus on promoting local entertainment content, such as K-pop-related news, Korean drama plots, etc. British platforms give priority to push local hotspots such as British royal dynamics, Premier League events and European-related information. Australian platforms, except for local hot In addition, it also focuses on pushing hot content from the United States, the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Canada and other Commonwealth countries, while the American platform focuses on pushing local hot spots and various controversial content.

Algorithms have high frequency and strong exposure in Western festivals, fashion trends, film and television variety shows, while Chinese culture-related content released by international students, such as traditional food, festival customs, etc., generally face the problems of sluggish traffic and insufficient exposure, and the traffic gap with daily sharing content is obvious.

The algorithm shows obvious one-sidedness and tendency in China-related content push, but there are differences in the degree of bias of platforms in different countries. The United States and Australia amplify China-related controversial and negative content. The overall positive proportion of China-related content is relatively low, and positive content faces the problem of insufficient exposure, which reflects the implicit bias of the algorithm.

According to the interview, the habits and needs of international students in the four countries to use overseas social platforms vary depending on the country where they study. The core needs of international students to use international social media are communication, information, entertainment and some academic needs. At the same time, there are geographical, cultural and political biases in the platform algorithm. The traffic of Chinese cultural content is low, the exposure of positive China-related content is insufficient, and

© 2026 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

the negative trend of China-related platforms in the United States and Australia is more obvious.

4 Findings and Discussion

4.1 Algorithmic black box: The dilemma of technological opacity

The core algorithm of social media is "big data + personalised content filtering and ranking." That is, it relies on databases and captures user preferences through likes, comments, shares, and dwell time to build user profiles. In this process, users frequently encounter content they are interested in, but the information spectrum narrows as they browse, making it easy to form filter bubbles. Traffic becomes relatively concentrated, and such a recommendation mechanism harbours invisible bias, namely the prioritisation of commercial interests.

As an expression of human thinking, algorithms themselves contain inherent values, including the summary of views from historical data sets, the embedding of views in engineer programming, the logical manifestation in platform design, and the unconscious embodiment of technical logic. [1]There have been a lot of relevant studies on gender, racial, ethnic and cultural prejudices caused by algorithms, and algorithms have also been constantly censored because they reinforce existing cultural prejudices around the world.[2]

When ordinary internet users interact with social media platforms, due to the opacity of algorithmic logic, models, and rules, even when account suspensions, traffic restrictions, or content removals occur, average users cannot perceive the underlying operational mechanisms or the basis for traffic distribution. In our interviews with Chinese students in the UK, we found that respondents voluntarily posted content related to traditional Chinese Dragon Boat Festival customs on international social media platforms as material for cross-cultural communication. However, the final like counts and viewership of this cultural content were mediocre, and its communication effectiveness was weak. Moreover, under largely identical conditions such as posting time and video length, the traffic for this video stood in stark contrast to other videos posted during the same period. This phenomenon directly reflects how the invisible labour of algorithms implicitly filters and restricts the reach of cross-cultural content. The platform's black-box algorithm determines the visibility and dissemination range of cultural content through opaque recommendation mechanisms, making it difficult for high-quality traditional Chinese cultural material to obtain fair exposure.

Similarly, in our interviews, two students studying in the United States and Australia both indicated that international social media discourse concerning China tends to be relatively negative, with insufficient positive exposure. The spread and overflow of negative information reinforce overseas audiences' stereotypes and cognitive biases about China, making it difficult to present a true and comprehensive image of China to overseas users and the international community from multiple perspectives.

In February 2022, Beijing hosted the 24th Winter Olympic Games. China adhered to the concept of green development, renovating and reusing venues from the 2008 Summer Olympics while strictly implementing pandemic prevention measures to protect athletes' health. Upholding the principles of greenness, inclusiveness, openness, and integrity, China called on the world to "journey to a shared future." This should have been an opportunity for people worldwide to witness a wonderful icy and snowy moment together, yet it be-

© 2026 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

came a "golden opportunity" for foreign media to smear China.

The Biden administration took the lead in boycotting the Beijing Winter Olympics on the alleged grounds of "human rights violations against the Uyghur people in China's Xinjiang," deciding not to send US government officials to the Games. The New York Times even implied in its reporting that Dinigeer Yilamujiang, a Uyghur female athlete who lit the Olympic cauldron, was an actress in a staged performance. The Beijing Winter Olympics once again placed China at the centre of global attention, yet in the eyes of Western media, the Games also became a "perfect opportunity" to vilify China, especially politically. The most common attacks by Western media on the Beijing Winter Olympics involved spreading political rumours unrelated to the Games.[3] It seems that praising oneself while demeaning others is a way to highlight American superiority. In The New York Times' coverage of the Beijing Winter Olympics, the US and the West were often portrayed as a "positive self" (e.g., frequently praising Western athletes' performances and achievements), while a "negative other" discourse about China was constructed.[4]

