

Research on the Democratic Political Construction of Contemporary China from the Perspective of Technology Empowerment: Illustrated by the Case of Huan Yu in Liaocheng on April 14

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Abstract

Technology and power have been inseparable for a long time, and the former has a profound impact on the latter. In particular, Internet technology, as a new technology produced in the fourth information revolution, is empowering the society as well as the country. Therefore, this technology plays an important role in the development of contemporary Chinese democratic politics. Taking the case that Huan Yu stabbed the individual who insulted his mother in Liaocheng, Shandong Province on April 14, 2016 as an example, Internet technology has promoted China's political system to follow the development trend from information closure to openness and transparency. The mechanism of information transmission has changed from one way to two-way interaction. The governance concept of the contemporary Chinese party and government has transmitted from social control to social governance.

Keywords

Internet technology, technology empowerment, the case of Huan Yu in Liaocheng on April 14.

1. Introduction

Science and technology play an important role in the construction of democratic politics in contemporary China. In other words, Internet technology empowers both the country and society. Then contact the case that Huan Yu stabbed the individual who insulted his mother in Liaocheng, Shandong Province on April 14, 2016. How did the government strengthen its governance capabilities in the Internet space? How do social forces realize effective political participation in virtual spaces?

2. Proposal of Technology Empowerment

Democratic politics has been an important political vocabulary for thousands of years. It has different meanings in different era backgrounds and countries. From the "direct democracy" of the city-state in the ancient Greek period to the representative democracy of the capitalist countries in modern times (namely citizens elect the representatives to form a system of representative agencies to exercise state power, which is a form of indirect democracy). As a socialist country, under the guidance of the theoretical system of socialism with Chinese characteristics, contemporary China has developed a new model of democratic political development—deliberative democracy. Deliberative democracy "emphasizes that consensus can be reached on decision-making and legislation through ordinary citizen participation in the context of a pluralistic society. Its core elements are consultation and consensus. Deliberative democracy can help correct the shortcomings of liberalism, and it can also help separate political community's political practice"[1]. Of course, the development model of

contemporary China's deliberative democratic politics is still in the early stages of development, and it needs to be further improved in the continuous polishing of theory and practice.

Shortcomings of contemporary China's deliberative democracy construction are concentrated in the state-society relationship. For example, the channels for social participation in political participation need to be further expanded, and the modernization of national and local government governance capabilities lacks a certain driving force. And technology empowerment helps to solve the above problems. In 2007, Singaporean scholar Yongnian Zheng put forward the concept of technology empowerment in his book *Technology Empowerment: China's Internet, State and Society*. Specifically, after the Chinese society entered the new media era, Internet technology empowered the country while strengthening the central and government's ability to conduct national and local governance, while also empowering the society and broadening the channels for people's political participation-Political participation online. According to the 40th *Statistical Report on the Development of the Internet in China* released by the China Internet Network Information Center (CNNIC) on August 4, 2017, as of June 2017, the number of Chinese Internet users has reached 751 million. The so-called online political participation is understood according to its literal meaning, which means that the public exercises legal power to supervise and advise political actors in the political system and their political actions through Internet channels such as Weibo and forums. So, how does China's increasingly strengthened Internet technology empower the public to promote the development of contemporary Chinese democratic politics? Next, the author will take case of Huan Yu in Liaocheng as an example to further analyze the above problems.

3. Introduction of the Case: Case of Huan Yu in Liaocheng on April 14

On March 23, 2017, a report published by Southern Weekend reporters in the Internet space sparked heated discussions among netizens. The report describes a case in which a son assassinated his mother on April 14, 2016. The defendant's mother, Yinxia Su, was the person in charge of Shandong Yuanda Industry and Trade Co., Ltd. in Liaocheng City, Shandong Province. Due to the unsuccessful fund turnover, she borrowed 1.35 million yuan from Xuezhao Wu with a monthly interest rate of 10%. Since then, she has repaid 1.85 million yuan and a set of real estate worth 700,000 yuan, but still has not paid off her debts. On April 14, 2016, Zhihao Du, a debt collection agent sent by Xuezhao Wu and others, used extreme means to insult Yinxia Su and her son. In the case of no results from the alarm, Yinxia Su's son Huan Yu stabbed Zhihao Du and four other individuals with a fruit knife. Zhihao Du died of excessive blood loss, and the remaining three, two were seriously injured and one was slightly injured. On February 17, 2017, the Liaocheng Intermediate Court of Shandong Province sentenced the defendant to life imprisonment for intentional injury. This was an ordinary criminal case. Websites, newspapers, and their staff use audiovisual technology and printing technology to transfer case information to the next higher level of government and society, making many netizens question the first-instance judgment of the case, creating strong public opinion pressure, and the higher level As a result, the government has further compensated for the information asymmetry between the government and the government at the next lower level, and reorganized the law enforcement agencies to collect relevant information to produce a fair judgement.

