

Opportunities, Anomalies and Governance of New Media under Capital Logic: Case Study of WeChat Subscription "Mi Meng"

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Abstract. In recent years, with the development of Internet technology, the form of news media has changed, and a variety of new media have emerged. The integration of new media and different industries not only changes the operation of other industries but also re-integrates the relationship between new media and other industries. At the same time, many media companies pursue "exposure" rate and short-term interests. They disregard professional ethics and social morality, create negative public opinion, mislead public opinion, and become the slaves of capital. In the era of mobile internet, a group of self-media (we media) subscription accounts, represented by "Mi Meng", emerges and prevails because of their unique communication characteristics and distinct style of writing. However, they also gradually lose themselves in the "traffic/flow carnival" and eventually went to the end of being "blocked" in the whole network. This paper analyses the content and the dissemination pattern and scope of self-media subscription account "Mi Meng", and then makes an attempt to provide a reference for the governance of new media.

Keywords: capital logic, new media, government, Mi Meng.

1. Introduction

1.1 Communication and Development of New Media

New media emerges under the new technology support system, such as digital magazines, digital newspapers, digital broadcasting, mobile phone short messages, mobile TV, network, desktop windows, digital TV, digital movies, and touch media. New media caters for the fragmented leisure and entertainment time, and is highly interactive. New media pays attention to personalized expression, and everyone can become an operator. The dissemination and renewal of new media is fast. Moreover, the cost is cheap. On the one hand, joining the new media industry is rather simple, while the process lacks supervision and restriction. The amount of media information is large, which makes it easy to disseminate false information, sell anxiety, stir up negative emotions and so on, which jeopardizes social harmony and stability. On the other hand, the audience of new media lack judgment and are inclined to accept stimulating and entertaining information. There are two main reasons for the dilemma of "difficult governance" in the new media industry. For one thing, the new media industry produces huge amount of information and complex content every day. For another, the lack of a "gatekeeper" role leaves most self-media operators unregulated.

1.2 The Mi Meng Event

As a representative successful commercial self-media operator, Mi Meng has more than 1 million fans and more than 1 million views on multiple articles in 2016. It has been reported that Mi Meng's WeChat subscription has attracted more than 10 million followers and more than 3 million daily visits. In 2019, Mi Meng's WeChat subscription published an article called "The 'Death' of a Gaokao Champion from a Poor Family", but it is suspected that it caused negative public opinion by fabricating stories and deliberately inciting emotions. On February 1, 2019, Mi Meng first announced on Weibo that the WeChat subscription "Mi Meng" would be suspended for two months and that of Weibo would be closed. Subsequently, Mi Meng issued an apology letter on the Internet, saying: "We have a profound reflection on the negative impact of the Mi Meng team. We sincerely apologize for the mistakes we have made." On February 21, 2019, Mi Meng officially canceled the WeChat subscription "Mi Meng". The key media subscriptions, such as Today's Headlines, Fenghuang, A Little Information and Zhihu, all issued a statement indicating the permanent closure of accounts such as "Mi Meng" and "Limited Talented Youth". On March 14, 2019, Mi Meng's Holgus Aifa Red Pack

Cultural Media Co., Ltd. added liquidation information. The company is a wholly-owned subsidiary of Beijing October 5th Film and Television Media Co., Ltd. on. At the end of March 2019, Mi Meng's October 5th Film and Television Media Company officially dissolved.

1.3 The Dilemma of New Media

How does the new media seek profits? How is it governed by the logic of capital? The Mi Meng event is a representative example. This paper will start with the operation of Mi Meng, the profit model and negative externalities of marketing, the social basis and theoretical analysis of "Mi Meng" media, and finally, gives the countermeasures and suggestions of new media governance.

2. Mi Meng's Manipulation

2.1 Accurate Positioning of Audiences

Mi Meng's fans are mainly girls, and the ratio of male to female is close to 1:4. Female groups pay attention to emotional expression, and Mi Meng's views from the perspective of women tend to have an emotional resonance with most female fans. Besides, Mi Meng fans are mostly "post-90s". Most fans have just graduated from school and entered society, lacking professional and romantic experience. Mi Meng's tweets mainly focus on gender topics based on marriage and life, and express the concern and understanding for women. Mi Meng's articles are always able to create reversals or surprises, which are contrary to everyday cognition. Mi Meng positioned herself as a reader's "friend", shortening the distance between the writer and readers.

2.2 Content Creation Techniques

Mi Meng's articles are very eye-catching from the title, such as "To the Bitch". The articles aim to catch the eyes of the audience with a compelling title. Although the title and the content are quite different, this strategy can increase the click volume of the article.

