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Research on the Shaping Mechanism of User Behavior by Media under the Digital Capitalism Model

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Abstract: This article delves deeply into the shaping mechanism of media on user behavior and the multi-dimensional influences it generates. It is pointed out that the media shapes users' cognition, social interaction and behavioral habits in all aspects through content presentation, interaction mode, etc., and plays an important role in social culture, value construction and international communication. However, this shaping mechanism has drawbacks such as distorting cognition and leading to cultural homogenization. To address the challenges, the article emphasizes the crucial roles of technological ethics and user subjectivity in the construction of the balance mechanism. Technological ethics regulate media behavior, and the return of user subjectivity enables users to become active participants, so as to achieve harmonious coexistence and sustainable development among media, users and society.

Keywords: Digital Capitalism; Media; User Behavior; Algorithm Recommendation; Attention Economy.

1. Introduction

The rapid development of digital technology has given rise to a new form of digital capitalism. As an important carrier of digital technology, the media has not only become a hub for information dissemination, but also evolved into a core field for capital proliferation and power operation [1]. Under the combined effect of algorithmic recommendation, big data analysis and platform economy, the shaping of user behavior by the media presents unprecedented complexity and concealment. Users have transformed from passive recipients in the era of traditional media to "data producers" and "behavior shapers" in the digital media ecosystem[3]. Their cognitive patterns, consumption decisions and social interactions are all profoundly influenced by the media mechanism.

This article aims to explore the shaping mechanism of user behavior by the media under the digital capitalism model. Through the cross-analysis framework of media environmental science, communication political economy and behavioral economics, it reveals how the media achieves systematic intervention in user behavior through the interwoven operation of technological logic, capital logic and power logic.

2. Literature Review

2.1 The Theoretical Context of Digital Capitalism

The concept of Digital Capitalism has gradually become an important issue in the criticism of communication studies and media political economy since the early 21st century. Schiller believes that [2] The capitalization application of information technology has permeated the entire process of production, circulation and consumption, forming a capital appreciation model centered on data flow. Taylor believes that the rise of the platform economy and the emergence of data as a new production factor are the core features of digital capitalism. Vercellone proposed [4] that digital capitalism achieves the implicit extraction of users' surplus value through the exploitation mechanism of "digital labor", and its essence is the deep integration of capital logic and technological logic.

In recent years, with the rapid development of artificial intelligence, big data and algorithm technologies, the theoretical connotation of digital capitalism has been continuously expanding. Srnicek pointed out in "Platform capitalism" [5] that platform enterprises have constructed a new type of capital accumulation model by monopolizing data interfaces and users' attention. Van Dijck et al. In "The platform society: It is emphasized in "Public values in a

connective world" [6] that the core contradiction of digital capitalism lies in the monopolistic possession of user data by platform enterprises and the absence of user data rights. In "Labor Order under 'Digital Control'" [7], domestic scholar Chen Long, through empirical research, revealed the labor alienation phenomenon of digital gig workers such as food delivery riders under algorithmic control.

2.2 Research on the Relationship between Media and User Behavior

The exploration of the relationship between media and user behavior in the field of communication studies presents a binary opposition between technological determinism and social constructivism. The technological determinist McLuhan holds that "the medium is the message" and believes that the medium technology itself determines the patterns of human perception and behavior [8]. Social constructors hold that users endow media with social significance through meaning negotiation, and the communication process is the result of symbolic interaction and power negotiation [9].

In recent years, the cross-disciplinary research of behavioral economics and computational communication has provided a new perspective for understanding the shaping of user behavior by the media. Samuels once proposed [10] that algorithmic recommendation systems, through personalized content push, construct users' "information cocoons", resulting in cognitive narrowing. It was found through experiments [11] that algorithmic recommendation significantly reduced users' willingness to be exposed to heterogeneous information. Furthermore, the development of affective computing technology enables the media to optimize the content push strategy through users' emotional feedback, further enhancing the media's ability to control users' behaviors.

In the field of social media, the digitalized monitoring of user behavior has become a research hotspot. Platform enterprises have achieved precise prediction of user needs and behavioral intervention by comprehensively collecting user behavior data. The digitalization of user behavior not only enhances the efficiency of information dissemination but also brings risks such as privacy leakage and algorithmic discrimination.