French media argued that constructing ski slopes in the Songshan Nature Reserve damaged the region's biodiversity and that the construction of accommodation, competition venues, and transport infrastructure emitted millions of tonnes of carbon dioxide.[5] French media claimed this contradicted China's reported emphasis on environmental protection and labelled it "greenwashing." They also accused China of adopting excessive (pandemic) precautions, which they deemed insufficiently humane.[5]

Influenced by Japan's political ideology, Japanese media coverage of the Beijing Winter Olympics was predominantly negative, attempting to politicise China's international sporting event. From various angles, they portrayed a negative image of China as incapable of hosting major international events, indifferent to environmental protection, violative of human rights, economically declining, and threatening peace and security.[6]

Western media acknowledge China's rising international status and its broad influence in global affairs, yet their reporting frameworks remain unable to shed ideological bias. This represents a continuation of China's image as the "negative other" in past Western media coverage.[7]

In contrast, German media coverage of the Beijing Winter Olympics was relatively objective, focusing on the opening and closing ceremonies, competition venues, and global context. Some reports offered positive assessments of China's role as a responsible major power as demonstrated during the Games.[8]

Under the current communication landscape where "traffic reigns supreme," the struggle for discursive power in the international public opinion arena has become increasingly intense. Faced with a complex and volatile international public opinion environment and deliberate vilification by Western media, we must take the initiative to break the deadlock: continuously strengthen our international communication capabilities, innovate communication methods, expand communication channels, tell good China stories, and convey a true and credible Chinese voice. We need to dispel prejudice with facts, shape China's international image as a civilised, harmonious, and beautiful country, steadily enhance our national cultural soft power and international discursive power, and let the world see the real China. Mainstream media such as People's Daily have integrated meticulous event organisation, a green and low-carbon philosophy, the nationwide enthusiasm for ice and snow sports, and the humane care of solidarity and friendship into their reporting framework. This not only conveys the objective reality that the Beijing Winter Olympics provided a fair competitive stage for ath-

© 2026 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

letes from around the world, but also communicates to the world the shared vision of “together for a shared future.”

4.2 Global competition: international competition for the right to speak

International social media platforms seem to be neutral, but in fact, "neutral" is a bias. Under the guise of neutrality, foreign social media platforms intend to create an atmosphere of "free discussion and free publication". Foreign social media platforms spread the content of China's excellent traditional culture and customs under the premise that international students do not violate the rules of the platform. However, the platform restricts the flow, but does not remove the content to slander China. Social media is the forefront of cross-cultural communication research today.[9] In a word, international social platforms do not guarantee the authenticity and accuracy of the content, and are often deeply influenced by international existing cognitive perceptions and Western ideologies.

Nowadays, social media platforms have become the key way for users to obtain news information.[10] The focus of the current international communication pattern has shifted from the traditional mass media information flow, official media shouting, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs's speech to the struggle for power on algorithm platforms. In other words, the media gains more international discourse as a medium that obtains more traffic. All media compete for users' limited attention resources in the visibility distribution of algorithms to maintain the possibility of "being seen". [11]Strengthening international communication is an important step to break the prejudice of Western public opinion and seize the right of international speech. It can take the initiative to shape a good image of China, enhance the international influence of the country, and create a good external environment for the development of the country. At the same time, it can convey Chinese concepts and wisdom to the world, promote civilization exchanges and mutual learning, and promote the construction of human Kind of community of destiny.

Based on the influence of algorithmic power, the resulting information cocoon deepens the existing prejudice against China's national image at the international level and hinders the positive construction of China's national image.The information cocoon is a theory formally proposed by American scholar Keith Sunstein in his 2006 book Information Utopia. That is, in an environment where information dissemination is highly developed and individuals can independently screen information, individuals actively filter information according to their own interests, preferences and values, coupled with the personalized recommendation and support of the platform algorithm, individuals are confined in a closed loop of information of homogenization, the same position and the same circle for a long time, like being wrapped in a cocoon, forming a self The information I solidify is a closed space. In the long run, the information to which people come into contact with is getting narrower and narrower, and the information tends to become more and more unified. It is difficult to accept different views and opinions, and at the same time, they have stereotypes about things they have never come into contact with. interviewee explanations about how they discover English-language content and decide what to watch revealed that recommender algorithms used by global platforms and social media play a pivotal role in pushing US and other English-language content to the top of recommendations, further strengthening the ‘self-reinforcing cycle of English language dominance.[12]According to the results of this questionnaire, 65.2% of the respondents believe that there is an obvious information cocoon on international social media platforms. 53.0% of the respondents said that China-related public opinions affect their views on

© 2026 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

China. 76.8% have encountered China-related content restrictions, deletions, etc., and most of them believe that the platform There is a difference in the review and recommendation of Chinese content. It can be seen that more than half of the respondents believe that long-term negative propagandas affect their views and opinions. Therefore, when foreign social media use algorithm black boxes to manipulate the public opinion environment against China, we must compete for "traffic", reverse the direction of propaganda against China, and truly shape a responsible power and a harmonious and beautiful China. Image, reduce misunderstandings and communication deviations.