Mi Meng's words are quite straightforward: "bitch", "cheap man", "ugly man", and the like. Mi Meng uses spoken language directly in her article to make reading more fluent and easy to understand. These barely spoken words also played the role of emotional catharsis. In her articles, Mi Meng often says some shocking words contrary to common sense, such as "If you ask me which is the longest procrastination in my life, my answer will always be the next time", and "The sexiest picture I can think of the of is a man kneeling on a keyboard". These seemingly rebellious sentences follow the readers' preferences and bring a kind of "pleasant" feeling to Mi Meng's articles. Nonetheless, they are just the catharsis of negative feelings.

Mi Meng's article uses simple sentences and short paragraphs of the text presentation, in line with readers' fast-paced, fragmented reading habits. At the same time, the themes of Mi Meng's works are closely related to the readers' life, such as romantic topics, interpersonal relationships and so on. Mi Meng's articles draw attention thorough shocking titles, point out the theme at the beginning, and then insert a daily example to enhance credibility. The use of clear judgments and a clear stance brings readers a smooth reading experience. In this fast, strong emotional stimulation, most of the audience will not use critical or questioning eyes to examine the article but simply accept the values inculcated by Mi Meng.

2.3 Media Operating Method

Mi Meng pays great attention to the interaction with fans. Firstly, Mi Meng has her own "senior" fan group. The WeChat Group collects topics, materials, and ideas from the fans. These data enable Mi Meng to understand the dynamics of fans' preference and taste, thus making adjustment of the push content. Secondly, Mi Meng also devotes to abundant large-scale fan interaction. She initiates activities or competitions and announces awards. This interaction allows Mi Meng to directly see the dynamics of fans, hotspots of concern, and timely follow-up of her content.

In addition to interaction, another major feature of Mi Meng is the promotion of soft advertising. Mi Meng writes the advertisement as a tweet article to ensure the pageviews. Meanwhile, when Mi Meng advertises, she also tweets an update, killing two birds with one stone.

3. Profit Model and Negative Externalities of Marketing Subscriptions

3.1 Profit Model

Mi Meng's main source of profit is product promotion and knowledge payment. Because of Mi Meng's precise media operation, she has a huge number of active fans, so the price of product promotion is high. Mi Meng is good at inadvertently expressing the ideas she wants to convey in the article, and also includes the advertising ideas that she wants to promote at the end of the tweet article. Readers accept the idea inadvertently and indirectly in reading articles, identify with the advertising intention, and form as potential consumer groups. For example, on February 15, 2016, the "Best Marriage is a Spiritual Portal Couple" was published on the Mi Meng's WeChat subscription. The article introduced the "social topic" of the relationship between "Phoenix Men" (Men from poor family) and Shanghai women and expressed the public's recognition of marriage values in the new era -- the portal couple has never been material, it is spiritual, and that to cherish the partner in one's life does not depend on family status and origin, but values. At the end of the article, Mi Meng combines the advertisement of "cherishing is the right person; cherishing is making the best" with the independent feminist outlook on life and love. She also outputs her values and spreads the brand value. This commercial soft-text propaganda reduces the reader's disgust, and to a certain extent arouses the sympathy of fans, and achieves a good advertising effect.

With the gradual expansion of Mi Meng's fan group, later Mi Meng had a strong fan base and began to pay for knowledge. In the early stage, Mi Meng's products are the workplace oriented, relying on the flow basis, while in the later stage, Mi Meng tries to turn into a knowledge payment platform.

3.2 Mi Meng's Negative Externality

Due to the limited channels of communication, the traditional news media in the past established a reader-based and advertising-based business model while fulfilling their social responsibilities. In the Internet era, this old business model has been subverted, while the new model has not yet been formed. The media may abandon social responsibility because of business objectives, and even regard business objectives as the primary choice. For example, to win huge advertising fees, Mi Meng abandoned her more rational writing style, advocated extreme feminism, publicized her arrogant personality, and used vulgar words to attract fans. For the fans who are easy to be guided by public opinion and the young readers who have not yet formed a complete world outlook, Mi Meng is certainly harmful and misleading. If this negative externality is allowed to be amplified, it will cause the whole new media industry to lose its credibility. On February 1, 2019, after the Mi Meng event, *People's Daily* commented on the incident: "Mi Meng sent apology letters, avoiding the truth, and avoiding the important part, revealing the consistent thinking of rubbing the ball. They can be a written merchant, but they cannot mislead the public, nor can they manipulate the mood of the public. If they are not sure about the life values, apologies are just for avoidance, and taking corresponding social responsibilities is just a matter of saying."

4. Social Foundation and Theoretical Analysis of New Media

4.1 Social Foundation

"Post-truth" was chosen by the Oxford Dictionary as the 2016 word of year, which refers to that "resorting to emotions and personal beliefs can influence public opinion more than stating objective facts." Compared with rigorous discourse and objective evaluation, people tend to choose short, vivid, entertaining contents that are consistent with their views and produce more intense stimulation to

their senses. Meanwhile, Postman pointed out that "form determines content". When the media is TV, video, or entertaining network tweets, the form of the media determines that it cannot convey logical and argumentative contents. The network environment is not suitable for serious and academic content but rather tailored for entertainment.