3. Analysis of the Media's Shaping Mechanism of User Behavior

3.1 Media Content Presentation and Construction of User Cognitive Framework

As the core carrier of information dissemination, the way media presents its content profoundly influences users' cognitive framework of the world. In the era of information explosion, the media construct a unique cognitive schema through carefully planned topics, narrative structures and visual symbols, imperceptibly shaping users' understanding of reality. For instance, in news reporting, which events the media choose to cover, how they describe the background of the events, and what language style they adopt will all influence users' judgment of the significance of the events and their understanding of their essence. When the media continuously focuses on a certain social issue and interprets it from a specific perspective, users tend to form a fixed cognitive pattern about the issue. Once this cognitive framework is formed, it has relative stability and is difficult to change easily.

Furthermore, the entertainment-oriented tendency of media content is also reshaping users' cognitive patterns. To attract users' attention, the media often package serious topics in an entertaining way and present them in a light and humorous manner. Although this presentation method enhances the dissemination power of information, it also leads users to be more inclined to focus on the entertainment elements when receiving information, while neglecting the thinking about the deeper meaning of the information. Being in such an information environment for a long time, users' cognitive abilities may gradually deteriorate, making it difficult for them to form in-depth analysis and independent judgment on complex issues. Therefore, in the process of content presentation, the media need to balance the interest and seriousness of information dissemination and avoid the distortion of users' cognitive framework caused by excessive entertainment.

3.2 Evolution of Media Interaction Patterns and Users' Social Behaviors

With the rise of social media, the interaction mode between media and users has undergone fundamental changes. In the era of traditional media, users were mainly passive recipients of information. However, in the era of social media,

users have become important nodes in information dissemination and participate in the process of information dissemination through behaviors such as liking, commenting and sharing. This transformation of the interaction mode profoundly influences users' social behaviors.

On social media platforms, in order to gain others' attention and recognition, users often adjust their social behaviors according to the platform rules and popular trends. For instance, on short-video platforms, users tend to create and share entertaining and novel content to attract more likes and fans. This behavioral pattern not only changes users' creative habits, but also influences their social values, making them pay more attention to external performance and social image.

Meanwhile, group interaction on social media has also strengthened users' herd mentality. When a certain viewpoint or behavior is widely spread on social media, users are often influenced by group pressure and choose to follow the mass trend to avoid being isolated. This kind of herd behavior weakens users' independent thinking ability to a certain extent, making it difficult for users to form their own independent opinions when facing complex social issues. Therefore, when constructing interactive models, media need to pay attention to the evolution trends of users' social behaviors and guide users to form healthy and rational social values.

3.3 The Development of Media Technology and the Reshaping of User Behavior Habits

The rapid development of media technology, especially the wide application of technologies such as mobile Internet, big data and artificial intelligence, is reshaping users' behavioral habits. The popularity of mobile devices enables users to access media information anytime and anywhere. This immediate and convenient way of obtaining information has changed users' information consumption habits. Users are increasingly accustomed to fragmented reading and find it difficult to concentrate for a long time for in-depth thinking.

The application of big data and artificial intelligence technologies enables the media to accurately grasp users' interest preferences and provide personalized information recommendations for them. Although this kind of personalized recommendation has improved the efficiency of information dissemination, it has also led to the emergence of the information cocoon effect. Users are often exposed to the information environment they are interested in for a long time, making it difficult for them to access diverse viewpoints and knowledge, thereby restricting the expansion of their horizons and thinking.

In addition, the application of new technologies such as virtual reality and augmented reality has brought users a brand-new media experience. These technologies enhance the appeal and persuasiveness of information by simulating real scenarios, enabling users to experience the information content as if they were there. However, this immersive media experience may also lead to a decline in users' perception of the real world and even cause confusion between the virtual and the real. Therefore, when applying new technologies, the media need to pay attention to their potential impact on users' behavioral habits to ensure that technological development serves the all-round development of users.

4. The Multi-Dimensional Influence of Media Shaping Mechanisms

4.1 The Shaping of Individual Cognition and Behavioral Patterns by Media Shaping Mechanisms

As an important channel for information dissemination, the shaping mechanism of the media has a profound and multi-dimensional influence on individual cognition and behavioral patterns. In the era of information explosion, individuals are exposed to a vast amount of media content every day. This content is carefully planned and edited and presented to the audience in a specific way, thereby influencing the cognitive structure of individuals imperceptibly. By repeatedly emphasizing certain viewpoints, values or behavioral patterns, the media enables individuals to unconsciously accept and internalize this information, and then form a cognitive framework that is consistent with it.