Firstly, the news media and their staff used information technology to obtain information resources for police officers dispatched by the Liaocheng Public Security System to implement malfeasance. The Southern Weekend reporter reported that "multiple on-site personnel confirmed that after entering the reception room, the police said that" accounting is OK, but

they cannot be beaten ", and then left." Many netizens pointed out that relevant police officers had committed malfeasance and they After receiving the alarm call and rushing to the scene, he did not stop the improper behavior of the personnel at the scene to prevent the situation from further deteriorating, but only discouraged him, causing the defendant Yu Huan to lose his last hope, which was extremely emotionally unstable. Under extreme circumstances, resulting in irreparable consequences. Secondly, the information resources obtained by the news media and their staff using information technology provide effective arguments for judging whether the defendant's behavior is a crime of intentional injury or excessive defense. According to Article 292 of the *Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China*, the crime of intentional injury refers to a criminal act that intentionally and illegally harms the body of another person to a certain serious degree and is punishable by the criminal law. In addition, Professor Xingpei Yang, a professor at East China University of Political Science and Law, pointed out that the defensive behavior refers to the victim's defense against the situation where illegal violations are ongoing. According to Article 20 (2) of the *Criminal Law of the People's Republic of China*, those who are justified in defense and obviously exceed the maximum to cause significant damage should be held criminally responsible, but the punishment should be reduced or eliminated [2]. The relevant newspaper reports contained the following information: Yu Huan's behavior caused death, and the illegal violations by Zhihao Du and others did not cause serious injury. The above information provides an effective basis for judging whether Yu Huan's behavior is excessive defense. Third, Internet users obtain relevant information in the Internet space, which provides some basis for judging the effectiveness of law enforcement actions of the judicial system and public security system of Liaocheng City, Shandong Province. The last part of the Southern Weekly report on the case of Yu Huan's assassination of her mother mentioned that Zhihao Du had killed a 14-year-old girl and escaped until the case of Huan Yu in Liangcheng occurred, he was still beyond the arm of the law. Based on this, it is naturally questioned whether these local government law enforcement departments perform their corresponding functions in a true sense.

4. Case Analysis under Technology Empowerment

In the face of the above problems, the use of technology empowerment by the state and local governments has effectively strengthened their governance capabilities, while social forces have broadened their access to information and enriched sources of information, thereby enhancing their practical impact on the political system. Specifically, in the case of Huan Yu in Liaocheng on April 14, Internet technology has promoted the internalization of the political system from information closure to information openness, from one-way upload to the establishment of a two-way interaction mechanism, from social management with the government as a single subject to Social governance and services in which multiple subjects participate together.

4.1. Access to Information Resources from Closed to Open

On February 17, 2017, the Liaocheng Intermediate Court of Shandong Province conducted the first trial of the case of assassination and death of the mother and produced a sentence of life imprisonment. And until March 23, 2017, when reporters from Southern Weekly published the entire case report on the Internet, the majority of netizens learned about the cause and effect of the case in the Internet space. Immediately afterwards, most netizens expressed strong dissatisfaction with the trial results of the case, forming a strong public opinion pressure on the Internet. On June 23, 2017, the Shandong Provincial Higher People's Court publicly conducted a second trial of the Huan case. During the entire trial, the relevant court personnel posted 176 Weibo with pictures and videos, allowing people across the country to Microblog, WeChat and other media platforms understand the trial process of the entire case.

Gabriel Almond advocates that the formation, implementation and revision of political decision-making must go through the three steps of input of political demand and support, output of political decision-making, and feedback [3]. In contemporary China, especially before the advent of the Internet era, access to information in some local political systems was basically closed, and relevant administrative staff paid more attention to the output of political decisions and relatively ignored political input. In the case of Huan Yu on April 14, the entire trial process of the first trial was basically closed, and the public did not obtain complete information about the case in the first instance. So why can the information resources related to the Yu Huan case go from closed to open?

First of all, the widening of network channels for paper media is a key factor. In the early days of the founding of the People's Republic of China, the country mainly transmitted information to society through newspapers and periodicals. In other words, the Chinese people, especially the residents of large and medium-sized cities, mainly obtain information about various government orders and regulations issued by the state through newspapers. However, paper media also has defects that cannot be ignored. The information obtained by ordinary people through it does not have the timeliness and integrity, and the complete and effective acquisition of information resources is a prerequisite for the reliability of an event. The Internet as a new type of media can better make up for this shortcoming. Southern Weekend, as a mass media with a long history of publication, has a high degree of credibility among the masses, and can quickly make more than 700 million Chinese netizens in China understand the whole process of the incident in a timely manner through the Internet. Secondly, Weibo has a powerful information penetration function and comment function. Weibo officially entered people's field of vision in 2009 and became a popular self-media platform in the Internet space. Events across the country can be quickly spread through Weibo. In addition, the comment function of Weibo also enables the public to express their views on an event through Weibo, and even forms a collective action, thereby raising social events to political events. In the process of the second trial, Shandong Provincial Higher People's Court used Weibo as a medium for the public trial process. On the one hand, it responded to strong public opinion pressure, and on the other hand, allowed netizens to grasp relevant information in time to make effective feedback. The above two factors make the trial result truly reflect the fairness of combining legal principles and human feelings.