It can be seen that the Chinese media's ability to improve the international discourse is no longer just to expand the channel matrix, but also to use good algorithm technology, optimize discourse expression, understand the current situation of international public opinion and the mechanism of public opinion generation, and do a good job of accurate communication, so as to establish a real and tangible international image of China and enhance the appeal of Chinese culture.

4.3. Active struggle: China's active breakthrough

China's current forms of international communication are mainly divided into two categories: one is the official media platform and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to speak and shout, and the other is private communication, which mainly relies on overseas students, overseas Chinese, etc. for publicity and dissemination.

In communication research, the mass media is considered to play an important role in shaping and disseminating the image of the country, and how the news media's construction of the national image affects the public perception and opinion is also concerned.[13]

Relying on CGTN, Xinhua News Agency and other central external communication agencies, the official media covers the world with irreplaceable advantages and authority. At the same time, the official media has entered overseas mainstream social media platforms, releasing short videos, pictures and live broadcasts, and using overseas channels to make a voice out. Secondly, use transnational media cooperation, joint editing and program co-production to expand the international discourse. As of May 2026, China has unilaterally exempted 50 countries, bilaterally exempted about 30 countries, and allowed 55 countries to cross the border for 240 hours. The visa-free policy can not only promote economic development, but also play a crucial role in diplomacy and communication. Visa exemption is a strong signal of China's openness and inclusiveness. The active opening up is to convey to the world: Chinese people welcome overseas people to travel to China. China is an open and inclusive country, not a closed and rigid country. Opening up visa exemption is conducive to improving the international image. Only when tourists come and see the real life can they change the original stereotyped negative impression of China. At the same time, they can use the communication and sharing of tourists to change the thoughts of others in their social circle, enhance the good impression of the people, and shape a good image of China.

The main “aboriginal” users of the social platform Xiaohongshu are mostly the young generation who prefer life, consumption, beauty and workplace. After a large influx of TikTok refugees, the Xiaohongshu platform shows the most authentic daily life of Chinese people. TikTok refugees take friendly interaction as the starting point, and link identity identification, border exploration and other behaviors into the overall expression of the platform. The core goal is to bridge the ecological differences between users in different dig-

© 2026 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

ital spaces and the digital psychological distance caused by cultural boundaries, so as to complete individual digital in foreign countries. The sustainable development of space. [14] For example: Chinese users say that foreign users need to pay "cat tax", that is, they need to post photos of cats as admission tickets to enter the platform, which is intended to express Chinese users' love for pets. Through simple interaction, foreign users can also deeply realize the true character and demeaner of Chinese people, which is more conducive to shaping China's image.

It is worth mentioning that the Xiaohongshu platform does not limit the large influx of foreign users. Overseas users enter the social media platform in China to truly understand the life scenes and personality of the Chinese people, and the communication effect is better. The openness of the platform access mechanism reduces the migration cost of digital refugees, allowing them to concentrate on the Xiaohongshu platform at the same time, creating a phenomenal media landscape.

The communication in today's era and the active resistance made by China are not only in the active shouting and release of the official media, but also in the active communication and friendly interaction of the people. In the relaxed daily online interaction, stereotyped prejudices are dispelled, and the real image of China can be naturally spread. Such a flexible and changeable communication and communication mode is to break In addition to the information cocoon, it eliminates cultural antagonism, shapes a good Chinese image, and avoids algorithmic hegemony, and provides a realistic path that can be implemented.

5 Conclusion

Under the current situation of rapid globalization and continuous breakthroughs in digital technology, international social media platforms such as Facebook, Twitter (X platform), TikTok, etc. have become key fields of international news and important platforms for public news and public opinion. The algorithm uses “big data + personalized content screening and sorting” to push content to users in a targeted manner. Although it significantly improves the accuracy of information dissemination, it also aggravates the information cocoon, resulting in user cognitive limitations, which in turn affects the objective judgment of events.

Under the objective existence of discourse hegemony in the international community, it is objectively difficult for foreign audiences to respond widely to the voices of China. This is exactly where China's news media needs to overcome difficulties and give full play to its wisdom.[15]

Overseas mainstream media are influenced by their own ideology and geopolitical influence, and there are often prejudices in China-related reports, slandering China's image by distorting facts and amplifying negative cases. This sets up public opinion barriers and obstacles for the international dissemination of China's national image. At the same time, the profit model of social media platform algorithms determines that algorithm push is interfered by commercial interests, which directly affects the visibility and exposure of media content.