The influence of the media shaping mechanism on individual behavioral patterns is equally significant. The media not only showcases social phenomena but also guides individuals to imitate and learn specific behavioral patterns through means such as role models and plot Settings. For instance, the qualities of bravery, wisdom or

kindness of the protagonists in film and television works often become the objects for the audience to imitate, prompting them to exhibit similar behavioral characteristics in real life as well. In addition, the media also influences individuals' consumption choices, living habits, etc. through advertising, publicity and other means, further shaping their behavioral patterns.

However, the influence of the media shaping mechanism on individual cognition and behavioral patterns is not entirely positive. In the process of information dissemination, the media may, in pursuit of commercial interests such as click-through rates and viewership ratings, neglect the authenticity and objectivity of the information, resulting in deviations in the information received by individuals. The long-term accumulation of such biased information may distort an individual's cognitive structure, causing them to form incorrect values and behavioral patterns. Therefore, while enjoying the convenience and pleasure brought by the media, individuals should also maintain critical thinking, rationally examine the media content, and avoid being influenced by its shaping mechanism.

4.2 The Construction of Social Culture and Values by Media Shaping Mechanisms

As the disseminator and shaper of social culture, the shaping mechanism of the media plays an indispensable role in the construction of social culture and values. The media conveys the core values and cultural traditions of society to the audience by reporting social events, disseminating cultural knowledge, and showcasing artworks. Under the repeated emphasis and wide dissemination by the media, these contents have gradually become a social consensus, influencing people's ways of thinking and behavioral norms.

The media shaping mechanism also plays an innovative and leading role in the process of constructing social culture and values. The media promotes the progress and development of social culture by focusing on emerging cultural phenomena and promoting advanced ideas and concepts. For instance, with the popularization of the Internet, new cultural forms such as online culture and digital culture have emerged. Through reporting and disseminating these cultural phenomena, the media have gradually integrated them into the mainstream society and made them an important part of social culture.

However, the media shaping mechanism also faces many challenges when constructing social culture and values. On the one hand, in the process of pursuing commercial interests, the media may neglect cultural diversity and the inclusiveness of values, resulting in the homogenization of social culture and values. On the other hand, when disseminating information, the media may, due to reasons such as biased positions and one-sided viewpoints, trigger social disputes and differences, affecting social stability and harmony. Therefore, when shaping social culture and values, the media should adhere to the principles of objectivity, fairness and diversity, respect the differences among various cultures and values, and promote the prosperity and development of social culture.

4.3 The Promotion and Challenges of Media Shaping Mechanisms to International Communication and Globalization

Under the background of globalization, the role of the media shaping mechanism in promoting international communication and globalization has become increasingly prominent. Through cross-border communication, international cooperation and other means, the media have broken geographical restrictions and promoted information exchange and cultural integration among different countries and regions. This kind of communication and integration not only enriches the diversity of world culture, but also promotes the process of globalization.

The media shaping mechanism also faces many challenges in the process of promoting international communication and globalization. On the one hand, factors such as cultural differences and language barriers among different countries and regions have restricted the effective dissemination of media information. On the other hand, issues such as ideological struggles and cultural conflicts in international communication have also brought severe challenges to the media shaping mechanism. How to respect cultural differences and promote cultural integration while maintaining the objectivity and fairness of media information is an important issue that media need to solve in international communication.

Facing these challenges, the media should actively seek innovation and breakthroughs. On the one hand, the media should enhance international cooperation and exchanges to

jointly promote the improvement and development of the global media communication system. On the other hand, the media should focus on cultivating cross-cultural communication capabilities, improving the cultural literacy and cross-cultural communication skills of media practitioners, so as to better adapt to the media communication demands in the context of globalization. Through these efforts, the media will be able to play a more active role in international communication and the process of globalization, promoting the exchange and integration of world cultures.

5. Balanced Mechanism Construction: Technical Ethics and User Subjectivity

5.1 Regulation and Guidance of Technical Ethics in the Media Shaping Mechanism

At present, when the media shaping mechanism is increasingly complex and its influence is constantly expanding, technological ethics has become a key element to regulate and guide its development. The rapid development of media technology has brought about earth-shaking changes in the speed, scope and mode of information dissemination, but at the same time, it has also brought about a series of ethical issues. Technical ethics delineates the behavioral boundaries for the media shaping mechanism, ensuring that while pursuing communication effects and commercial interests, the media does not violate social public order, good customs and moral standards.