Another concept is "Information Cocoons", which refers to the phenomenon that people's information field will be habitually guided by their interests, thus shackling their lives in cocoons like silkworm cocoons. The information cocoon room not only increases the difficulty of communication between different groups, but also limits the range of information received by individuals, thus constantly strengthening existing interests and views, and hindering the possibility of accepting other views. In a large information cocoon house, we constantly reinforce the external wall or barrier, gradually losing critical insights.

In such a network and social environment, rationality disappears, replaced by fast-food entertainment and reinforcing one's values over and over again. As is seen by public, there are usually plentiful applause and adulation in the commentary area. If someone objects, he or she will be attacked by a crowd. The cost of expressing opinions on the Internet is very low. Authors often make a rough distinction between opinions and blocking logical discourse. Direct presentation of ideas can attract the attention of readers and bring reading flow to content access.

In such an environment, Mi Meng established itself as one who dares to love and hate, and expresses roughly, which is close to life but has its fantasy, will certainly cater for most people's needs. Once the readers agree with Mi Meng's values, influenced by "information cocoon room", the reader will naturally resist the content of criticizing Mi Meng. In explaining their favorite WeChat subscription account, they also strengthen their recognition of Mi Meng's content.

4.2 Capital Logic Invading Public Fields

Under the control of capital logic, new media gradually lose or even voluntarily abandon their public attributes. For example, to protect their interests, new media organizations often reach compromises with political groups or other interests groups to cover up, modify or reconstruct some important events. For example, to win circulation or advertising revenue, the media will take pleasing the public as the orientation, by means of "star hype", creating the crisis and other ways to increase click and to earn more profit. Under market conditions, capital logic exerts a great influence on the publicity of new media. This capital logic does not mean that new media organizations may be affected by interest groups, but that those new media organizations operated in the market economy will safeguard their interests and even become an independent interests group. Entering the era of media, the whole society moving towards media, the seriousness of the situation is far beyond its expectation. Firstly, the social stratum differentiation, the unbalance of discourse power among different strata and the "representative fracture" (proposed by Wang Hui) have emerged. Secondly, the self-Media society constantly weakens the organizational power, mobilization power and cohesion of the Party. The Party's political ideals and programs have declined in appeal to the masses. Thirdly, governments at all levels pay more attention to the self-media to some extent, so they are easily trapped by the interest groups and media groups, and neglect the mass work, resulting in the phenomenon of "party media". At the same time, due to the link between political parties and the masses, new media organizations have evolved into new political participants, agenda setters, political mobilizers, and organizers of political activities, and the phenomenon of "media part sanitation" has emerged.

5. Strategies and Suggestions

5.1 Laws and Regulations

Everything needs rules. New media and self-media must be under the supervision of the legal network regulations so that the network will not become an extrajudicial place. Establishing good laws and regulations can be a good way to restrict the inappropriate comments and articles published by new media, especially by self-media personnel.

5.2 Public Attributes of New Media

The development of media should not depend solely on the choice of the market mechanism. Even in the United States, where the market economy and media industry are most developed, the existence and development of new media organizations are first regulated by state-related public policies and then regulated by the market. There is still much room for improvement of new media in China. It is necessary to use the "visible hand" of public policy system and system to ensure that the new media can provide equal news and speech services to the society as public utilities, such as education and health, to guarantee the people's right to know and express their opinions, and to shape and influence public policies taking the people's opinions into account.

5.3 Social Responsibility of News Media

The sense of social responsibility of the media plays an extremely important role in creating a harmonious environment of public opinion and a sound social atmosphere. Today, capital logic dominates news production, new media organizations at all levels, especially traditional media, which requires media practitioners and organizations adhering to journalism professionalism and maintain a sense of social responsibility in the market economy. Through policies and regulations, it is essential to guide all kinds of news media to put social benefits in the first place, adhere to the correct guidance of public opinion, distinguish right from wrong. What's more, universities and news media institutions should be guided to cultivate professional talents with decent moral character and respect their labor achievements.

5.4 The Right to Know and Discourse Power of the Masses

The new media cannot just be the spokesperson of those who hold political and economic power, and the content of the news media can not only reflect the interests of those elite groups. Instead, the voices of the masses of different social groups should be expressed freely in the media, so that the party and the government can accurately understand the public opinion and truly grasp the current situation of Chinese society. To break the monopoly of discourse, the new media should increase the coverage of the opinions of the masses at the bottom, and the scholars who put forward reform proposals in the media should widely represents the masses' opinions. In addition, the political transparency of various reforms should be enhanced to ensure public confidence in the fairness of decision-making so that the reform policies of the state can be believed to represent the fundamental interests of the vast majority of the people.

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