4.2. Information Transfer Mechanism: from One-way to Two-way Interaction

In the case of Yu Huan's assassination and death of his mother who occurred on April 14, 2016, the Liaocheng Intermediate Court in Shandong Province sentenced the defendant to life imprisonment for intentional injury. After the public learned that the whole case had gone through the relevant website, especially the victim insulted the defendant's mother by extreme means, it caused a strong public opinion pressure in the Internet space. In the end, the Shandong Higher Court made a fair and just judgment based on comprehensive jurisprudence and public opinion in the Internet space, so that the concept of governing the country according to law was further implemented in local judicial trials. On February 1, 2018, Yu Huan was selected as one of the *Top Ten Cases for Promoting the Rule of Law in 2017*.

The above case shows that the core characteristics of the information transmission mechanism existing between the state and society have gradually changed from one-way uploading to two-way interaction. The uploaded information transmission mechanism has a certain historical origin. The traditional thought in ancient China advocated following the ethical rules of three outlines and five constants, that is, the monarch is the minister, the father is the son, the husband is the wife, and the ethics, wisdom, and wisdom. Therefore, for thousands of years, the idea of "official standard" has been Deep-rooted. On this basis, there are serious political and technological phenomena in some local governments in

contemporary China. Scholar Shengju Fang believes that technicalization of politics means that, due to the continuous penetration of natural technology, social technology and thinking technology into the political field, professional differentiation and specialization have emerged in the political field, political operations have become patterned and formalized, and political behavior has become more precise, standardized, and stereotyped [4], such as the professional civil service system and the technicalization of the administrative field. The trend of political technology has led to the problem of expert-only compliance within these local governments, that is, technical officials occupy a key position in the formation of political decisions. However, the public's feedback in the process of policy formulation and implementation is often not valued. With the popularization of Internet technology across the country, more and more people are more inclined to choose non-institutionalized Internet channels to express their wishes than institutionalized channels of interest expression. After the government receives feedback from social individuals through the Internet, it will make corresponding adjustments in the subsequent policy process to form a good two-way interaction mechanism.

4.3. Governance Model: from Government's One-way Control to Multi-subjects' Participation in Social Governance

The above has involved the political phenomenon that, in contemporary China, the relationship between the state and society has changed from the one-way control of the state to society to the participation of multiple actors including state and social forces in social governance. Before the reform and opening up, the state implemented one-way control over society, mainly because the social forces at that time were relatively weak and needed to rely on the state's power for further development. Since the reform and opening up, as social interest groups have continued to diversify, they have increasingly become important actors in participating in social governance, especially after the advent of the Internet era. With the support of Internet technology, a variety of social organizations and individuals express their opinions. For example, the role of "grassroots leader" is now common on the Internet. Lingbo Tu pointed out that China's online opinion leaders have undergone a 20-year history of change from the BBS and blog period to the Weibo period, and then to the "post-Weibo period", which has public and organizational characteristics [5]. Therefore, their insights can profoundly affect the public's cognitive orientation. In short, in the age of the Internet, the ability of national and local governments at all levels to integrate multiple social forces to build a diverse social governance structure is crucial to the further improvement of contemporary Chinese democratic political development models.

5. Conclusion

In summary, with the further development of Internet technology, the phenomenon that Internet technology empowers the state and society will further spread and strengthen. Combining the above claims with the case of Huan Yu Which emerged in Liaocheng on April 14, the author has reached the following conclusions: In the Internet era, the information resources within the political system have changed from closed to open, and the one-way upload and release mechanism between the state, the government, and society has changed to a two-way interactive communication, the state's governance model has shifted from a one-way government control society to a multi-action subject's joint participation in social governance. On this basis, the forces of the state and society must continue to play a joint role. Specifically, under the premise of complying with the existing legal system, the government, as the main body of state power, must strengthen the construction of electronic government and enhance the transparency and openness of government information. Social forces need to strengthen their own construction, which is mainly reflected in the use of advanced Internet

technologies to improve their organizational level, and then obtain relevant information resources through legal and effective methods, and actually participate in social governance. In short, diversified actors will jointly exert the positive effects brought by Internet technology, overcome their negative effects, and ultimately promote the further improvement of the development model of contemporary Chinese democratic politics. Then the state can strengthen its voice in the international political structure to a larger extent.

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