From the perspective of content production, technical ethics requires that when media use advanced technologies for content creation, they should ensure the authenticity, accuracy and objectivity of the information. For instance, when using artificial intelligence to generate news reports, one should not fabricate false information or exaggerate facts just to attract attention. Meanwhile, during the process of content dissemination, the principles of fairness and impartiality should be followed to avoid the information cocoon effect caused by technical means such as algorithmic recommendations, which would expose users only to information that aligns with their interests and viewpoints, thereby exacerbating social division.

In terms of data collection and utilization, technical ethics is even more indispensable. When media obtain user data to achieve precise push and personalized services, they must follow the principles of legality, propriety and necessity, clearly inform users of the purpose, scope and usage of data collection, and obtain users' explicit consent. At the same time, strict data security protection measures should be taken to prevent the leakage and abuse of user data and safeguard users' privacy rights and data security. Furthermore, technological ethics also focuses on the influence of the media on social values. As the guide of public opinion, the content and value orientation disseminated by the media will have a profound impact on social atmosphere and public perception. Therefore, when the media uses technology to disseminate content, they should focus on spreading positive, healthy and beneficial values, avoid spreading vulgar, violent, pornographic and other bad information, and create a good social and cultural atmosphere.

5.2 The Regression and Reinforcement of User Subjectivity in the Media Balance Mechanism

In the media shaping mechanism, the return and reinforcement of users' subjectivity is an important link to achieve balanced development. In the past, the media often held a dominant position and unidirectionally disseminated information to users, who could only passively accept it. However, with the popularization of Internet technology and the enhancement of users' participation awareness, users are no longer satisfied with passively receiving information. Instead, they hope to actively participate in the creation, dissemination and feedback process of media content.

The return of users' subjectivity requires the media to fully respect users' opinions and demands. Media should collect users' feedback and suggestions through multiple channels, understand users' preferences and expectations for media content, and adjust content strategies and dissemination methods based on users' needs. For instance, interact with users through social media platforms, conduct user research and voting activities, and involve users in the planning and production of media content to enhance their sense of participation and belonging.

Meanwhile, users should be granted more options and control rights. The media should provide users with diverse content options, allowing them to independently choose which

information to receive based on their own interests and needs. In addition, users should also be able to control their media usage behavior, such as setting the weights of personalized recommendation algorithms and blocking content they are not interested in, to avoid being overly manipulated by media algorithms.

Strengthening the subjectivity of users also requires cultivating their media literacy. Media literacy refers to the ability of users to acquire, analyze, evaluate and disseminate media information. By carrying out media literacy education, users' ability to distinguish media information and critical thinking ability can be enhanced, enabling users to filter out valuable content from the vast amount of media information and avoid being misled by false and bad information.

In the media shaping mechanism, technical ethics and user subjectivity have a mutually reinforcing and promoting relationship. Only by establishing a complete set of technical ethics norms, safeguarding the legitimate rights and interests of users, while strengthening the subjectivity of users, and enabling users to truly become participants and promoters of media development, can the balanced development of the media shaping mechanism be achieved and the healthy and sustainable development of the media industry be promoted.

6. Conclusion

Through in-depth discussions on the mechanism by which media shapes user behavior and its multi-dimensional influences, as well as the relevant contents of technological ethics and user subjectivity in the construction of the balance mechanism, we have clearly recognized the key role that media plays in modern society and the complex impacts it brings. With its powerful content presentation, interactive models and technological development, the media comprehensively shapes users' cognitive frameworks, social behaviors and behavioral habits. It not only affects the individual level, but also plays an indispensable role in the construction of social culture and values, international communication and the process of globalization. However, this shaping mechanism is not without drawbacks. It may distort individual cognition, lead to the homogenization of social culture and pose many challenges in international communication.

To address these challenges and achieve the balanced development of the media shaping mechanism, the return and strengthening of technical ethics and user subjectivity are particularly important. Technical ethics sets reasonable boundaries for media behavior, regulates the media's actions in content production, data usage, and the dissemination of values, and safeguards the legitimate rights and interests of users as well as the public order and good customs of society. The enhancement of users' subjectivity enables them to transform from passive recipients to active participants. By respecting users' opinions, granting them the right to choose, and cultivating media literacy, users can better cope with media information and avoid being overly manipulated.

In the future, the media industry should continue to explore how to find the best balance between technological progress and ethical norms, give full play to the positive role of the media, and effectively avoid its potential risks at the same time, so as to achieve harmonious coexistence and sustainable development between the media, users and society.

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