After research, it is found that the audience's long-term exposure to negative information changes their view of China's international image, that is, the media agenda affects the audience's agenda.Therefore, at a time when digital media is highly developed, China's mainstream media and social media platforms need to

© 2026 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

understand the inherent logic of algorithms, break the monopoly of public opinion in the West, and then take the initiative to compete for the right to speak internationally.

References

[1].Debao Xiang, Chunxiao Cao, (2022). The value bias of international social media platform algorithms on China-related international public opinion and its governance. External communication, (10), 8-11. (in Chinese)

[2].Zhang,P.,(2021). “The'CEO'is a man:how Chinese artificial intelligence perpetuates gender biases”, South Morning Post.

[3].Jianyong Du, Ming Su, (2022). Exploring the practical path of China's international communication from the perspective of foreign media reports - Foreign media reports related to the Beijing Winter Olympics as an example. News Lovers, (09), 75-77. (in Chinese)

[4].Lin Zhang, Wenting Xue, Xiaoqing Meng, (2023). Western media discourse construction of China's international sports events and its coping strategies - Take the New York Times report on the Beijing Winter Olympics as an example. Journal of Beijing Sports University, 46(02), 117-128.(in Chinese)

[5].Fang Jia, Xuemei Deng, Ke Fan, (2024). Looking at China's external communication work from the French media's report on the Beijing Winter Olympics. International Public Relations, (24), 140-142. (in Chinese)

[6].Xuming Deng, Xinyue Zheng, Xiujuan Zhang, (2024). Research on the construction of China's national image in the coverage of the Beijing Winter Olympics in mainstream Japanese newspapers. Media Forum,7(16), 61-64+120.(in Chinese)

[7].Jingxuan Liu, Zixuan Zhang, Jie Yu, etc..(2022).Diversity and Prejudice: Characterization of China's national image in the Beijing Winter Olympics report by Western media. Journal of Wuhan Sports College, 56(03), 23-29+100. (in Chinese)

[8].Zhenxiang Zhao, Ao Du, Dehui Lin,(2022). International interpretation of China's image - Take the German media's report on the Beijing Winter Olympics as an example. News Spring and Autumn, (06), 21-30.(in Chinese)

[9].CROUCHER S M..(2021).Social networking and cultural adaptation:A theoretical model.Journal of International and Intercultural Communication,(4), 259-264.

[10].Greenwood, S., Perrin, A., &Duggan, M.(2016). Social media update 2016. Pew Research Center, 11(2),1-18.

[11].He Gong, Xu Dong, Geba Qiao, (2026). t search: Adaptable news production of mainstream media based on platform algorithms - investigation of two competing media during the Beijing Winter Olympics. News reporter, (02), 20-32. (in Chinese)

[12].Mast J De Ruiter K Kuppens AH .(2017) .Linguistic proximity and global flows of television. International Journal of Communication , 11(22), 2562–2583. (in Chinese)

[13].Wanta, W., Golan, G., &Lee, C.(2004). Agenda setting and international news, Media influence on public perceptions of foreign nations.Journalism&mass communication quarterly, 81(2), 364-377. (in Chinese)

[14].Beichen Gao, Shuai Zhang, Meiji Zhu, (2026).Global Digital Commonality: Platform Migration of TikTok Refugees and New Roads for International Communication - BERTopic Model Analysis Based on Xiao-

© 2026 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)

hongshu Notes. Future Communication, 33(01), 78-89. (in Chinese)
[15].Baiquan Ding, (2026).The construction and promotion of China's international discourse - doctrinal thinking on optimizing international communication. Northwest Normal University Newspaper (Social Science Edition), 63(01), 65-74. (in Chinese)
[16].Abdelhamid M M A ,Ali M S M .,(2026).Algorithmic recommendations and echo chambers: User awareness in the UA.Social Sciences & Humanities Open,13102930-102930.
[17].Wenqi H ,(2025).The Algorithmic Shaping of Aesthetic Preferences: A Comprehensive Analysis of Netflix's Recommendation System and Audience Responses.Frontiers in Art Research,7(7).
[18].Geber S ,Stahel L . (2026). Recommended to you: an experimental study of normative influences from algorithmic and social recommendations on social media.AI & SOCIETY,1-14.
[19].Kelley C .(2023).”Shadowbanning is not a thing”: black box gaslighting and the power to independently know and credibly critique algorithms.Information, Communication & Society, 26(6),1226-1243.

© 2026 by the author(s); licensee Mason Publish Group, this work for open access publication is under the Creative Commons Attribution International License (CC BY 4.0). (http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/)